New Shelter House at Spring Grove, Jamestown, Michigan, where the 25th Anniversary Field Day will be held.

JUNE 21, 1950
BEACON LIGHTS

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CORRECTION

The Station-wagon or Bus mentioned in the Anniversary Story (May Issue) is to be purchased for the use of the Missionaries wherever they labor and not for any specific congregation.

As we go to press this fund stands at $2500.00 with only $500.00 to go to reach the goal. Our young people who wish to help should do so now.

Mail your Gift today to:
PRISCILLA BUS COMMITTEE
743 Fuller Ave., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.
INTRODUCTION: — “Meet Mr. Buwalda!”

The writer of “The Value of Classic Learning for Christ’s Fighting Church” is Doctorandus D. J. Buwalda, lecturer in New Testament and Patristic Greek at the Kampen Theological Seminary of the Gereformeerde Kerk (Art. 31). He is also instructor of classic languages at the Kampen Gereformeerde Gymnasium. The author took graduate work at the Free University of Amsterdam, and Tubingen University in Germany. Mr. Buwalda’s work is an effort to stimulate the biblical re-examination of our modern culture in the light of its classic roots. Scholar and humble Christian, Mr. Buwalda takes his place as contemporary pillar in the monument of Reformed fathers. Mr. Buwalda has agreed to answer questions or comments in regard to his article. Carl J. Reitsma.

The heavens are blackening. Even now we watch God’s lightning bolts come crashing down around us.—His wrath over “our” universally declining evil culture. “Our” western culture, immersed in the Gospel was blessed while serving Him. But now look at it! Let’s be on guard not to look down from our pedestal of arrogant conceit and pronounce a proud anathema upon the Graeco-Roman thinking world. Are “we” better than they?

God has let them walk in their own way (Acts 14:16). Yet this same Paul maintains that the lawless heathen in following their own considerations often do better than the Jews themselves (Rom. 2:14, 15). For us this means that we, who are saved from agony and death through Jesus Christ the Lord, and possess this Gospel which was held aloft in the great Reformation and held under again and again during the Middle Ages in men’s unrighteousness, should very really place hand upon mouth as we compare the culture of heathen and . . . “Christian”.

Let’s honestly admit it. We of the
civilized modern day world have to blush a bit don’t we when we read the almost 2,000 year old fragments and discover how a son expresses his true gratitude for the thorough bringing-up that his parents gave him; how a son instructs his younger brothers to love and obey his parents? The papyri which we inherited were of course not written for publication as the classics were and so, here we have a genuine picture of life as it then really was. What does “our” contemporary culture have to offer in respect to the parent-child relationship?

O, of course, I am not forgetting about Rom. 1:25. Paul didn’t either. That culture was corrupt. God’s judgment was executed in a terrible manner over it,—more terrible yet when we remember that they got just what they wanted. They were not able to excuse themselves as though God had not revealed Himself to them. But “we”? “We” daily treasure up wrath for ourselves (Rom. 2:5). But now, what is so abominable? Here in the Netherlands people are accepting as a true treasure what we know to be God’s wrath and they think that now finally they are on the right track. That which God gave to this generation through the blood and tears of the forefathers is caricatured by them as . . . the pseudo-religious eighty-year struggle for riches through worker oppression, the loveless, fanatical inquisition at the Synod of Dordt, the narrow, national independence, the church-play in the 19th and 20th centuries. Nevertheless, of our predecessors the church sings “their blood and tears and suffering were precious in His sight”. They confessed His name. However, in spite of the tyrannical French regime, the loss of Belgium and many colonies, and just lately in the German occupation, this generation rushes on in pursuit of the way of the Beast. A short time ago Holland gave up its responsibility over millions of subjects willingly and for the greater part with pleasure. Sure it did so under U. S. A. pressure, but just the same, remember, it did so by conviction! He who reads the royal words of parting when India was declared “free”, will begin to understand what God says in His Word, “I have chastened them, but they have felt no pain!” “We” of today consider “Christian” what God always hated and terribly punished in the Pagan world,—the elevation of Sovereign Man over a subjected Creator. This view in classic times was represented by the Stoics and their principle of a would-be cosmic law. Today men make their own lord, their own law,—the sovereign man. And now what would not seem possible is happening. The Stoic is making an astounding impression upon innumerable Christians. How? Through: 1. its Individualism; 2. its Universalism; and 3. its Spiritualism.

1. The Stoic is individualistic in respect to time and space. One must disregard his history, his people and race, his city, and everything that might stand in the way of the maintenance of one’s individual position and self respect. One must disconnect all ties. Away with marriage, family and all that could disturb peace of mind. 2. But, devote your-
self rather to mankind. Seek only to accomplish mankind’s ideals. Work for the world-state. 3. You really are not of this earth. Your spirit is divine. There, in the sphere of the divine is where you belong. Elevate yourself above your bodily existence, your expectations, your desires, and consider all things in the perspective of the “eternal-light”. Death is not your enemy, but friend who releases you from the bonds of the body. Practice impassiveness to bear of death and fate. In your fight against fate you will surge above the gods. They have a life of rest and sweet repose while you in your daily constant struggle elevate yourself above the earthly!

As an example of this I want to translate a small fragment of a letter (Epist. 41) that the Stoic Seneca wrote at the end of his life to his friend. Seneca was the teacher of the infamous Roman Emperor, Nero.

“You are doing an extraordinary and beneficial work if, as you write, you persist in striving for a harmonic spirit. To pray for it is foolish, because you can get it from yourself. You don’t have to lift your hands to heaven or beg the temple assistant to permit you to come a little closer to the ear of the image, as though you then could hear better: divinity is near to you, it is with you, it is within you. That’s the way I mean it Lucilius: a holy spirit resides within us who keeps his eye on both the good and bad that we do and guards this. After he is treated by us he treats us. No man is good without divinity. Can one surge above fate without being helped by it? He gives advice, noble and supreme . . . you come under the influence of godly majesty in a woods that on a clear day completely shuts off the sunlight; or when you see a man who is unafraid in the midst of dangers, unaffected by desires, happy in set-backs, peaceful amid the roar of the storm, looking down from a higher level upon his fellowman, considering gods on an even level with himself. Would you not be filled with admiration for such a person? Would you not say: such a person is too great and superior for us to suppose that he should feel at home in this inferior body? A heavenly power has descended in him. A superior spirit which knows how to control itself, which lets everything pass as below his worthiness and laughs at what we fear and which is driven ahead by a heavenly power. Therefore he is for the most part there from where he descended. As the rays of the sun touch the earth, but have there existence where they originate, so also there is a great and holy spirit who is sent here in order that we should learn to know the divine from close up. He converses with us, certainly, but he is bound to his origin from within . . .”

