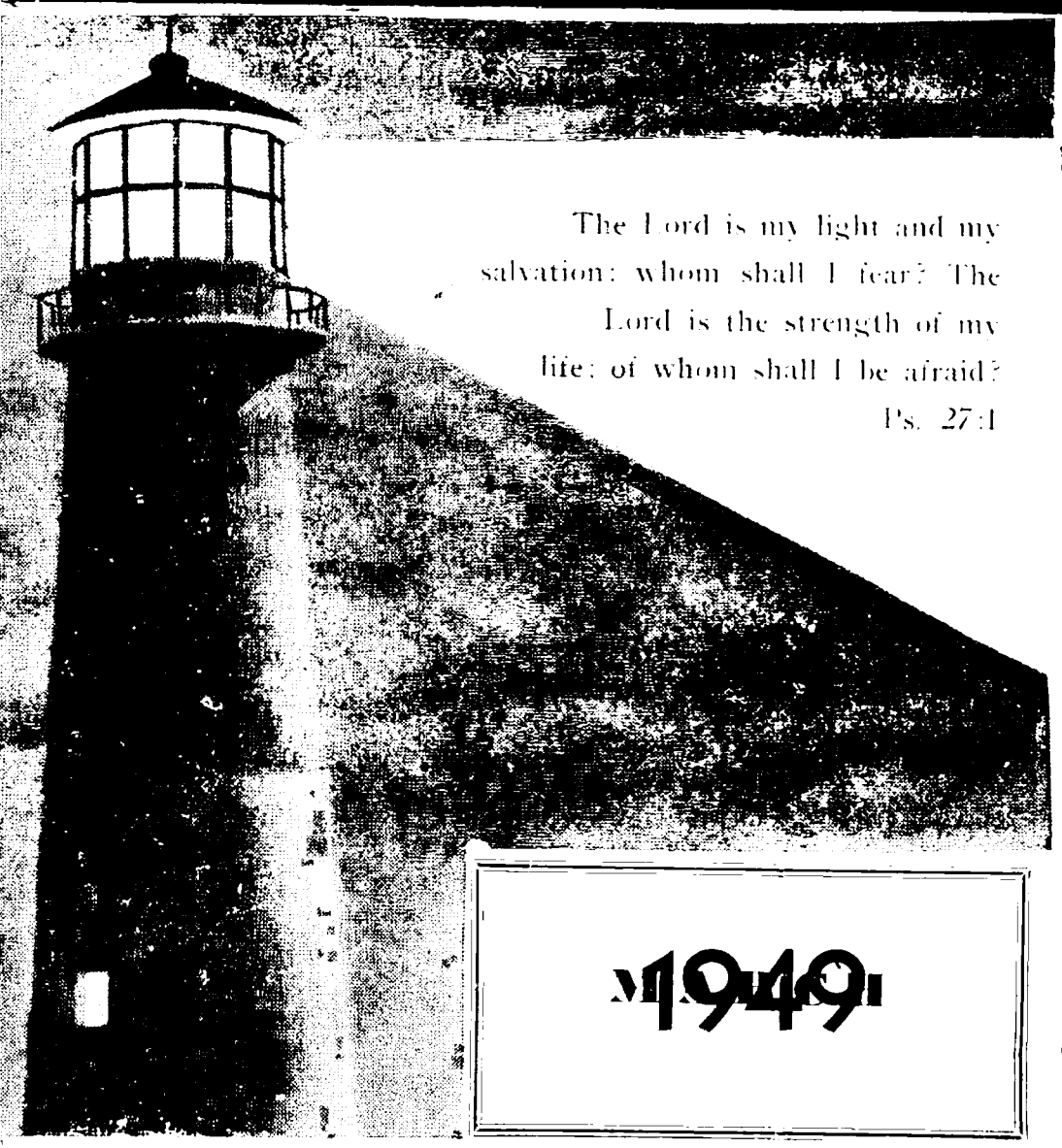
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life: of whom shall I be afraid?
Ps. 27:1

1949

BEACON LIGHTS

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Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME IX. MARCH — 1949 NUMBER 6

A Plea For The Home

Rev. J. W. Van Weelden — Sioux Center, Iowa

It has been quite some time since I have seen that daily feature found in many newspapers, called "The Man on the Corner Says". I used to read that eagerly. I would not mind being the man on the corner myself—just long enough to say to youth especially: "It would be much better if many of us would get off the street and go home".

I assume that you do have a home. Or isn't yours a home? Perhaps it is only a house where you hang up your cap, eat, (?) and sleep. That might account for the fact that you are on the street so much, away from home practically every evening.

Whose fault may this be? There are generally two sides to a matter. In this too! I know that parents do not control the sovereign grace of God which sanctifies the hearts of their children, be they ever so pious. However, must not most parents of children who practically "grow up on the street" confess that they have failed to make their house a home? On the other hand, you, if you are one of these "street lovers", share a grave responsibility. For you are wasting your time, trifling with your life, living carelessly, possibly drunk with the cares of this world and its attractions. And the worst part of such "life on the street" living is, I'm afraid, this: it is a symptom of superficial religion, or even in cases the evidence of a life wholly careless, worldly, profane!

The lack of home life is simply alarming. The question might very well be put: "Are you at home when you are at home, or are you at home when you are away from home!"

What is your answer to that?

* * * *

Sitting home with the family a little more these cold, stormy, winter evenings when it was fit for neither man nor beast to be outside, the necessity of our houses being homes has been impressed upon my mind. It made me remember that home is not the invention of man, but the design of God. Man and wife they were created, they establish their home.

they train their children in the fear of the Lord. The family life is the basis of all social life. God has not created us as individualists but as individuals closely related to other individuals. We are parts of an organism.

As such you are the son or the daughter of your father and mother. Quite naturally so, you say? But when the family is ever split up, away to work and school days, and gone every evening of the week on top of catechism and society (?), to bowling alleys, basketball and football games, skating rinks, theaters, etc., I believe that many might very seriously consider whether they are sons or daughters of their parents, or whether they just happen somehow to eat and sleep with them in the same house! When in the world the divinely instituted family and home has been disrupted, broken, it is bad enough. But it is a sad commentary upon our life as covenant people if our homes are infested with the same dread evil.

The family sitting at home, engaged in the sober discussion of what should be talked about in the believers' homes, or engaged in good reading, in family singing, or family "recreation", is disappearing rapidly.

Oh, the on-the-street-life so prevalent in our day and age must not be attributed solely to a new generation, though modern inventions have wrought their havoc. I believe that collectively, parents and youth, yes, all of us(!) must bow our heads in shame and repent of our world-conformity. Parents and youth are co-responsible. Who is the more guilty? I leave that matter to every individual's conscience before God. All of us are co-responsible, though the measure of guilt and the measure of resistance may differ in degree.

When I see the sport-craze and worldlimindedness growing by leaps and bounds and the home-life degenerating at the same pace (in our own circles as well as outside!) I believe that it would be well if we all take inventory of our lives, of our homes, of our out-on-the-street-life. Self-examination will do us good. We are just out of our homes too much. We are just living too fast a pace. We must slow down, slow down to the pace where there is time for reflection, meditation, study of the scriptures.

Take time to be holy,
The world rushes on;—
Spend much time in secret
With Jesus alone;—

By looking to Jesus,
Like Him thou shalt be;—
Thy friends in thy conduct
His likeness shall see.

* * * *

For this the home life which God has designed is all-important.

I realize that there is not only a time to "sit in your house" but also a time for being "in the way". There is a time to be home and a time to be on the street. Were not the two witnesses of Revelation slain *in the street?* We may not abandon the street as a place of witnessing for the principles which are ours through the new life by Jesus Christ our Lord. We may not hide our light under a bushel. In the world we must manifest to the world that we are not of the world.

How does your and my on-the-street-life compare with that? Havn't we conformed just too much to the world in our everyday pursuits and especially our evenings away from home? As our homes are so are we. If our homes are God-centered, we will be God-centered in all the rest of the spheres of life.

Perhaps I could better say that if our homes are abodes of God we will not be at home in the world. Again: if ye are at home in the world we are not at home with God. If we are at home in the world, and that is our chief care as evidenced in a life primarily worldly and profane, we shall never be in the Home of God, the House with its many mansions, the eternal abode of God's chosen people.

To me this is a serious matter; very serious. It is something which we as Protestant Reformed people, old and young alike, must take hold of, that we may strive to maintain and restore through the power of the life of Christ the Christian home!

A volume might easily be written on this. I must, however, terminate here. I do so with a final appeal to youth especially. Youth represents strength, activity, the time of goals and ideals. Never stop striving to make your home a God-centered, Christian home. To you who contemplate marriage: seek seriously and prayerfully to establish such a home. You may believe that the Lord will provide much joy and blessing—for yourselves, but also for His children which you may be privileged to bring forth for an eternal dwelling in God's Home.

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May the grace of Christ the Saviour
And the Father's boundless love,
With the Holy Spirit's favor
Rest upon us from above.
Thus may we abide in union,
With each other, and the Lord;
And possess in sweet communion,
Joys which earth cannot afford.

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Happy are the families where the government of parents is the reign of affection, and obedience of the children the submission of love.

—Bacon.

EDITORIALS

GLEEP

Among the many new words coming into our language as a result of new inventions and technical progress the term GLEEP will probably have very great significance for us in the future. GLEEP is the abbreviated designation for the peacetime use of atomic energy and is derived from the first letters of the term "graphite low energy experimental pile".

Ever since the cataclysmic release of atomic energy in the form of bombs over the cities of Japan at the close of the recent war, scientists of this nation have been seeking to arrest the rate of atomic energy release so that it could be used for many peacetime purposes. A certain amount of progress in this direction is being made by building a "pile". A pile consists of many bricks of graphite or carbon interspersed with blocks of atom energy material known as uranium. Thus a pile looks in certain respects like any ordinary pile of brick but differs in that it contains the indescribable energy released with the splitting of atoms.

It is generally conceded by all those involved in this type of work, that the success of the gleep will result in many changes in our mode of living. It is predicted that atomic energy in this form will be used to power the great ships that ply the oceans, the planes flitting across the sky and the powerful generating plants which supply light and power to our homes. In fact, it is thought that eventually even our automobile will be powered by atomic energy engines. The picture presented to us of the future is an era of unlimited prosperity and well-being all involved and produced by the harnessing of the atom's power.

Your editor believes that there is a great amount of truth in these predictions. In fact we wish to go a step farther. We believe that the technical progress now being made in the use of atomic energy will be subjugated to what the Scriptures call "the kingdom of this world" and it will be a factor in the development and the revelation of the antichrist, that coming ruler of the world who will introduce a reign of material prosperity the like of which this world has never seen.

We feel that the atomic age will further intensify the materialism of the age in which we live. This will certainly also have its influence on the people of God. We can expect more professing Christians to sell out to this spirit of this age and seek physical comfort before the things of the kingdom of heaven.

As far as the use of atomic energy for military purposes in the future, we all recognize that as a definite possibility. A war involving the unrestricted use of atomic bombs will in all probability be a very short one. No one familiar with

the bombing of the Japanese cities will deny the possibility of the entire destruction of certain areas of the world in a very short period of time, possibly only a few days.

The attitude of the Christian toward the world situation created by the discovery and development of atomic energy is best expressed by the apostle Peter "The end of all things is at hand; be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer."

H. G. K.

THANK THE LORD

Last week one of a group of student nurses said to her instructor, "Do you mind getting up at five o'clock every morning?" The young nurse, a devout Catholic, replied, "I only thank the Lord for a healthy mind and body so that I am able to get up in the morning". Each one of us can take a lesson from this remark.

Isn't health a blessing which most young people possess to the highest degree? Yet, often you and I, Christian young people, neglect to give thanks to the Almighty God for our sound minds and bodies. When God takes away our health, usually temporarily, or brings sickness or death to some close friend then we suddenly become aware of and grateful for our health. This was the situation, a few weeks ago in Grand Rapids, when Rena Hoogesteger, one of the young people of the First Church, was suddenly taken away. Weren't we all jolted into the realization that God can sever earthly ties or give health and strength according to His own good pleasure?

Often, when assigned to a task or when we see work to be done, who of us doesn't think to himself "Why must I do this?" or perhaps, "Why can't someone else do this?" It is then that we must remember that God in His counsel has seen fit to deprive some of health so that they are unable to perform the every day tasks we so frequently find very dull and trying. And then we, each of us, should in his or her heart thank the living God for able bodies to perform every task He has given us, no matter how small and menial it may be. May you and I constantly find this prayer on our lips: "I thank Thee Lord, for a healthy mind and body to do the tasks which Thou hast given me"!

L. A. L.

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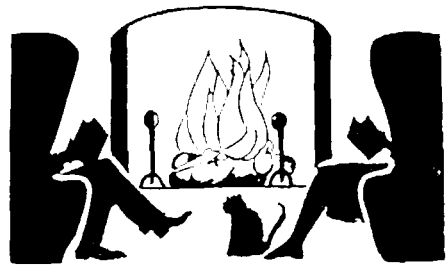
"YOUTH FOR CHRIST"

You will recall that in our last issue of Beacon Lights Marvin Koerner wrote an article under the above title. A "Rethinking" of his article appears in this issue and in Truth vs. Error Rev. Howerzyl asks: What do our Young People think of Youth for Christ? Remember—we do have an Open Forum and we welcome any opinion anyone would like to express on this subject.

A. J. R.

Christian Living. . .

REV. R. VELDMAN
Grand Rapids, Mich.



Entering Into God's Covenant

Your baptism, covenant young people, is your uniform. That point we stressed in our previous article. True, it is more than that. It is also a means of grace, whereby the Holy Spirit enriches the church in her salvation in Jesus Christ, and whereby the conscious faith of the child of God is confirmed. However, baptism is also the uniform whereby the children of believers are distinguished from those of the world. How clearly this is stated in our Heidelberg Catechism: "They (infants) must, by baptism, as a sign of the covenant, be also admitted into the Christian Church, and *distinguished* from the children of unbelievers". What this entails in the way of responsibility and calling to walk as children of God we have seen.

Young people, is it requiring too much in the way of spiritual interest to ask you to take up your February issue of Beacon Lights and read once again what was written on this subject? That will refreshen your mind and at the same time serve as an introduction to what follows. Do this, by all means.

In this article we place ourselves before the question: More specifically, what does baptism signify! Just what does that uniform, that distinguishes us from the world, declare? In the main, what does it preach to the church and to the world? When one is really baptized, what happens? If you really wear the uniform according to truth, what have you, and what are you? One who wears the uniform of the U. S. Army, and does so truthfully, is an American soldier, of course. One who wears the uniform of Christian baptism, and does so in truth,—what is he? Really, young people, we should know this.

Baptism is a sign and seal of the covenant of God.

How clearly this is stated, time and again, in our Baptismal Form. Always baptism is connected with the covenant of God. Thus we read: "For when we are baptized

in the Name of the Father, God the Father witnesseth and sealeth unto us, that He doth make an eternal *covenant* of grace with us." A little later we read: "And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not therefore despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony, that we have an eternal *covenant* of grace with God". To the parents it is said: "Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have heard that baptism is an ordinance of God, to seal unto us and our seed His *covenant*".

(By the way, friends, learn to appreciate the beautiful Baptismal Form. Baptism is a beautiful thing. When this sacrament is administered in your congregation, don't think of it as a drab, monotonous, fruitless part of the service; a sort of necessary evil. Sit up and take special notice: follow the reading of the form in your Psalter: try to understand the significance of baptism for yourself and the congregation as a whole. In this way you will experience that the sacrament never grows stale; in fact, you will see a little more of its beauty each time it is administered. Also, let us as ministers do our best to promote proper interest in the sacrament of baptism and to make the form live for our people, old and young. Let us read it with reverence and expression. Let us not speed and stumble through it in such a way that everything seems to say: this is just a matter of dead routine: let's get it over with as quickly as possible.)

That these quotations from the Baptismal Form are indeed based on the inspired Word of God, is plain from what we read in Genesis 1:10 and 11: "This is the covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee: . . . .and ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be *a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*" This passage speaks of circumcision, I know. However, whereas baptism and circumcision are exactly the same in meaning, differing only in form; and whereas baptism came in the place of circumcision: in fact, whereas baptism is called by Paul "the circumcision of Christ", —therefore the words also apply to the covenant sign of the New Testament: "and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you."