If you read this fragment closely you will find many of the elements in it that I previously mentioned. And if we let them work themselves in upon us we will have to admit that these tenets are in complete harmony with our times and depraved hearts. Do we not have all these ideas here in a nut-shell?—contempt for creaturely life, the superior
personality independent through its own divine might, absolute, sovereignty, residing in heaven with its associates, the gods. You fail to find here ties that bind “this great one” to fatherland, history, family, or relative; to laws to which he would have to conform. Life to him is a divine game. You search in vain here for the humble fallen man who has completely spoiled his position before the Lord and although condemned to the flames, yet through His mercy in Jesus Christ is saved from ruin and now guilt-conscious seeks life in obedience to His Word. And yet, one is shocked at the number of folks who consider this philosopher and his thinking-world quite close to the Christian Life, and who also live out of these same principles. “Is there not a “holy spirit” spoken about here,—a spirit that watches over “wrong and good”,—of a personality who lives his real life in heaven, of an “unio mystica”? A thorough study of this whole culture is extremely necessary. The whole world is being driven back to this culture and even calls for it. Our culture is so badly infected with all these idea-webs that we can hardly recognize them as such anymore. The Church of Jesus Christ must feed and refresh us with the Word of God. Read the letters and speeches of Paul, for they especially strengthen us in this terrible conflict against our own flesh and blood.

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The 25th Anniversary
FIELD DAY CELEBRATION
will be held in
JAMESTOWN’S SPRING GROVE
Wednesday, June 21, 1950

Mark this important date and plan now to attend and enjoy yourself in fellowship and recreation. It will be a wonderful day for sure!
The question preponderant in my mind and also motivating me to write this time on this subject is: "Is there place for habit in Christian Living?" Particularly does this question come to my attention now because the habits (?) of the covenant youth obviously change with the seasons. Summer time is here and consequently our habits (?) must be garbed with summer dress. The custom is to discontinue the work of catechism, society, and virtually all spiritual activity in the church other than the Sabbath worship services and declare a vacation. Even beside this general pattern of church-life, our individual lives follow more or less a pattern of customs which we are not reluctant to call "habit", and so the question, "Is there in Christian Living to be given a place to habit?"

When one attempts seriously to analyze the implications of this question, he at once arrives at the consciousness of its wide, practical significance. The purpose of this writing is not to urge you to pry into one another's habits to condone or justify them but rather that together we consider the subject of "habits" in order to ascertain whether they have a place in our life as Christians. If habits are to be outlawed there will be a great transformation in our lives as we are, no doubt, without exception, led to do this or that every day by these "common gestures". If, however, we are to conclude that some habits are good while others are evil, the task is upon us to draw the line and set up the standard according to which we may judge our own needs. If we are to approve of all habits finding in them much virtue, our purpose of writing will be to encourage the cultivation of more of them. Can we now give them a place in our life or ought we to militate against them and discourage, wherever possible, the development of them?

A proper starting point from which to face this question would be to clearly define "habits". They must be distinguished from that which we call "instincts". The latter are certain spontaneous actions of our body which take place without the exercise of mind or will. When I touch fire, I do not stand with my hand in the fire, reasoning whether it will burn or not. I rather, instinctively withdraw my hand. Instincts are inborn in us and also in animals. In contrast to them, habits are actions that have so often been repeated
that they can be done automatically without the full consciousness of one's will. Habits, too, are spontaneous but they are never performed without the mind and will. Effort and will are implied in these "common, ever-recurring gestures" and, therefore, it follows that one is also responsible and accountable for the deeds which they habitually perform. There is no such excuse possible as, "I did it out of force of habit". When one acts as "a matter of habit" the mind and will is not inactive even though the subject may not be fully conscious of the thing he does.

In this light we may ask, "Are habits good or bad"? To answer this we would put all the acts of men into two classifications: (1) those acts that are moral-ethical and, (2) those that are purely physical. To the first belong such things as the act of prayer, worshipping God, whether privately or publicly, actively participating in the life of the congregation, loving the neighbor, etc. Now when such deeds are performed merely out of force of habit we brand them as evil. God demands that we worship Him in spirit and in truth; that we love Him with all our being; that we serve Him as willing children. When, then, these things are done in "a rut" because the time is there or it is custom and our desire of heart is not in them, they are displeasing to God and, hence, sinful. It is understood, of course, that when we "by habit do what is in itself sinful" that we walk in very bad habits. When "by habit" we choose the world, seek earthly pleasures, lie, steal, curse, etc., we walk in great wickedness and can never excuse ourselves by appealing to the fact that we were only semi-conscious of that which we did. Thus we conclude that no "good habits" can possibly be formed in respect to moral-ethical deeds regardless whether the deeds be good or bad.

But what then about "physical deeds"? In our life there are a good number of things which we do and repeat so often that they become habits. These deeds we would not now try to classify as good or evil, as such, they have no ethical content and so we simply face the question as to whether or not we should do these things in a habitual manner? For example, we eat three meals a day; we form speech habits, dress habits, work habits, and many others. Doing many of these things habitually we find that they lead to an orderly and systematic way of living which is also pleasing to God who has commanded that "all things be done orderly".

However, we are not yet ready to condone the practice of such habits, for to do so means that we favor the Jesuit ethics that "the end justifies the means". I think that where the ever-recurring acts of life's daily routine become habitual, life itself becomes a matter of cold formalism. The spirit of work is gone. The spirit of eating is absent. The spirit of life is extinguished and finds himself living arbitrarily and mechanically. He eats because it is time. He works because he must. He goes through the motions of life in a stupor.

From that point of view his habits are
not only detrimental but also sinful. Even purely physical actions become evil. God demands that all things we do, we do lively, consciously and in such a manner as to please and glorify Him. To do that our heart and soul must be in it. We cannot go through the outward motions and expect that He, Who looks upon the heart, is satisfied. Whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever thing we do, we must do it to His praise. It is therefore, pleasing to God when we do all things with a full consciousness of mind and will and then all that we do, we do because it is the inmost delight of our heart to do it.

With this last thought in mind we want to write a closing paragraph on introspection and make the application of this principle to our Christian living. How do you find, upon a careful and honest examination of your deeds, that you do things? Do you go to your place of work each morning because it is your delight to serve God in your vocation? Or ... is it habit? Do you read the Word of God in the family circle or individually because you rejoice in hearing Him speak through His own revelation? Or ... is it force of habit? Did you some weeks back discontinue your society fellowship and study of the Word because that is the thing you wanted because it pleased the Lord? Or ... just plain habit? Do you smear your face with cosmetic paint because you delight to present yourselves to God in that way? Or ... habit? Do you go "crazy" over "big league stuff" so that you can hardly bear missing the hearing or seeing of the games because you love to take Jesus with you to delight in those "Sabbath desecrators and thieves"? Or ... habit?

A great deal of our life is made up of habits. Many of them are positively evil. Many others, although perhaps we cannot detect the harm they do, nevertheless, do us no good. Let us strive to be freed from habitual ruts and "be transformed by the renewing of our minds so that we may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." (Romans 12:2).

A Timely Passage:
Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain.

And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible.

I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air:

But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be cast away.

—I Corinthians 10.
IV.
A NEFARIOUS SECRET GLOBAL EMPIRE OF DARKNESS.

Where'er His creatures gather
The unseen God is near;
Let rulers fear their Ruler,
Their Judge let judges fear.
How long ye earthly judges,
Will ye pervert the right?
How long shall wicked persons
Have favor in your sight?
Do justice for the helpless,
The orphan's cause maintain;
Defend the poor and needy,
Oppressed and wronged for gain.
When rulers walk in darkness,
When judges truth forsake,
The cornerstones are crumbled,
The firm foundations shake.

These lines, taken from our Psalter, have been the song of the church of all the ages and still is. Our present modern rulers in all spheres of life do not fear their Ruler, but have sworn unquestioning allegiance, upon penalty of death, to their Masonic superiors. This is one of the major reasons why the cornerstones of our modern civilization are crumbling and the firm foundations of the world are shaking.

** ** With this instalment we conclude our study of the lodge. Societies interested in pursuing this subject further may contact the writer for additional material.

Seymour Beiboer
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Many of the world-shaking events that have occurred during this last half century were planned and controlled by Masonry; that is humanly speaking of course. "There appears to be plenty of evidence that the murder of the Austrian Archduke and his consort, which event was claimed to have started World War I, was decreed in the Masonic Grand Orient of France a year and a half before it was actually carried out. The New Age, monthly organ of the Mystic Shrine (Southern Jurisdiction) had this to say in 1918, 'The (1st) World War as none other is outspokenly a Masonic War—for Masonic ideals 17, 19p 318, 451, 510. Without a doubt this is also true of World War II. The fact that Russia has learned the secret of the atomic bomb is due to Masonry." (Christian Cynosure, Aug. 1949, p. 54).

The devil invented Freemasonry to protect and acquit criminals, fifth columnists, thieves, and other evil doers from the just consequences of their wrongdoing. Part of the oath of the Royal Arch Mason (7th degree York Rite to which so-called Christians join) reads like this:

"Furthermore do I promise and swear that I will aid and assist a companion Royal Arch Mason when engaged in any difficulty and espouse his cause, so far as to extricate him from the same, whether he be right or wrong. Also that I will promote a companion R.A. Mason's
political preferment in preference to another of equal qualifications. (85 percent of our government officials are Masons). Furthermore do I promise and swear that a companion R. A. Mason's secrets, given to me in charge as such, I knowing them to be such, shall remain as secure and inviolate in my breast as his own, murder and treason not excepted”.

From this one can readily imagine how this must effect the honesty of our judges, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, and civil officers when dealing with fellow lodge members. Very few men ever run for high offices in our government without being lodge members and prominently wearing lodge rings and pins.

Masonry has its influence in the leadership and politics of the worldly labor unions. This is evident from books such as Misleaders of Labor, by Wm. Z. Foster, published by the Trade Union Educational League. Space does not permit me to go into detail on this score, but here is some food for thought. A government that can force 130 million citizens to give up a part of their tires, gasoline, coffee, sugar, and shoes during wartime and can force from twelve to fifteen million young men to go to the battlefronts of the world to bleed and die—that government certainly ought to be able to force law-defying labor union leaders to come to time if it so desires.

Masonry has its influence in the industries, businesses, and in the armed forces of every nation. Experience, knowledge, education, initiative, capability, honesty, personality, and reputation are only secondary qualifications for the higher salaried and more responsible positions. It depends on whether or not you are a Mason. That’s what counts!!! And such a man is always “favored” in his position; that is if he remains a lodge member in good standing, no matter how poor his work may be or how big a crook he is. To prove these statements please check your daily papers whenever a prominent politician, industrialist, or business man dies, and note the lodges he belonged to and how high he was in them. I know this to be true with very few exceptions, from my own personal experiences.

Dr. R. A. Torrey, former superintendent of Moody Bible Institute and worldwide evangelist, writes, “In one city where I lived, the proprietor of the vilest and most notorious place in the city could not be touched by the law because he was a Knight Templar. Every other place of the sort was run out of the city but his. I have known similar things that have come under my personal observation.”

Masonry has its influence in education. “Chas. E. Wheelock, Commissioner of Education, University of New York, in Official Document, July 21, 1921, stated, “I also happen to know that among leading educators in the public school system at least 80 percent are members of the Masonic Order”. Grand Master H. S. Park said, “The public school is primarily the child of Masonry”. (Proceedings, Grand Lodge of Nevada, 1920, p. 34). The lodge is opposed to all Christian education. “We do not see why children need to be educated as Presbyterians,
Catholics, methodists, Lutherans, Hebrews, (or Reformed, S.B.)" (Grand Lodge Library Bulletin, Jan. 1921). However the public educational institutions do pump their religion(s), such as communism, atheism, evolution, modernism, etc., into the minds and hearts of the students.

Masonry has its influence in the home and family. A Mason must attend the meetings of his lodge which last until after midnight in most cases. He is under oath not to reveal what took place or what he did during that time to his wife, parents, children, or a brother in Christ. No, not even in sickness and death.

Masonry has a very unique method of persecuting the Church of Christ should it interfere with any of its nefarious business. Ministers of denominations that tolerate lodge members (in fact there are very few that do not tolerate them and such denominations are always very unpopular and small in number in this world) are forbidden to preach or teach against the lodge in any way whatsoever. If they dare to, the Masons of that congregation will secretly spread all sorts of lies and gossip in order to ruin his good reputation in the congregation and community he serves, until he is forced to quit the ministry or leave for another charge. This actually happened several times.

This is also the reason why so many modernistic ministers (or Balaams?) do not preach against, but actually condone and encourage evils, such as the theatre, dancing, gambling, drinking, paganizing and commercializing our Christian holidays, etc., in order to be on the right side of the business-lodge members of their congregations.

From the foregoing one can readily see that God is using Masonry to accomplish His good pleasure in preparing this wicked world for its final destruction according to Romans 1 and 2 Peter 3:7. Think of all the juvenile delinquency, immorality, debauchery, crime, robbery, gambling, etc., that is going on in our land today, supported by the lodge via Hollywood and publishers of immoral magazines, pictures, books, and comics. The Masonic lodge to my mind is also one of the most leading factors in the development of the coming Antichrist. The time, in which we as true Christians will neither be able to buy or to sell except we wear the mark of the beast, is a lot closer that what we really think.

Much more can be said about Masonry, but space does not permit. But it should become evident that Masonry and Christianity can never go together and no Mason can ever have a place at the table of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is my sincere wish that the True Church may ever be vigilant in applying the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, not only in the exercise of Christian discipline (why of course we must), but also in the preaching of the Word. We as covenant young people must know about the anti-Christian character and practices of the lodges, so that the church which we love and in which we have a name and a place may be kept free, by the grace of God,
from this power of darkness for generations yet to come and until that Day when Christ shall judge the secrets of men.

* From tract, The Antichrist in the Lutheran Church, by Wm. Meyer (National Christian Association).