Now, then, what is the covenant?

The covenant, friends, is the heart of the Christian religion. It is the end and purpose of our entire salvation: the pinnacle of bliss for the creature. If there is one doctrine that distinguishes the Reformed churches from all other churches in the world, even more than do the doctrines of uncon-

ditional predestination or particular atonement,—this is it. Therefore, it is so essential that we know something about it. Be determined, as maturing covenant young people, that you shall understand and appreciate this truth, and all Reformed truth. Study it wherever the opportunity presents itself to do so. Remember, *you* are the church of tomorrow. Does this mean anything to you?

The heart of this doctrine of the covenant is not so difficult to grasp. The covenant may be defined as the living, concrete relation of fellowship and friendship between God and His people in Jesus Christ. FRIENDSHIP WITH GOD —therein lies the chief idea of the covenant. It implies, purely and simply, that the great and eternal and all-glorious God of heaven and earth will condescend to be our Friend, and we may be His friends; that God is our Father and we are His children; that the Triune God receives us into His family life, in creaturely manner and measure, takes us to His bosom, opens to us His heart, walks with us and talks with us; and that we may live under His roof, gather round His family table, as it were, lie in His bosom, know Him, trust in Him and love Him with all our heart and soul and mind and will. In short, family life with God, a home life with God, a life of friendship and intimate fellowship with the Triune God—that is the essence of the covenant. It is the realization of that Word of God: "I will be your God, and ye shall be my sons and daughters."

Baptism is the sign and seal of that covenant.

Now, then, with respect to that covenant of God, just what does our baptism signify?

This question, friends, must wait. I do hope, in all sincerity, that our young people will make a study of these things and make these truths their own. If your baptism is to mean anything to you, it must be understood. I hope that these simple efforts may in some measure help you to come to that understanding. The Lord willing, we shall continue this subject in the next Beacon Lights.

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— IF —

If we noticed the little pleasures,
As we notice the little pains;
If we quite forgot our losses,
And remembered all our gains;
If we looked for people's virtues,
And their faults refused to see;
What a comfortable, happy, cheerful place,
This world would be.

Current Comments

REV. L. DOEZEMA

Bellflower, California

"Youth Speaks On Calvinism".

This is the title of a pamphlet published by Baker's Book House and put out by the *Youth and Calvinism Group.* Apparently this is a group of Calvin Colloge students who wish to present their views to the Christian Reformed Church. In the preface it is called a Report, a Confession, a Criticism, a Plea.

So far it has succeeded in evoking criticism from some leaders of the Christian Reformed Church.

Since, however, we are interested in Calvinism as Protestant Reformed youth we ought to take an interest in these voices too. More particularly as Calvinists having the same Dutch background and of the same stock we are naturally interested in our brethren. We could say too that because we consider it our mission to speak to the Christian Reformed constituency we feel sympathetic to any sincere voice of criticism within the church.

Although the title suggests that it is youth that speaks we should not discard it as merely a youthful expression. It should be evident that in a large measure we are dealing with sentiments of professors and leaders in the church. This is evident from quotations that are made, and from the natural law of the relation of pupil and teacher. The youth are to be given credit for their grasp of the teachings and especially for their zeal to appear in print and speak to the public.

To make a few comments about the contents of the pamphlet we would point out first of all that the criticism concerns itself with the program and action of Christian Reformed Calvinists. It accepts the principles of the Christian Reformed Calvinism. There are eight articles which touch upon the challenge of working out a program socially, politically, scientifically, with literature, educationally, with respect to amusements, and finally in regard to the pulpit.

There is much with which we can agree in regard to the negative criticism. Some of the positive suggestions are also worthwhile.

However, there is a serious fault

that should be pointed out and it seems that that is left for those outside of the Christian Reformed circles to do.

The serious error is that the principles of the Christian Reformed Calvinism are taken for granted. There is only one sentence which speaks of re-examining the Principle of Calvinism and develop from it a Program (page 114). This thought is not, however, taken seriously by any of the writers. Their criticism is not with the Principle but with the Program.

This error lies at the door of the leaders who have interpreted the Principle solely from the wrong perspective of common grace. This perspective has been criticized and is being criticized today and the leaders in the Christian Reformed Church have not taken this criticism seriously nor honestly.

The Calvinistic youth should therefore correct this failure and question whether the wrong action or failure to action is due to the wrong interpretation of the principles. This involves a study of the Scriptures. It has been correctly pointed out that there is no Scripture proof adduced in this pamphlet. This is due to the lack of Scriptural proof in the defense of the common grace theory in the past.

After there has been a clear understanding of our principles and comparison with the clear teaching of Scripture we are ready to ask ourselves about the purpose and aim of history. Thereupon we may find a clear outline for action which also agrees with the action of the saints in the Bible.

If we have a wrong interpretation or understanding of the principles, of our calling and aim in history the danger is not that we fail to act but that we act in the wrong way and become instruments of Satan without realizing it.

There lurks behind the suggestions for a positive program a failure to understand the Scriptural principles of faith and works and also a lack of understanding of the aim of history. The Barthian criticism of American theology that it is Pelagian should be received for information by these youth. At least they should be acquainted with the abundance of literature produced by Protestant Reformed men who also were youth for Calvinism at one time in the Christian Reformed Church and who have contended that there is definite evidence of Pelagianism in the teachings of their leaders.

Finally we all should turn to the powerful preaching of Peter, when he says "we have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Especially we as Calvinists should have in our Calvinism more of the power and coming of Christ.

Truth vs. Error

Rev. J. Howerzyl — Oskaloosa, Iowa

For some time now we have been listening in on the conversations which have taken place between Jack, a young Christian Reformed fellow, and his pal John, from the Protestant Reformed Church.

Let's do some more eavesdropping, shall we?

One day, while they were working near each other, for they worked in the same factory, you know, their talk turned to amusement and recreation, especially for the Christian. They had both agreed rather certainly that dancing was not the proper thing for a Christian to do. From this they had started talking about the movie and while both agreed that attendance at an ordinary run-of-the-mill movie was out of the question for a Christian, Jack maintained that a person might be allowed to pick out a very few excellent pictures and see them and none other, while John on the other hand maintained that all acting was sinful. In fact, the argument became rather heated, so much so that Ed, another boy working in the same department, was attracted by it and said, "The trouble is that you fellows are starting out from the wrong end entirely, but here comes the boss so we'd better get to work." With which warning remark all turned busily toward their proper tasks.

The next day, which was Friday, the three walked together to a table to eat their lunch and while eating, the conversation swung back toward that which had occupied their attention the day before.

"What did you mean when you said that we were beginning from the wrong end, Ed?" asked John. "It seems to me that we were exactly going at it right, this whole question of amusements, by trying to bring the light of God's Word to bear upon it."

"Oh, I have no objection to that" replied Ed. "I simply don't like your theoretical approach. You can argue about it all you please and decide what you please, the plain fact is that many young people, and I mean Christian young people, will still go to the shows and dances and all your arguments won't stop them. That's what I mean when I say that you are approaching the whole thing backwards. And in that way you will never get the answer, I'm sure of that."

"Wait a minute, Ed," John almost shouted, "You certainly can't mean that we shouldn't determine from the Word of God what is right or wrong and then guide our lives accordingly? Why, that's absurd. Where else would we learn

to know what we may and may not do except out of the Bible?"

"Well, maybe I left the wrong impression, fellows, by saying that your method was wrong. What I really meant to bring out was that you are always talking about right and wrong and never doing anything about it. It all ends in talk. You don't offer anything positive. You don't get beyond the talking stage."

"But that's not true", burst out Jack, "We certainly do get beyond the talking stage and you can be certain that neither John nor I go to the show, much less go dancing. And if that's not being positive about the matter and getting beyond the talking stage, then I don't know."

"Please, please let me finish", Ed went on, "let me get done will you please? Why you hardly let me say a word let alone explain what I have in mind. I don't mean that for yourself the matter never gets beyond the talking stage, but I mean you don't have the proper approach for the majority of young people. You just say to them you mustn't do this and you may not do that and you leave the rest blank and don't go any further. You don't offer them anything positive."