Much of the material used in preparing these articles was obtained from the National Christian Association of Chicago, Ill. This organization is composed of ministers of various denominations whose aim and purpose is to enlighten the Church about the evils and practices of the secret societies by means of books, pamphlets, tracts, and its monthly organ, the Christian Cynosure.

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YOUNG PEOPLE’S SOCIETY — HOLLAND, MICHIGAN

First Row, left to right: David Rhoda, Norma Windemuller, Roger Westenbroek, Robert Rhoda, Reverend Kok, Marion Windemuller.
Third Row: Gerald Kok, Theodore Elzinga, Ralph Bouwman, Niel Dykstra, Laverne Casnier, Kenneth Knott.
Absent when this picture was taken: Isla Stegink, Irma Kortering, Paul De Goed.
The OPEN FORUM offers to all our readers the opportunity to express their opinions and thoughts concerning articles and contributions published in Beacon Lights. It also extends to our readers the privilege of space for comment on any other issue or development within our sphere of interest. If you wish to place a contribution in OPEN FORUM, please feel free to do so. All we ask is that copy be typed (double-space) or at least legibly written.

P. S. — And not too long, please.

After reading SCHUILER’S page in the May issue of the Beacon Lights, I thought about this question, What do you think of smoking in the church parlors? and your remark that one would have a hard time proving from Scripture that it is wrong to smoke in the church parlors. Let us leave off the phrase “in the church parlors”.

What I can never figure out is that most of our ministers will argue in favor of smoking when they know in their hearts it is wrong. Is it because the habit is stronger than the will? If so, that alone would make it sin.

In the seventh grade science book, or in any health book there are stated at least seven reasons why smoking is detrimental to the body and not one reason why it is beneficial. Some of the reasons are: “It acts as a stimulant to the heart causing that organ to work harder, it effects the entire digestive system, nervous system, respiratory system, also causing shortness of breath, it effects the eyes and irritates the delicate tissues to the nose and throat.”

A habit that is harmful to the body is sinful!

Recently there was a notice in our bulletin to the effect that men were stepping out their stubs on the basement floor thus ruining it. When our twelve year old daughter read this she was thoroughly shocked and said, “Why, mother, they shouldn’t smoke in church, should they? The church is God’s house!”

How much more blessed we would be if all the money spent for tobacco would be put into our “Foreign or Unchurched Mission Fund”. Then instead of the pitiful sum of two hundred and seventy-six dollars and ninety-eight cents, it would be swollen into the thousands. If we have no one willing, capable, or available to do this work we should donate this sum to some other denomination who is more enthusiastic about bringing the Gospel to the unchurched.

Mrs. D. Vander Ploeg
1200 Edna St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Young People's Society — Hamilton, Can.

Front Row: Arie Oosthoek, Gerard De Boer (secretary), Joe Knecht (president), Theodore Hart (treasurer), Bill Hart.


Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
April, 1950

To all our Friends in America,

A picture in the Beacon Lights’ naturally means an article accompanying it. And then this will be the first time we have contact with you through our “Beacon Lights’.

In a previous issue Herm Banko wrote something about our congregation and Young People’s Society in Hamilton. So you also could read that Rev. H. Veldman has very much work to do, and therefore he appreciated to hear that our society has its own board and president. With this principle Rev. Veldman is and always has been in hearty agreement.

In the first place, I will tell you something about our Protestant Reformed Young People’s Society which has the name of “Thy Kingdom Come”. Our society was established in the summer of 1949 and counted at that time 12 members. Since last summer, many families have moved to Hamilton or vicinity, which means a gain for our society of at least ten members. We have our meetings every two weeks on Friday evening at Hamilton.
I think it would be nice to give you a general view of our programs on these evenings. It may be different from the meetings you have.
1. Opening with songs and prayer.
2. Reading a chapter of the Bible with reference to the subject.
3. Reports (in Dutch and English) of last meetings.
4. The main point: The subject with discussion.
7. Closing: Songs and prayer.

This is just a little view of our regular meetings. The language, however, is also a problem for us. At least 90 percent of our society is Dutch. Yet, we speak English, (very instructively, too). All of you will understand that the language is a real difficulty. Still, it is a very important thing to understand and to speak the language of this country.

We all have to testify in this world. It is not easy, but we have to do it. However, though troubles are great, let us stand firm and trust in God. Because He and He alone can and will help us.

Therefore, let us be joyful, because God has given us a name and a place in His Church. May our hearts be filled with joyfulness and thankfulness for what God has given our Federation and our Churches in the past 25 years. And may God give us many more years, as His worthy followers in His service.

D. V., let us hope to meet each other at the Convention this year.

With Christian greetings to you all from the Prot. Ref. Young People Society “Thy Kingdom Come”, at Hamilton, Ont.

—J. J. Knecht, pres.

Assurance

The Principle hinge on which faith turns is this—that we must not consider the promises of mercy, which the Lord offers, as true only to others, and not to ourselves; but rather make them our own, by embracing them in our hearts. Hence arises that confidence, which the same apostle (Paul) in another place calls “peace”; unless any one would rather make peace the effect of confidence. It is a security, which makes the conscience calm and serene before the Divine Tribunal, and without which it must necessarily be harrassed and torn almost asunder with tumultuous trepidation, unless it happens to slumber for a moment; for it does not long enjoy that wretched oblivion, but is most dreadfully wounded by the remembrance, which is perpetually recurring, of the Divine judgment. In short, no man is truly a believer, unless he be firmly persuaded, that God is a propitious and benevolent Father to him, and promise himself every thing from his goodness; unless he depend on the promises of the Divine benevolence to him, and fell an undoubted expectation of salvation; as the apostle shows in these words: “If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.”

—Calvin’s Institutes, Vol. I.
Report of the .

25th Anniversary Mass Meeting Western League

A wonderful afternoon and evening of Christian fellowship and joy was ours as Protestant Reformed young people of the Western League. We observed our 25th Anniversary Mass Meeting at Edgerton, Minnesota, April 14.

Our afternoon session began with community singing under the direction of Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema. Scripture was read by Rev. P. De Boer and Prayer by Rev. J. De Jong. Our Sioux Center society favored us with a vocal duet. Following this a member from each of our Hull, Doon, and Edgerton societies gave a Historical Sketch of their congregation. Our Hull congregation was organized in 1925, Doon in 1926, and Edgerton in 1938. It proved interesting to hear what our fathers endured that we might have our Protestant Reformed Churches.

Lunch was then served in the church basement after which we resumed our meetings upstairs. A member of our Doon society then supervised a Bible Quiz with two members from each of our societies taking part. Next our ministers carried out a very interesting part of the program. It was a round table discussion on the topic: "Improving our Societies".

Our afternoon session was closed with singing and prayer by Rev. H. C. Hoeksema.

At six o'clock we entered the banquet room. It was beautifully decorated and we were served a very delicious meal. The center of all the decorations pointed out our 25th Anniversary.