"You mean this matter of recreation centers either in church or outside of church where Christian amusements may be offered for us who are young people, under proper supervision, etc. Well, that question has been discussed in our circles often enough and I personally don't believe that it is the answer. How about you, Jack?"

"Well, I don't just know what to say about them off hand. I really can't see but that they might be the way out."

"I certainly wish you would let me finish," complained Ed. "You still don't understand me. What I mean is that the simple question of certain amusements being right or wrong isn't the answer to our present problems as young people at all, no matter how you may decide the question. What we have to do is get away from the amusement and recreation tendency or craving or whatever you want to call it and turn it in an entirely different direction. Get away from the whole problem not simply by condemning it all or opening the door wider for it, but by substituting something entirely different for it."

"Well, that sounds all right, I guess," retorted John, "But where are you going to find something that is entirely different, is not evil in itself, but positively good, and at the same time is attractive enough so that it will draw the young people? Your idea may be all right as an idea, but I'd like to know what you would substitute."

"I can point you to the one substitute that has all the qualification you require. Something different,

far from being evil in itself, positively good and so attractive that the young people simply crowd the doors. You have it in our "Youth For Christ" meetings. Why don't you go along with me and bring all your friends too. We meet tomorrow evening in the town hall. Why not come and see for your self?"

"Well. . . . I don't know if the Youth for Christ is the answer," both John and Jack replied. "We'll have to think about it."

Young people, what do you think of the "Youth for Christ". Send your replies to Rev. James Howerzyl, 515 Third Avenue E., Oskaloosa, Iowa.

The Silent Voice

Due to a growth on one of my vocal chords, which has been removed by surgery, I have been forbidden to speak, even a single word, for at least five weeks. At this writing, three of the five weeks have already passed, and if all is well I hope to be completely recovered when this number of our Beacon Lights appears in print. The reason the Doctor forbade me to speak even a single word for this period of time he explained as follows: "An injured vocal cord," he said "is just like a fractured limb. It will not heal if you keep on using it. We can put a splint or a cast on a fractured limb, but we cannot do that to your vocal cord, although sometimes we wish we could."

At first I thought it would be humanly impossible for one who has the ability to speak, not to utter even one single word for such a long period of time. With Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, it was different. He could not speak. I can speak, but may not. Barring a few slips, (eight or ten words in more than three weeks) I have strictly adhered to the Doctor's orders.

One never realizes what a blessing the human voice is, until his tongue has been silenced. As we converse, and as we speak from day to day, how little do we realize what a wonderful gift of God the gift of speech is. One regret has come to me over and over again during the past few weeks, and that is that I so often misused this wonderful gift of God. How often I spoke, when I should have kept silent, but also how often I kept silence when I should have spoken. I may, by the grace of God look forward to a speedy recovery, but what if I should never be able to speak again, even as several whom I met at the hospital in Chicago, who had their vocal cords removed, among whom was also a young man in his twenties. Work while it is day, for the night cometh in which no man shall be able to work. It is my hope and prayer that if and when I may again be restored, I may use my voice more carefully in the master's service. I would say to all of our young people: "Let the voices God has given joyful anthems to Him raise". B. KOK.

BIBLE OUTLINES

Rev. John Blankespoor

Grand Rapids, Michigan

LESSON XXIII.

"Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles"

(John 7:1-24)

Jesus and His Brethren, vs. 1-9.

The first verse speaks of a part of Jesus' Galilean ministry. Very likely this period lasted some six months, comparing chap. 6:4 with 7:2, since these two feasts were some six months apart. During this time He fed the four thousand, healed the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman, etc. From this verse we also learn how the Jews' hatred has come to the point of desiring to kill Him.

The feast of the Tabernacles was celebrated from the 15th to the 22nd of our month of October, in commemoration of Israel's passage through the desert, (dwelling in tents, tabernacles) and was made a festival of thanksgiving for the season's harvest of grain, fruit and wine.

Now His brethren enter the picture. How many He had we don't know, but it is certain that James, who later was an elder in Jerusalem and wrote the epistle of James, and perhaps also Jude were His brother's. At this time they had learned that Jesus was making no preparations to attend this festival. Was not Jerusalem their metropolis? As His relatives they would like to see Him make a grand triumph at the capital with the nation bowing at His feet. Their argument, too, is sound. No one who seeks himself to stand out in the eyes of the people does things in secret. And here Jesus is scattering His efforts among small, insignificant groups of people in remote parts of the country. Jesus claimed that He was sent to the world. Why not go to Jerusalem where thousands were gathered at this time? "To the world" is the very opposite of "in secret".

Vs. 5 is inserted not merely to tell us that they were as yet unbelievers (until after the resurrection) but also explains why they assumed this attitude and gave such advice. They were carnal and sought earthly glory. Therefore their time is always ready. They urge Jesus to go now.

Christ in turn shows the big difference between Himself and His brothers. They are still of the world, and so is the crowd at Jerusalem. He calls the Jews the world. And the world always hates the light. Why? Because He bears testimony that its works are wicked. This the light always does. And so Jesus re-

mained yet in Galilee for some time, perhaps a few days, while they went up.

Questions: Which other feasts did the Jews have? What kind of kingdom did Jesus' brothers expect? Doesn't Jesus in vs. 8 contradict His own actions, since He did go up to the feast?

Jesus Goes to the Feast, vss. 10-14.

After the crowds of pilgrims have gone to Jerusalem and Jesus' brethren with them, and the roads are deserted, Jesus goes up. The question is if Jesus, according to vs. 1 did not go to Jewry because they might kill Him, why did He go at this time? Not because Jesus had now conquered the fear of death, but because He must testify of Himself as the Son of God to these multitudes, who came from far and near ,and also because with such multitudes there was less danger of a tumult. No doubt Jesus could have hindered them at any time from taking Him, but He must still preach, bring testimony of God, and perform miracles, wwhich would be quite impossible if conditions would be now what they were six months later when they did kill Him. Neither must this climax come too soon, therefore He stayed in Galilee for some time.

At the feast there is much talk about Him. Where is He? Notice what they call Him. They expected Him and now even make a search for Him. Also there was much difference of opinion. Some consider Him to be a good man, i.e., one who brings some good, some benefit with His miracles, etc. Others think that He is false and uses the wonders to cover up His hypocrisy. What hatred and devilish evaluations! One is simply amazed at the hatred of the world!

When the feast is half over Jesus appears on the scene. But not like with the first appearance at the Passover, neither like with the healing of the lame man. He uses only the ordinary privilege of a rabbi, teaching a group of interested hearers. This was a common sight.

The Divine Origin of Jesus' Doctrine, vss. 15-18.

The Jews had never before heard Jesus teach as a rabbi. What amazes them is that He does so without having attended one of their rabinical schools. In that sense He is unlearned. The purpose of this is to discredit Jesus before the audience. He has no credits. So they will condemn Him and His teachings. But Jesus in His reply, vs. 16, speaks only of the substance of what He is teaching. His doctrine is not His own at all, it belongs wholly to His great Sender. Again Jesus attests to them that His words are from God, and woe unto those who thus criticize and condemn Him. And they don't believe that His doctrine is of God? Vs. 17 is the answer. Anyone that wills, sincerely, to do God's will has the necessary subjective factor for the recognition of Divine doctrine as such. This doctrine corresponds with the saint's inner spiritual nature. Vs. 18 is proof that Jesus spoke not of Himself, for all men seek their own glory.

Questions: Can the natural man perceive and agree to the truth? Why do

you suppose Jesus waited until half of the feast was past before He came?

Judge a Righteous Judgment, vssfl 19-24.

Now Jesus takes the offensive. Did not Moses give them the law? And did they not sit in Moses' seat as teachers and guardians of the law? And yet none of them keepeth the law, they are all sinners. And yet in this capacity they try to kill Jesus. Surely, the law must be kept, also that of circumcision. This had to be done on the eighth day, and if that fell on the Sabbath, they circumcised on that day, and thought nothing of it. But when Jesus healed a man on the Sabbath, that was worthy of death, not seeing that this act was much greater than any circumcision. Therefore Jesus applies a general rule. They must judge a righteous judgment, not a superficial one, from the outward appearance. They must judge things as they really are.