Enthusiastic singing led by Mrs. Hoeksema began our evening session. Our chairman, Rev. De Boer opened with prayer, after which members from Sioux center and Rock Valley societies read Historical Sketches of their congregations. Sioux Center was organized in 1926 and Rock Valley in 1928. A vocal duet was given by members from our Hull society.

Highlight of the evening was Rev. De Jong's inspirational address on "Your Presentation Before the Lord". Our speaker brought out that the elect shall be presented before Christ in glory—1st, holy; 2nd, unblameable; 3rd, unreprovable. Ours is a rich heritage and therefore we must continue in the faith and the keeping of the Gospel. God will unite all things by Christ. Is this a theory with us or is it a living confession? This Presentation is not an automatic thing. The elect should have their eyes fixed on it. In the day of Christ's coming we shall be delivered from all sin and shall never be able to part from that faith. He reconciled us to present us holy, unblameable and unreprovable. Do we believe, confess and live it? Let us in our societies study that Word and hope for the Promise of that Gospel.

Next a member from Sioux Center society read a poem. Then we had a debate, topic of which was "Resolved:
Television is Beneficial for our Youth." Affirmative speakers were two members from Edgerton, and Negative speakers were two members from Hull. Our affirmative speakers brought out that with television we should not fail to see God's glory in man's wisdom. They pointed out that we have to use our willpower with it just as with the radio. And also that it is a great test to our faith. Our negative speakers pointed out that with the television set man misuses the wisdom given him by God. They pointed out that it would be more of a temptation to listen when we saw the exciting shows.

A mixed quartet from Edgerton then favored us with two selections.

Our evening session was closed with remarks by our Chairman and prayer by Mr. Wm. Huiken. When we left our hearts were filled with gratitude to God for having been our Guide these 25 years and it is our prayer that He may continue to bless us and increase us spiritually and also in number.

Christine Broek,
Reporter.

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YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETY — Fourth Church, Grand Rapids
1st Row, left to right: Connie De Hoog, Anne Yonker, Hilda Kuiper.
2nd Row: Shirley Hager, Jean Hager, Betty Wiersema, Joanne Wiersema (secretary).
3rd Row: Richard Heys, Gladys Ponstein, Claray De Hoog, Mary Meulenberg, Chris Haan.
4th Row: Jim Veldman (Treasurer), Andy Leep, Henry Kuiper (vice-sec'y-treas.), Ray Elzinga, Fred Monsma, Mr. P. Luyk (Pres.)
Religious Beliefs of Youth.

This is a title of a book which tells of a survey made by Social Scientist Murray G. Ross. This survey was made by sending eight-page questionnaires to American youth from the ages 18 to 29, including Protestants, Catholics, and Jews. Nearly two thousand replied to these questionnaires. The conclusion of the author is given in his own words, “that most young people have a passive feeling about religion, and are confused about its place in their lives.” It is further stated that Ross found, “that almost three-quarters of the people questioned do not feel that their individual lives are very important in the larger scheme of things... Few share deeply in the life of a group dedicated, and actively devoted to the highest goals of mankind.”

First of all our interest is immediately drawn to such a book because it concerns the religious beliefs of our fellow Americans. Still more interesting it is that this concerns the youth who presently shall become future American parents.

In the second place we can be still more disappointed in the results than the author. Or rather it confirms our own opinion, the opinion of many of our own youth who have come into contact with American youth in the armed forces and in the daily contacts that we all have. It is almost impossible to obtain accurate information of the country as a whole from results of a questionnaire. That is true of any information we would desire, but especially true of information regarding the religious beliefs of Americans. The only value that such a book has is to give us some answers about some individuals' religious experience. For we notice immediately that only about 2,000 replied to the questions. If the percentage of these shows, for example, as is given in the book, that about three-quarters of them believe that the Bible is the revealed word of God, that less than fifty percent went to church once a Sunday, that less than half prayed daily, then we cannot conclude that the percentage of American youth is anywhere near such percentages of the two thousand who answered. It is to be very readily seen by anyone that among those who did not answer, the percentage of those who are at all religious is very small indeed. It is to be understood that those not interested in religion would also lack the interest to answer the questions.

This provides us with questions about our own Protestant Reformed youth life and it also gave me an occasion to drop a few comments about our “mission”.

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REV. L. DOEZEMA
Bellflower, Calif.
Our Mission.

This is to be interpreted in the deep and broad sense of our task in our American world.

First of all it implies that we all, and especially our youth must become conscious of our Christian principles with respect to this life in relation to the life to come. Together with our calling to become conscious of our principles is implied our calling to live and confess these principles and seek to have them made known wherever it pleases the Lord to put us. That includes all our personal and collective work, prayers, gifts, and labors, in our churches also.

In this connection I want to pass on some interesting remarks that I heard from a Dutch immigrant couple whom I visited last evening and stayed with till past midnight. This well-informed couple who came from the "Hervormde Kerk" in the Netherlands about two years ago began to visit our services a month ago. The interesting way that they heard about our church cannot be told now. But in the conversation about our calling with respect to politics they made this remark. In the Netherlands everyone concerns himself with politics. The school children are even able to express themselves about important subjects. But after coming to America it struck them that the Netherlander does not have an understanding of what he is talking about. He has no world conception.

This remark may offend some of our Netherland brethren, but I pass it along as a remark of a fellow Hollander with-
Some Pertinent Questions

The word pertinent signifies proper, appropriate. I will bear in mind, therefore the occasion which is a gathering of Christian, Protestant Reformed Young People. In classifying these questions there is some arrangement and limitation necessary. If that were not done there would be no end to the possible pertinent questions that might be asked. Also, because there must be order in all things, even in asking questions, I have determined on the following order in presenting these questions to you this evening.

First, I shall ask questions that pertain to your personal life in relation to God. These are first because they are most important. Secondly, questions that pertain to your relation to the Church in which God gave you a place. Thirdly, questions pertaining to your life in the society to which you belong, or ought to belong. And lastly, I shall ask questions that pertain to your personal life outside of the Church and the society.

With reference to the questions pertaining to your personal life before God. These are most important because our life before God determines all the other aspects of life. Under this heading I might ask many questions, but I will limit myself to just two.

Do you pray? I mean do you know,

in your life in relation to God, in the first place the need of particular times when you seek God’s face in the true spiritual sense of the word? When you not only seek, but find His fellowship. That often takes time. It is quite impossible in our strenuous life to just jump out of the world into the inner closet and find God. That means that there are in your life moments, times (shall I say Hours?) that you devote to being alone with God. That is what I mean when I ask the question, “Do you pray?” I don’t doubt that you pray, but do you in that sense of the word lead a life of prayer?

In the second place, whether under the influence of this seeking and finding God’s face at stated times, God is in all your thoughts. That ought to be the result of hours of fellowship with God. That God is in all your thoughts. Is God in all your thoughts? That is, wherever you be and whatever you do and in whatever company you find yourself. You will have to admit not only that this is a pertinent question, but is extremely important for our whole practical life as long as we are in the midst of the world, that God is in all our thoughts, that we never forget Him. If God is in our thoughts we will cease from doing, or let me rather say, refrain from doing many things that we do when He is not in our thoughts, and we will do many things that we fail to do when God is not in our thoughts.

The second question under this heading

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This is a summary of a talk given by Reverend H. Hoeksema the evening of February 4, 1936. The title of this article suggests our motivation in publishing it.
is this: (under the heading pertaining to your personal relation to God): Do you read the Bible? Now, of course, if I leave the question in a general form there is no one here that will say no. I don't mean it in that way. I don't mean whether you read the Bible in your family worship in the home. I do not even mean whether you study your Bible. It is very possible to go through the routine year after year and it is even possible (I know that has been my experience) to study the Bible without reading it. It may seem strange but it is possible to make the Bible the subject of our earnest study and investigation without reading it. I mean, do you have times when you are all alone, that you pick up the Holy Scriptures because you feel the need of your soul to have God speak to you? That is something else than merely studying and explaining it, which by the way is very good. There should be times when we turn to the Word of God for the purpose of having it speak to us and thus having it work in us. You know the Bible is not a scientific book but above all it is the fountain of the water of life and it is the bread of life. Do you spend times, moments, with the Bible alone and place yourself before the Scriptures in order to let the Word of God speak to you for your spiritual nourishment, comfort and assurance? You must answer, of course. I can only ask. The second group of questions, I said, concerns the relation which you sustain to the Church in which God has given you a place and name. Also that is extremely important and I am sure that its importance is not always realized as it should be. I can tell that by many indications. The question is, what is your personal relation to that particular Church in which God gave you a place; and God gave you a place in that particular Church in which you are a member, whether by baptism or otherwise. The particular Church is the Protestant Reformed Church. Now that it is important to ask ourselves a few questions with regard to it, is first of all due to the fact that the Church is essentially the body of Christ; that there are in this world many institutions that claim to be manifestations of that body of Christ; in other words, there are many Churches. That among these many Churches there are many that have totally departed from the truth and are not worthy of the name of Church and that there are just as many, I dare say the majority, that have largely departed from the truth. According as the Church departs from the truth in its confession and conscious knowledge of the truth, the Church has departed from Christ. Now, it is your calling that you take a conscious stand with respect to the question, to what Church you must belong. You cannot let that question be determined by accidentals. You may not let it be determined by circumstances, by someone else, by friendships, fellowships, or maybe by development of the course of your history. You cannot. You must—it is your duty personally to be a member of that Church of which you are convinced that it is the purest manifestation of Jesus Christ in the world. If you don't you
help and aid and abet the false Church in its development.

Now, with a view to that I am asking a few questions. In the first place, are you, as far as it may be expected of you, developing in the direction of being a member of the Protestant Reformed Church by conviction? Is your answer perhaps that it is merely the way it happened and it may change any time perhaps? or would you say, "No, I am a member of the Protestant Reformed Church because of the conviction of my heart". That is an important question. And there are a few questions that are intimately connected with it. First of all the question, of course: are you acquainted with the truth as God has entrusted it to our care and are you developing in the direction of becoming acquainted with the truth, or do you think it sufficient that the minister and consistory and a few others are acquainted with that truth? Do you know the truth? In the second place, do you know its history? In the third place if you are by conviction a member of the Protestant Reformed Church, do you love that Church or do your love probably spread to many other Churches. Under that heading one more question: Do you attend the services which God has instituted, and do you attend them as you should? How do you prepare for the services? Perhaps by being someplace where you ought not to be until late Saturday night? I heard recently that such was the case with some of our people—bad preparation for the services on Sunday morning. Do you then so plan to be in places until late Saturday night and then probably sleep as long as you can on Sunday morning and hurry through preparation and then come to church; do you expect that in that way you are fit to meet God and worship Him and seek His truth? When I ask whether you are properly attending services, I mean, do you before the service prepare yourself for the service in prayer? Do you pray for yourselves, for me, who am called to bring to you the Word of God. Do you pray for yourselves and for the influence of the Word of God upon your heart? And when you attend services and God has heard your prayer, what do you do when you come out of Church? Does the Devil wait outside of Church to pick away the seed that has been sown, and is your first concern to speak about the things of the world, or do you talk about the things that pertain to God's kingdom, about the truth, about the preaching, about the Word of God? Those are questions concerning the Church which you must ask.

The third group consists of questions that pertain to your relation to the society, and I group those questions into two classes and address them to those who don't and those who do belong to the societies. So let me ask first of all, do you belong to a society? If you don't, my question is, "why not"? Do you have a good reason—and I mean by good reason, a reason which you can give before the face of God. Are you sure that your reason for not belonging to a society is not that your interest in the discussion of the Word of God and things
pertaining to your spiritual welfare is lax? You see it is not important in itself whether you do or do not belong to a society; but it is rather an important matter whether your failure to belong to a society is to be accounted before God. It would be rather sad don't you think so? if you would examine yourselves and ask the question candidly that you find the reason why you don't belong is that you have no interest in the discussion of the Word of God. What do you do and where are you when our societies meet? Are you quite sure that it is not because you have no interest in the fellowship with your own people and that perhaps you have more interest in the fellowship of others. Are you quite sure that that is not the case? If you do belong to a society, do you attend every time you possibly can? When you are a member you have the duty to do so; do you feel that duty? There is nothing worse for society than when it has members on the books and not in the meetings. That is disheartening; discouraging, paralyzing. So that the question is an important one: are you there every time, whenever you can be present? In the second place, when you are present, are you prepared? In other words, do you come to the society meetings to give as well as to receive and to take? Do you know that the two are inseparable? Do you know that you cannot expect to receive if you do not give and put forth no effort to give? If you make no preparation or study of the portion of the Word of God that is discussed, if you are never ready when your turn comes to deliver something for the program, do you know that it is absolutely impossible that you should receive anything? You sometimes hear our men and women say, "there is nothing to society, you don't get anything out of it"; let me turn around and ask, "do you bring anything there?" Society is not something that gives you something; society is as rich as the sum total of the efforts of its members. It is not an institution outside of its members; a society is you and society benefits you according as you make it, and is as strong and rich as you make it, and it fails to give according as you fail to do your share.

Finally, the last group of questions concern your life in the sphere outside of Church, of the society, that is, as I said what in general we might call the world. Now you all live more or less, to a greater or smaller degree in the world. You cannot escape it; you must be in the world. Some come more closely in contact with the world, others less. But you live in the world; besides you live in the home, (you have your leisure time). You have your friends, companions that are necessarily related to you as members of society. So in regard to that broad life, I am going to pick out a few questions. Here the questions are many, but I am going to limit them to three or four.