Questions: Do we often judge unrighteously? Isn't all judging sin? How do you explain this verse in the light of Matthew 7:1? How do we often keep the letter of the law but fail to keep the spirit of it?

* * * *

LESSON XXIV.

"Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles" continued

(John 7:25-36)

The Divine Origin of Jesus' Person, vss. 25-30.

Having witnessed to them that His doctrine is from God and not His own, Jesus now also testifies of His own origin, namely, that He came from God. This is the point that John emphasizes throughout, but also the very focus that causes the sharpest conflict and most bitter hatred on the part of the Jews.

Now some of the citizens of Jerusalem begin to speak, vs. 25. These men are better posted on the affairs and the attitude of the rulers towards Jesus than the pilgrims who came from far. Therefore the question: Is not this He whom they are seeking to kill? Yet Jesus speaks boldly, and no one takes Him. The rulers spoke once, vs. 15 but Jesus' answer silenced them. Can it be that He actually is the Christ? This question arises in their minds. But no, this cannot be, for they know Him and from whence He is. And this would not be true of the Messiah when He comes. This was a peculiar notion of the Jews. Since they therefore know Jesus and from whence He is, His mighty wonders and words mean nothing to them. Unbelief indeed is hard, and always finds excuses. Faith, that believes though not understanding, is lacking.

But Jesus will answer them. With a loud voice, in the temple, He tells them the truth, vss. 28, 29. First He says that they know Him, and whence He is and later in the same verse He ascertains that God who sent Him they do not know, implying that they do not know Him either. Sure, Jesus means to say to them, you know Me. From a mere natural viewpoint you do. And you think that you can explain all things con-

cerning Me. But remember, I did not come of myself. This is very important. Someone sent me, and He indeed is real, genuine. He is God Himself. Him ye do not know, and therefore you don't know me, spiritually. So Jesus points to their tremendous responsibility because of their contact with God Himself.

Questions: What is the fundamental reason for their rejection of Christ at every turn? How would you explain the expression "He made an open show of them", Col. 2:15 in this light? Why did Jesus cry with a loud voice?

Jesus Speaks of His Departure, vss. 31-36.

The previous words were spoken on the first day of the feast. Those of vs. 37ff on the last day. Hence these may have been uttered also on the first day, or possibly on some subsequent day. Now we also read of the Pharisees and Chief Priests sending officers to take Him. Possibly they were the police of the ruling body of the Sanhedrin. This implies that the Sanhedrin either was meeting at this time, or was meeting for the occasion.

Not all, but a goodly number of the pilgrims believed in Jesus. Why? Because of the miracles. This implies that Jesus also performed some, perhaps many at the feast, of which we do not read. But these men cannot imagine that the Messiah, whoever he may be, would work signs that exceeded those Jesus did among them.

This faith, however, and following puts the Jews to work. It must not go farther. They will take Him. So we see things developing. First ,in the days of John, they enquire about Him, soon they begin to despise and hate Him, then the desire to kill Him grows, but now measures are taken to do so.

Jesus, however, perceives what is going on. Vss. 33, 34 are His answer to them. The underlying thought is that nothing which they may do will change His program in the least. Jesus is always complete master of the situation, never the victim. Neither will they kill Him before His hour, He will complete His mission. And the time will come when they will seek Him, but will not find Him.

Thereupon the Jews said to themselves: Where is this fellow about to go, etc.? They do not deem Jesus worthy of a reply. Is He going to run off somewhere and hide where they will not find Him? To the pagan Greek perhaps? The Jews reject Him, also those in the Dispersion, and so as the "Messiah" there will be no people left than the heathen. So they argue. Bitter sarcasm! They know what Jesus means when He speaks of leaving them, also of going to Him who sent Him.

Questions: Was this true faith on the part of the pilgrims? Compare chap. 2:23; 4:41, 45. What is meant by the Dispersion? In which sense would these Jews later seek Jesus? Surely not in the hostile sense for Jesus will be in heaven, neither as penitent ones for they will not find Him. How then? Cf. Amos 8:11, Prov. 1:24.

LESSON XXV.

"Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles" continued

(John 7:37-53)

Jesus the Fountain of Living Water, vss. 37-39.

The last day of the feast had come, which apparently was the most important one. Jesus now performs the role of a public herald, no longer that of a teacher, who usually was seated. With the crowds surging about Him He lifts up His voice so that as many as possible may hear Him: If any man thirst, etc. The question is why Jesus suddenly begins speaking about water. The occasion may have been the drawing of water from the fountain of Siloam. It was customary that each morning a priest draw water from this fountain, and, accompanied by a solemn procession, bore it to the altar of burnt offering, pouring the water, together with the contents of a pitcher of wine from the drink offering, into two perforated flat bowls. It commemorated the water that gushed out of the rock at Meribah and that was intended to quench the thirst of the Israelites in the desert. Jesus applies this unto Himself, for the rock and the water certainly were types of Him. Living water symbolizes life, salvation and all that is connected with it. He is the fountain of such living waters. The coming to Jesus and drinking symbolizes believing and by faith appropriating Christ unto ourselves, and the rivers of living waters that shall flow out of the belly refer to the abundance of active spiritual life which the Christian receives from Christ the fountain through faith. Cf. 1:16. This life manifests itself in the midst of a wicked world. Therefore John speaks of rivers of living waters, the water gushes forth So the man who by faith drinks from Christ the fountain. He will in many different ways manifest these waters flowing out of his belly (his inner spiritual life, in walk, confession, etc.) The emphasis, however, falls on Christ. In Him men can find it.

Vs. 39 explains the previous words by telling us that Jesus spake these things regarding the Holy Spirit which was not yet given. This statement naturally causes many questions to arise. Wasn't the Holy Spirit in the church in the Old Testament? Much can be said about this, but our limited amount of space forbids us to go into detail. Suffice it to say that in the Old Testament the Holy Spirit certainly was present in the hearts of the redeemed elect, but only in a limited sense and then through the special offices, like those of the prophets etc. Later on Pentecost the Spirit was poured out, and that from Christ the chief Prophet and Teacher, etc.

Questions: Why for many different reasons was Pentecost Day of tremendous significance? How would you refute Arminianism with vs. 37?

The Effects of Jesus' Testimony, vs.40-44.

They vary greatly. There are at least three different groups. Some consider Him to be the prophet, who was promised according to Deut. 18 and was expected to be a forerunner of Christ.

Others consider Him to be the Christ. But there is also a group that opposes Him. Vs. 41. There comes a division in the multitude because of Him, vs. 43. Jesus always divides, is either a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death. And notice the extremes, some believe, others are ready to aid in killing Him, but fail to do so.

The Officers and the Sanhedrin, vs. 45-53.

The officers also fail to lay hands on Him according to their instructions. Now they make their report. Notice its contents. They could have stated that they failed because of the danger they would have incurred from the friendly part of the multitude. But nothing of the kind. Jesus evidently also made a tremendous impression upon them which they are not ashamed to confess. The emphasis seems to fall on the manner in which Jesus spoke. Never man spake like this man. Mark 1:22.

The rage of the pharisees now breaks loose. Their own servants believe in Him? What business have they as servants to follow impressions and thoughts of their own? None of the rulers believe in Him. Some of the multitude do, but they are stupid, ignorant of the law. Here we find an old argument, but a very dangerous one, namely, that in religious matters men of power, authority, and learning cannot err, and that all humbler people ought to be guided by them without questions.

Now Nicodemus lets himself be heard. This in itself must have caused consternation among the Sanhedrists. He objects that they don't keep the law themselves by failing to give a man a fair trial. Having boasted about themselves as the guardians of the law one of their own members points out that they are violating the law themselves. "Here we may remark that fanatical religious zeal on the part of men who claim great holiness for themselves often blindly violates the commonest ordinary justice when dealing with religious opponents". Lenski.

Vs. 52 shows again how they always look for excuses, for external things, credentials, etc., and fail, yes, refuse to listen to Jesus' words and notice His works.

Questions: Apply vs. 48, 49 to our day. How are we as Protestant Reformed often criticized in the same way? Why do you suppose Nicodemus voiced his objections in the form of a question? Did Nicodemus do right by staying with the Sanhedrin?

* * * *

LESSON XXVI.

"Jesus and the Adulterous Woman"

(John 8:1-11)

Jesus Tried, vss. 1-6a.