In the first place, in that world, wherever you may be, do others know that you are a Christian? Not that you belong to a certain Church and go to Church on Sunday, but is your conversa-
tion and walk in that broad world such that you leave the testimony of Christ, or are you unfaithful and maybe worse than silent. Do others know that you are a Christian because you let them know it in your conversation and walk? That first of all. In the second place, what do you do with your leisure time. You have a good deal of leisure time. Let me pointedly ask that question. Which are your recreations, your amusements, as they are sometimes called? An important question, because the amusements reflect the state of your soul and reflect back upon your soul. They influence you. You are not found in worldly places, are you? It is not true of you what we sometimes hear said of others, to their shame, that you attend dances, movies, and parties of all kinds, and that you spend your God-given moments in the service of the flesh. Let me connect that question with the very first question I asked: do you pray? Is God in all your thoughts? Answer that question in this connection.

In the second place, I can make that question pointed by asking: what do you read? Do you read stories—very well, I have no objection to them—I do too sometimes. I think it is well occasionally to read a story, providing it is a good story. It gives you relaxation just to stretch yourself and abandon yourself to a good story. But is that the rule? Do you also read that which is to the upbuilding of your spiritual life? For your growth in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord? Amusements and reading make a deep impression upon your souls and you are living in the period of formation and development in which you still are impressive and to a certain extent passive. Under what influence do you subject your young minds and souls, whether by amusements or reading?

And finally, my last question is this, who are your friends? Your companions? The companions which you choose, also your friends, reflect upon your own attitude and personal life as I have tried to put it before you in these questions. One of the Reformers said, “Tell me who your friends are and I will tell you who you are”. Who are your friends? When you choose friends and companions do you bear in mind your God-given place and the truth that has been entrusted to you? And not only does the choice of your friends reflect upon you, but your friends influence you just as you ought to influence your friends. Are you the companions of them that love the Lord and love His truth, or is your fellowship in the midst of them that love the world? You will have to admit that you will have to answer them—I could not. But they are questions that ought to be in your mind and conscience. Labor with them and sincerely answer them before the face of God.

Habits are at first cobwebs, then CABLES.
—Spanish Proverb.
The Concealed Plant

"The very act of planting a seed in the earth has in it to me something beautiful. I always do it with a joy that is largely mixed with awe. I watch my garden beds after they are sown, and think how one of God's exquisite miracles is going on beneath the dark earth out of sight."

—C. Thaxter.

Again seedtime has arrived! An instinctive urge arises within the city dweller as well as the tiller of the soil to plant those small granules which contain the embryos of the prospective crops and flowers. How difficult it is to realize that amazing transformation which takes place: from a little seed to a lovely fragrant flower; from a handful of miniature plants encased in hardened shells to an entire harvest of grain! Never will we cease to wonder at this marvelous development in the plant kingdom.

Perhaps, your curiosity has been aroused when you plant your seeds as to their structure and latent possibilities. Externally the seed is covered with a protective coat called the testa, which is generally very thick and tough. The testa protects the delicate embryo within from adverse weather conditions and drying out. Upon closer examination with a hand lens you will notice a scar which indicates the place where the seed was formerly attached to the stalks. At one end of the scar you will find a minute opening through which the inner plant breathes and drinks. This little pore is called the micropyle.

Within every seed is a miniature plant consisting of a root, a stem, and a bud. A supply of food consisting of fats, proteins, and carbohydrates occupies most of the space within the seed and thus enables the small plant to get a start. Approximately 50 percent of the moisture is removed from the seed during the process of ripening. This dehydration preserves the seed and retards the growth processes until Spring.

When the temperature rises and the spring rains descend the seed awakens. The moisture penetrates the small opening and causes the embryonic plant to swell. The rapidly distending cells of the embryo use the food stored within the seed and obtain oxygen through the breathing pore. As the embryo enlarges it ruptures the water soaked seed coat—its winter garb—and sends its little roots into the earth.

Greater than the marvel that each small seed contains a wee plant is the fact that each seed consistently reproduces its kind. A zinnia never produces a sweet pea. Why not? Because in the beginning God established a definite law that everything should bring forth after its kind. Surely, all of plant life testifies...
of the Creator's design in reproduction. Microscopic examination would reveal that the individual cells of the minute seed plants contain a definite number of small bodies called chromosomes which determine the characteristics of the new plan. These chromosomes are inherited from the parent and cause it to resemble the plant which produced it—therefore, it would be impossible for the zinnia to produce a sweet pea.

Protected through the wintry blast
By providential plan divine;
Lies hidden in this tiny nest
'Til rains descend and sunrays shine,
A tiny plant so frail, so fair
E're to us a wondrous sign!

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--- Gifts ---

Holland Ladies Soc. (Fuller Ave)....$10.00
Mr. M. Van Antwerp ............... 5.00
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Miss Thelma Jonker
1210 Wealthy St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Mich.

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THE WORD OF GOD

Thy Word, O Lord, so pure and sweet
Is as a lamp before my feet,
A light upon my way;
It shows me who Thou art for me.
Tells me what I should be for Thee,
Corrects me when I stray.

I: tells me how in wondrous love
Thou hast sent the Saviour from above,
Thy well-beloved Son;
How He, announced by angel song
Yet served and labored with the throng,
Which through His love He won.

It tells me how His foes laid wait,
A traitor bound to give them aid,
How on the cross He bled;
How the accursed death He died,
His Father's presence was denied,
That I be freed from death.

I thank Thee, Lord, that I a man know,
That Thou wouldst thus Thy love bestow,
To draw me unto Thee;
Accept me gracious Father-God,
For Jesus' sake whose precious blood,
Has cleansed and set me free.

Rev. H. Vander Ploeg
San Jose 10, Calif.

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This book is the second prize winner in Zondervan's International Fiction Contest. It is a story that was supposed to have taken place in the time of Christ. Mara, a beautiful Jewess, is a concubine of Herod, loved by the king but hated by his jealous and ambitious wife Herodias. Through Herodias' influence she is sent from Herod's palace to Jerusalem, where she meets and learns to love Judah, a follower of John the Baptist. By clever and cruel scheming Herodias brings Mara and Judah to intense suffering and terrible shame. Mara finally comes to Jesus and finds healing for her soul and cleansing from her shame in His words, "Your sins are forgiven." Judah is also healed by Jesus from the madness to which his suffering had driven him. However, their earthly troubles are not yet over for Herod still holds power over them. In the end, Herod's power is broken and they escape together from a gruesome and fearful death to a life of love and freedom.

The story is easy to read and holds the reader's interest to the last pages. The author states in the foreword that although the novel is not a true historical novel, she has attempted "to preserve the historical sequence of events and to portray the life of the period." Whether she has succeeded in portraying the life of the period, I cannot judge, but to my mind her success is questionable. In my opinion the writing of a story such as this which presents the life and times of Christ to the readers but which is so imaginary and fictitious is not commendable. Although the author may have kept the historical sequence of events as found in the Bible, she leaves a distorted picture of these events in the minds of the impressionable readers. The picture of Jesus does not deny His divinity, nor does it positively present it. He is presented as one who exerted a strange power over the people and who brought peace of soul to those in suffering and shame as Mara was.