Perhaps it was on the night of the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles that Jesus retreated to the Mount of Olives. Why? Possibly to pray. Early in the morning He returned to the temple. And all the people came unto Him. And He sat down and taught them.

But the Jews have found something with which they will make another attempt to "catch" Him. They come with a woman taken in the very act of adultery. Moses gave his commandment concerning such sinners, but what does Jesus say? If Jesus condemns her He will contradict His former teachings and thus deny His own words. Besides, then He will also contradict the Romans who did not enjoin capital punishment for adulterers, no more than our country does. On the other hand if He justifies her He will contradict Moses' teachings. Then they will indeed have scored a point against Him. Which will it be? It must be one or the other.

Questions: What was the law of Moses concerning adulterers? Why do you suppose the Jews took only one of the guilty parties to Jesus?

Jesus' Answer to the Jews, vss. 6b-9.

What a wisdom Jesus displays! He first writes in the ground completely ignoring them. But they persist and ask and ask and ask, according to the Greek. Finally Jesus does give an answer: Let him that is without sin cast a stone at her. Why these words, and why this peculiar action? It means first of all that they are not in a position to judge, not legally. There was cause for action, but not by them. But neither are they able to do so, ethically, being sinners themselves. How can sinners condemn sinners? And the answer? They all walk out, beginning with the oldest, being convicted of their own sins. No one is in a position to condemn her. How defeated these haters of Jesus must have felt!

Questions: Why did the oldest ones walk out first? Does Jesus' answer mean that we can never condemn others?

Jesus' Answer to the Woman, vss. 10, 11.

None of the Jews can condemn her, being sinners themselves. Therefore Jesus only can do so. No, legally He doesn't have the right to do so either. He is still the suffering servant, afterwhile He will be the judge of heaven and earth. Ethically He can do so, for He is perfect.

And yet He doesn't. "Go, and sin no more". Does this mean that Jesus never condemns sinners? By no means, for this He did time and again with the Pharisees, telling them that they are of their father the devil, etc. But here He appears as the Saviour. The question was: what is His attitude towards a sinner so great as this woman? Therefore His actions and words preach salvation for sinners. No, this does not mean that this woman is necessarily saved, or forgiven. Jesus doesn't condone her sin. "Go, and sin no more". This means that He reveals Himself as the forgiving One. He tells her to repent, and be sorry for her sins. And what is true sorrow for sin. This, that we are grieved because we have provoked God by our sins, but also seek forgiveness in the blood of Jesus. The case is dismissed. The Pharisees lose another argument. With injured pride their hatred increases.

AFTER RECESS PROGRAMS

THE GLORY OF GOD - *And Labor*

James Doezema — Grand Rapids, Mich.

One hears the remark made repeatedly in our day, that they would rather go back to lower wages and lower prices, rather than have the present high wages and higher prices.

There is much dissatisfaction in our day in the ranks of labor which is evidenced by the many strikes and disregard of authority, and the destruction of property belonging to others.

It is without doubt true that some find it more difficult to provide for their families under present conditions, but the trouble lies deeper than that. Much of their dissatisfaction is not based upon facts. Man sets up a high standard of living and expects somehow it must be maintained. To be satisfied with daily bread is foreign to our present day thinking. It is very well possible that we as Christians will learn what this means by experience.

We are living in an age of rugged individualism. Men organize unions to promote themselves organically, but only because in union there is strength. In reality each is seeking self.

The employer also has methods to further his own interests, by getting as much as possible out of labor. The employer thinks in terms of more profits, more production, lower cost per unit, the employee, better working conditions, more pay, and social security when the world is tottering on its foundations. God is not in all their thoughts.

It is a continual struggle between the two powers. The question remains, who will gain the balance of power, and how will they use it? To look at things in general we would say that it is a hopeless mess, that there is no method in their madness, but there is, even in spite of themselves, for there is a God Who uses all things, even the wicked unto His own glory.

When the Taft-Hartley Labor Law was passed it seemed as if things were developing in the wrong direction, in the light of Scripture. Before this law was passed it was already becoming very difficult for Christian laborers to get or hold jobs where there was a union involved. This seeming development in the wrong way was short-lived. The strong labor

vote in the last election has given the party in power now, the mandate, so it is said, to repeal the existing labor laws. So now things are developing in the way of making the Christian's place in the world smaller again, and this, we believe, will continue until there is no room left. To be willing to be pushed around in this world is not easy for the flesh, we are earthy by nature and therefore love that which satisfies our earthly existence. If we are to be faithful, and thereby glorify God, we must be willing to be left without room in this world, and to be thankful in so doing, for it is a privilege to be counted worthy to suffer for His name's sake. You may say, "the outlook certainly looks bright for the man of the world, and very gloomy for the Christian". From a materialistic point of view this is true, but what is the material, which is transitory, compared with values that are eternal? That good part that we have chosen, by Grace, shall not be taken from us.

In the light of the foregoing we would like to submit a few questions on this subject:

1. Does the labor movement have and significance in the development of the world?
2. Does the outcome of the last election have any significance?
3. Do you think that labor could organize a political party and win an election?
4. If the Taft-Hartley labor act is repealed do you think the next one will be as favorable for the Christian employee?
5. Would it be wrong for a Christian business man to continue in business if he were forced to hire only union labor?
6. Is it possible for us to identify ourselves with, and support a labor union, as Christians?
7. Are you in agreement with our denomination in its stand against worldly unions?
8. Would it be well for parents to guide their children into vocations that do not require membership in a union?
9. What are some of the most important things to consider when seeking employment?
10. In what way can we glorify God in our daily work?

Re-thinking Youth for Christ

Carl Reitsma — Grand Rapids, Mich.

It is with not little hesitation and apprehensiveness that I reflect upon the subject treated in last month's issue of Beacon Lights and analyse the approach of my friend and fellow seminarian Marvin Koerner. Although I emphatically agree with Marve as to his contention that "Youth For Christ" is not properly sponsored,—an agreement which legitimatizes this critique since only similars can be contrasted with advantage and only like people disagree,—yet, it seems to me, that the process whereby this conclusion is achieved is wholly incoherent and inconsistent.

By way of explication to a positive, constructive perspective, let us analyse my friend's theme:

In re: "They have the bad approach, which is "winning souls for Christ." Notice that this statement embodies two unproved assumptions namely, that the endeavor to "win souls" is bad and that Y.F.C. is guilty of this activity. The first assumption is falacious because "soul-winning" per se is not only permissible but virtuous. (Proverbs 11:30. "The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.")

As to the second assumption, this could only mean that Y.F.C. is occupied in doing that which is "wise". Furthermore a "humanistic" interpretation of the phrase "soul winning" is excluded by the Y.F.C.'s doctrinal platform, point four, which reads, "We believe that for the salvation of the lost and sinful men, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential." (Doctrinal Platform adopted by Y.F.C. International, July 23, 1945 as quoted in "Youth for Christ", by Mel Larson).

In re: "They use the wrong approach entirely". It is a question in my mind whether we often do not fail to distinguish between "sheep-feeding" and "fish-catching". Certainly we would not feed sheep with fish bait or visa-versa. It is true, the Word must always be preached, but the form of the presentation may vary with the nature of the audience.

In re: "The preposterous goal of Y.F.C. is to evangelize the whole world." This statement can mean either of two things, depending upon the interpretation of the term "evangelize" and "world". The term "world" can be used quantitatively to express the idea that the gospel must be preached in every nation as a prerequisite to Christ's return. Certainly this goal is not a preposterous one. (Matt. 24:14: "And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all the nations; and then shall the end come") But then the "world" can also be understood in an ethically qualitative sense as including the reproabate. Indeed, if Y.F.C. endeavors to save the reprobate world their goal would be "a preposterous one". In fact, to say of any one that he endeavours to do that which he by his own

terminology confesses to be impossible is to question his rationality! To maintain that Y.F.C. is guilty of this latter charge (world in the qualitative sense, retaining M. K.'s interpretation of the term "reprobate") without presenting substantiating data is to beg the question.

In re: "We do not have . . . . or any other kind of testimonies." Although the language is vague, from the context we may assume that Mr. Koerner felt that the absence of testimonies among us was desirable. Contrast this sentiment with that of the preceding . . . . "Certainly we can present Christ to the youth of today. We can do this by our walk, manifesting that Christ is our Lord and Saviour." To this I would reply, is not one's walk a testimony? Is not the first statement so interpreted, contrary to the latter. Granted that by our walk we should testify, must we then desist with our tongue: should we not sing and shout and be glad for the work of grace in our hearts and feel compelled to tell others about it? Surely if we can walk in that narrow way we shall be able to speak about it. Let us not shun so rich an opportunity, such an impelling necessity because others have abused it. You and I must give testimonies reflecting God's goodness.

Having then shown that the method whereby Marve reached his conclusion is inconsistent, it is not my intention to disagree with this conclusion, but rather to show that this conclusion can be drawn from legitimate premises. Because of the looseness in organizational structure, another point not in its favor, it is difficult to evaluate Y.F.C. without becoming lost in objections to a particular rally. We must evaluate broadly enough to include all of the various articulations of the organization without criticizing generally on the basis of a particular rally which we have attended. We must attack a constant factor, Youth for Christ International, rather than individual meetings which change their color with the various speakers.

It is my conviction that Y.F.C. lacks a sound foundation in virtue of its extra-ecclesiastical existence. This, is its basic error. Y.F.C. is a group which arose spontaneously through the efforts of such men as Torrey Johnson and Jack Wyrtzen in conjunction with others who led small independent youth movements which in turn developed into an international youth organization Rather than such an independent movement, it is the Church of Christ which has received the command to gather the elect and to preach the word: in this respect Y.F.C. is an imposter, a competitor of the Church. Together with Dr. P. Jasperse, commenting on this point in "De Reformatie", June 7, 1948, I would like to maintain that God always addresses Himself to the Churches as the recipients of His benediction and the executors of His mandate. (Als Jezus Christus Zijn Openbaring aan Johannes gaat geven (die Openbaring is dus de eigen openbaring van Jezus Christus aan Johannes, zie Hfdst. 1 vs. 1), BEGINT, BEGINT, BEGINT Hij met Zijn positie te bepalen tegenover Zijn kerk. Vs. 9 e.v. Het eerste, dat hij neerschrijven moet, moet

zijn aan de gemeenten in Azie, de kerken van Efeze, Smyra, Pergamus, enz. Deze kerken noemt de Christus-in-verhooging Zelf: "gouden kandelaren"; zij, die kerken, zijn de lichtdragers; zij hebben het Woord; daarbuiten is geen licht. Temidden van die "gouden kandelaren" is Hij, de Zoon des menschen; daar is Zijn plaats; Hij, en Zijn lichaam behooren bij elkaar en zijn daarom bij elkaar! Aan het hoofd van die kerken staat een predikant, een "engel der gemeente"; die predikanten worden verzinnebeeld door "sterren". Die "sterren" nu houdt Hij blijkens vs. 16 in Zijn rechterhand!)

Observe that the New Testament epistles and particularly the Revelation of St. John (chap. 1:4: "John to the seven churches which are in Asia: . . . .") are predominantly addressed to the churches. The Church is the only institution which can properly preach and bring Youth to Christ.

Yet, we must face the facts. Even though Y. F. C. functions in a capacity not rightfully its own, it must be admitted that its results are astounding. It cannot be denied that in America and in England hundreds and even thousands of young people have come to the realization of their sins through the influence of Y.F.C. Neither can the sincerity of these individuals be doubted, for what greater can any man say than that God is his Lord. Youth for Christ is helping to gather the Church of Christ through its truths and in spite of its errors. This is the fruit of an organization so insecurely founded. Oh, how great is the power of our God who in spite of man's sin and error has seen fit to use vessels fit to destruction for the salvation of His Church.

It is not inconsistent to contend that God uses Y.F.C., an inherently wrong organization, to gather His Church, but this is merely the application of the accepted truth that God uses all things to accomplish His purpose. God uses sinful men to work out His counsel. Think of Judah, who actually carried out the work of the Kingdom he tried so hard to destroy. Judas, through his own wickedness made possible for us the redemption he did not share. Judas himself sinned, but the result of his sin was our salvation. The Devil tempting Eve tried to set God's plan at nought, but through the execution of his plot enabled us to enjoy life everlasting. Even as we may not disapprove of the existence of Judas and Satan, so also we may not disapprove of the existence of Youth For Christ.

We must not, however, make the mistake of concluding that the result God wishes to achieve, ethically effects the nature of the acting agent. Even though the results of an organization are good for the Christian, we may not infer that the character of the organization is good. Y.F.C. is not sponsored by the church and is therefore basically unsound. But this does not exclude the desirability of our recognizing the apparent truth that God is using Y.F.C. to a good end. Y.F.C. is fundamentally wrong, but its fruit accomplished in spite of itself is worthy of our recognition. This, I think, should be our attitude toward "Youth for Christ." (cont. on page 31)

Schuiler Writes

We invite all our readers to send in your questions and problems to: SCHUILER, c/o Doorn Printing Co., 705 Eastern Ave., Grand Rapids.

In the previous issue of Beacon Lights we promised that we would say a little more about the subject of "worldly amusements".

It seems as though the question of "worldly amusements" pops up every so often. What is worse, it sometimes becomes a "problem" in the church, in the home, a problem also for our young people. The question is often put this way: "In how far can we partake of or participate in worldly amusements?" Sometimes the question is asked: "May a Prot. Ref. youth do this or that, may he attend such or such a meeting, go to this or that place?" etc. etc. The formulation of such a question is wrong already because a Prot. Ref. person may do everything that any person may do. There is but one law of God for all men.

But to come back to the question: "How far can we really go along with and participate in worldly amusements?" I would say: "Pure worldly amusements are always wrong." And in the measure that we go along, partake of them and participate in them, we deny the antithesis.

Someone will say: "Yes, but are there not forms of amusement and entertainment which we can also have as christians, among our own people and in our own sphere?" I think there are such things. If that were not so we simply would have to forbid our children to play. I am inclined to say that any christian, especially young christians, and people still in the prime of life practice entertainment, diversion, and occupy themselves pleasurably. However, I am afraid that the trouble with many of us is that we often allow ourselves too much liberty in the line of amusements and entertainment. It seems to me no Reformed person will deny that the field of amusement and entertainment is very limited. And it is so limited because it lies so far away from the center and chief calling and interest of our life. No, we can not be with our nose on the grindstone eighteen hours of the day, we need diversion. But diversion is not yet amusement and entertainment as we usually understand these terms. When you come to think of it there is actually very little room and time for 'amusements'. Our time is too valuable and too precious for it, our calling in the office of all believers is too all important. I never heard of a "man of God" yet who found a lot of time for amusement. There are too many other things and too many other diversions that crowd in upon him and demand his attention and call for action.

Hence, I come to the conclusion that which is often designated by the term "amusement problem" in the church, for the youth, is first of all and above all a spiritual problem. Anyone who has an "amusement problem" on his hand deals with a spiritual problem. The basic problem is earthiness and worldlimindedness. The "spiritual man" has no amusement problem, least of all a problem of "worldly amusements". And it is a sign of spiritual shallowness when young people seek "worldly amusements". Scripture itself tells us in unmistakeable language how we must manifest ourselves in the world and with respect to the world. We read e.g. in II Corinthians 6:14-18 the following: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons, and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." That also covers the term "worldly amusements".

I once heard a story of a girl who asked her minister whether she might attend a modern dance. (Young people usually don't ask the minister first). Said the minister: "We'll read Psalm 1 and after that you decide for yourself." After the Psalm was read she said: "I may not go and by God's grace I will not go." Perhaps it might be a good thing if we as young people would read Psalm 1 a little oftener, especially at times when we have intentions and desires and the *urge* to frequent questionable places of amusement and entertainment. If we take our God and our calling into consideration our prayer will always be, either definitely uttered or living in our soul: "Teach me Thy way, O Lord: I will walk in Thy truth; unite my heart to the fear of Thy name." (Psalm 86:11)

Don't you see that if we live according to these principles of Scripture that our "problems" of amusement fall away? For then we certainly will use *all things*, also in the line of entertainment and amusement, in such a manner and in such moderation that we remain spiritually minded. O, yes, then you still may have a question about christian liberty and a relative difference of opinion as to what is allowed and what is not allowed. But then your basic problem is solved, and even though you do not want to lord it over your fellow

christian's conscience, your relative difference will be very small for then we all want to live out of the antithesis. And then the term "worldly amusement" certainly will have definite, objective content for us, and we will flee "worldly amuse-ments" and seek to please our covenant God. Then our life will not be based on the philosophy of: eat, drink, and be merry, it will not be self- and sin-centered, but it will be God-centered.

Hence, in conclusion, if you have a problem with the very term "worldly amusements", you better realize that yours is first of all and basically a spiritual problem. The spiritual man does not ask: "How far can I go along with the world and still be a christian?", but his life's motto is: "How far can I stay away from the world and please my God".

—SCHUILER.

A Word from our Federation President

Recently I was asked to answer a letter from the secretary of one of our Young People's Societies, a letter requesting information concerning the problems connected with putting on a Convention for our Young People's Federation. The questions were especially as to the cost of such a convention, the problem of lodging, the number of delegates and visitors that could be expected, and also the question of recreation. While writing the answers to these questions of this particular society, I thought it might be of interest to more of our societies, so I decided to pass on this information by writing a brief article for our Beacon Lights.

Let me state at the outset that it is a great undertaking for a small society to put on a Convention, but it can be done if there is wholehearted cooperation on the part of each and every member. It takes a lot of hard work, but it is worth every bit of it. It is a wonderful experience to be host to a large group of young people and provide them with a few days of spiritual and physical recreation. It also acquaints the young people of our denomination with the various local communities of our churches. It brings us closer together, and strengthens the ties of christian fellowship.

To make our Conventions more spiritually worth while I think it would be a good plan if the executive board of the Federation would choose the theme of the Convention with its various subdivisions a year in advance, appoint societies to study the various aspects of this theme during the course of the

year, and present their findings at the annual Convention.

In order to put on a Convention it is quite necessary to have a fund of some two or three hundred dollars to begin with. This money can be raised by first of all contacting the families of the local congregation for a substantial financial gift, and thus become sponsors. These gifts usually range anywhere from a few to five or ten dollars per family. If the congregation is quite small, then the young people could also ask for sponsors outside of the local congregation, by making an appeal through the Concordia or the Beacon Lights. This money is needed for the printing of the Souvenir Booklet, badges and other incidentals. To make the Convention a success there should not be a shortage of finances, because in an undertaking of this kind there are always several unforeseen expenditures. It is also usually customary to contact business-men who are willing to contribute from five to ten dollars and list them as Business Sponsors in the Souvenir Booklet. The rest of the expenses, such as for the banquet and other entertainment, should be covered by the price of the tickets. In the past it has been customary to give complimentary banquet tickets to all the delegates and Federation Board members. I think this is a very fine idea when the Convention is put on by some of our larger societies, but it is expecting a bit too much for one of our small societies to provide complimentary banquet tickets for some eighty or ninety delegates and board members.

It is, of course, very difficult to say just how many can be expected at a Convention. This information can only be ascertained by sending a questionaire letter to each society, asking them for the names of the delegates, and if possible, for the number of visitors that are planning to attend. This information is very necessary, especially if lodging must be found for the delegates and visitors. Lodging the delegates and visitors is quite a problem, especially for our smaller societies and congregations. But let me assure any society that may plan on inviting the Convention to be held in their community, that also this problem is not insurmountable. Young people are easily accomodated. If need be you can put them up three and four in a bed. At our last Convention we even had them sleeping on the floor. It is a fine experience to have a group of these young people in our homes for a few days, and gives us an opportunity to exercise the Christian virtue of hospitality.

I sincerely hope that our societies will give this some serious thought so that we will have several invitations at our next Convention.

Rev. B. Kok.

Book Reviews

Title—"*No Trumpet Before Him*".

Author—Nelia Gardner White.

Publishers—Westminster Press.

This is the story of Paul Phillips, a young minister who dared to practice what he preached. As a young country parson, he had become unpopular in Aporia, his first charge. When the Bishop transferred him to a fashionable church in Warrenton his wife felt that perhaps now she would be able to lift up her head in the social world rather than feel that her husband was a failure.

However, Paul continued to preach the things he believed in a simple, earnest manner. He refused to bow to the demands of society as prescribed by women like Julia Ficke. He was honest and sincere in his relationship with people like Gabe Ficke, Ocky Jones, and Keziah Woodley. He refused to compromise with what he thought was wrong even though the path he chose antagonized Agnes Pyne, the most influential member of First Church, against him. He remained true to his marriage vows, in spite of Jeanie Vane's love.

Although this book is entertaining and well-written it cannot be recommended for our young people. The book is a prize-winner of the Westminster Annual Reward for Fiction. It is called religious fiction but the religion it portrays is rank Modernism. In Paul's Christmas sermon which is the climax of his decision to speak for what he believed to be the right, he makes the following statement: "So, lest the manger in Bethlehem seem far away with the unreality of legend, I want to talk to you about this room on this alley in our own town, for it is near, it is real, and God dwells there."

Another illustration of the empty shallowness of the so-called faith that Paul Phillips preached and which is depicted by the author of this book to be highly desirable if found when Paul is musing after preaching a funeral sermon. "He wondered if anybody could say anything that would make death easy to take. He wondered if a belief in immortality had ever been

a real thing in the heart of man."

When one reads a so-called Christian novel such as this one, he cannot help but realize the depth of degradation into which even the term Christian has fallen. We cannot urge our young people enough to be on their guard against the errors which mask themselves as truth and seek to gain an entrance into every field of Christian literature.

—Mrs. M. Kroondyk.

—DONATIONS—

Henry Buys Sr. (Lynden, Wash.)	$ 2.00
Mr. H. Wustman (Byron Center)	3.50
Singspiration (at Hope church)	28.54
Hope Prot. Ref. Church	26.76
Hudsonville Prot. Ref. Church	51.80
Singspiration (at Fourth church)	28.98
Miscellaneous	.50

YOUTH FOR CHRIST

(cont. from page 25)

Whatever our attitude, let us always be guided by the sentiment of the Psalmist in the following words:

O Lord, how shall a youth preserve his way,
At every turn by vanity surrounded?
In truth, if he Thy statutes will obey,
If on Thy Word his attitudes are founded,
Thou whom I've sought, O let me never stray
From Thy commandments, lest I be confounded.

O let Thy Spirit be my constant aid,
That all my ways may ever be directed,
To keep Thy statutes, so to be obeyed,
That from all error I may be protected.
I shall not be ashamed then or afraid,
When Thy commandments I have e'er respected.

—Psalm 119.

—WITH JESUS—

Only a few more shadows; and then our Lord shall come;
Then life with all its battles, shall be forever done;
No sorrow, grief, nor misery, shall we there ever bear;
For then with our DEAR SAVIOUR, the battle shall be o'er.

Then with the saints in glory, HIS perfect praise we'll sing
T' repeat salvations story again, o'er and again:
'T will be that blessed anthem, praising our BLESSED LORD
Who gave Himself as ransom; HIM,—who we so adore.

Oh hail HIM!—For He's coming, to take us home to Him;
Soon with Him we'll be dwelling in our eternal home;
Our joy and expectation, our blessed hope is HE,
Our life and resurrection, throughout eternity.

How shall I here adore Him, in my imperfectness:
But there—Oh how! I'll praise Him in perfect blessedness
Pure: Righteous; with new body! How glorious that shall be!
Just to adore our Saviour throughout eternity.

Praise Him!—AMAZING SAVIOR!—who came to ransom us;
He—Victor—never wavered. He is our blessedness!
He is our resurrection; death now forever gone!
Soon glorious perfection, we'll own, with Jesus,—HOME.

Amazing love! Unbounded, who can but fathom this?
Damnworthy me, hellbounded: clothed—in His righteousness?
Pure white; in heaven's perfections, in purest holiness,
In Christ my resurrection: shall I, His Name, not bless?

Hush!—I hear anthems swelling. It is a heavenly strain,
The saints redeemed are singing it o'er and o'er again;
It thrills my soul:—How blessed! these saints must be at home
With Jesus—Ever blessed!—O come, Lord Jesus, come!

H. A. Van Putten
Holland, Michigan.