From simply an entertainment point of view this book will satisfy the average reader. As a desirable addition to one's library its recommendation is to be questioned.


This Book is called an historical novel. The story begins with the birth of Grandmother Thrilby on January 26, 1837 and takes the reader through her childhood,
courtship, marriage, motherhood, and grandmotherhood with more or less scarcity of detail until it leaves him with Grandmother at the age of nearly one hundred years, the final chapter in her life nearly finished.

As the author tells the story of Grandmother Thrillby he also acquaints the reader with the history of Michigan from the time it became a state on January 26, 1837, through its subsequent development and progress until the 1930's. Some of the Civil War which occurred during Grandmother's courtship is touched upon, and the step of progress of the Industrial Revolution are mentioned with almost as much detail as are the highlights of Grandmother's life.

The fact that the author tries to cover so much history and so many events in a book of 224 pages of average-sized print gives one an idea of what this book is like. It is interesting and romantic, although sketchy, from an historical viewpoint, but as a novel it lacks plot and intrigue. Its Christian background lacks the positive strength of our Reformed ideals.

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A big day for our Churches . . .

A Big Day For YOU!

25th Anniversary Field Day
Jamestown Spring Grove
Wednesday — June 21
A Summer Youth Camp

Debate given at Fuller Ave. Young Men's Society

(Affirmative):

The subject for this time is resolved: that we should have a Christian Youth Camp for our own. First, I think it might be well for me to define what I mean by a youth camp of our own. By this I mean a summer camp supported and maintained by our churches for the use of our young people up to the age of fifteen or sixteen years. To prove that we should have such a camp, I would like to show its necessity and possibility.

This whole question hinges upon what our young people are to do with their spare time during the summer. So far, parents have been mainly negative in their solution to this problem. Because of the many evils of the world of today, parents instruct their children not to go to certain places and not to do certain things. Parents have not, however, established anything on a church-wide scale in the way of a positive solution to this problem. To be sure, there are societies' catechism classes, and Sunday School classes during the school terms, but all of these cease meeting during the summer months. I think, then, that the operation of a youth camp of our own during the summer months would be a positive solution for some of this spare time.

The way things are now, for a large part of the summer the young people are in contact, at least to some extent, with other young people who have no positive Christian background. Such companions often show disrespect for God in their speech and actions. This does not have a bad effect on those who have firm Christian principles, but on the weaker ones this is sometimes disastrous. Also, in their relations with such people, Christian young people often hear of movie attendance and other worldly amusements. I do not say that the mere knowledge of such places is wrong, but sometimes young Christians, because of this knowledge start going to such places. Close contact with the world is always dangerous, even though not always fatal, and should be avoided as much as possible. I think that through a youth camp of our own we could not only avoid some unnecessary contact with the world but also prepare the young people for other contacts with the world.

A youth camp of our own would not only help solve the spare time problem, but would also be very beneficial for the young people. In such a place, in as far as it is a Christian youth camp, a good Christian atmosphere would prevail. There would be no profanity or enticing talk of worldly amusements. This atmosphere would be positive and would give a positive, Christian approach to work and play. Such an atmosphere would be conducive to greater self-expression by our youth on spiritual matters. Such a youth camp would also be a very fine training place for the
young people. The camp life would be regular with respect to certain tasks. Thus the young people would be taught the value of order in life. They would understand better that life is not all play and no work. At the camp the young people would also receive training in sports and handicraft. In this way they would gain skill in the use of their hands. Many of the young people would find an awakened interest in some of these things and take them over as hobbies or pastimes. This would then be a positive solution for the use of some of their spare time.

But, you may say, aren't you picturing this too idealistically? Don't you realize that things won't work out that way in practice? To this I must say, yes, I am picturing this as it would be if we had conquered our sinful natures. I realize that the extent that the old man of sin still rules, the Christian atmosphere and the instructiveness would be lacking at the youth camp. But, even though this is true, the young people would still be in the company of Christians and who can deny that this is much better than the company of the world? I am convinced that a Christian youth camp would be very beneficial to our young people. I realize that although I have shown that a Christian youth camp of our own is necessary and would be beneficial, I must still prove that it is possible and practical to have one. I realize that the erection and maintenance of a youth camp would cost much money and need much labor and care. This does not mean, however, that we do not have the resources to meet this demand. The largest resource at hand is the young people themselves. After all, this matter directly concerns them and I am sure that they would all be willing to help in every way that they could. The collecting of finances could be taken care of largely by them, especially by the older ones. I am sure that the money would be forthcoming since their parents are as deeply interested in the way they spend their time as they are. Much money could also be saved by the young people by doing as much of the manual work connected with the building of the camp as possible themselves. Surely, this would mean work, but then, look what it's for!

In conclusion I would only like to say that since a youth camp is necessary, since it would be very beneficial, and since it is possible to have one, why the delay? Let's remedy the situation.

Marvin VanderWal.

(Negative):

When this subject was assigned to me by the program committee of the Young Men's Society of Fuller Avenue, I was glad that they assigned to me the negative side of it. I was glad, because I am not in favor of a Summer Youth Camp for Protestant Reformed children. And I am not in favor of a camp of this kind for three reasons. They are: one, because I believe that it is not practical from a financial point of view; and, secondly, there are other needs which in my opinion are far greater; and, finally,
there is a great potential danger in an organization of this kind.

Now you must all realize that there would be quite a number of problems involved in a project of this sort. First, we would have to secure an ideal camp site. Land in these days is rather expensive. I understand that there is a tract of land available now on Lake Michigan, but which is priced at $45,000, and that would only be the beginning. We would still have only the site; we would also need buildings on it. For instance, we would need a dormitory, or cabins, and maybe a recreation building. We will play all our games etc. outdoors. Yes, but what about those days on which it rains, or on which there is other bad weather. I could very well conceive of the possibility that this project would cost well over $100,000. From this point of view, I say it certainly is not practical. If we have to work almost three years even to be able to start to build an eight-room school, how can we expect to have a Summer Youth Camp?

And this brings me to my second reason why I am not in favor of a Summer Camp. I believe that the cause of our own Protestant Reformed School for education in the way of the truth as we have been privileged to receive it from God, is greater by far than the need of a Summer Youth Camp. We should all be willing to do, and that is our duty to do that which we promise when we present our children for Baptism before the Lord. And certainly we ought to most enthusiastically from the point of view of Prov. 22:6: "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." If some of us would have done this in the past, maybe the children would not have departed. That is why I say the need of our own school, both grade school and high school is far greater than that for a Summer Youth Camp.

It is also not necessary for us to have a Summer Youth Camp from the point of view of its purpose. You say to solve the problem of children playing with the world—get them together with only our own children. But, you see, a Summer Youth Camp would not solve that problem. These children would be sent to this camp for two weeks, but after that, where will they go? Out among the children of the world, the same place they were before. What would really have to be our aim for having a Youth Camp? Would it be our purpose to give these children physical training, in order to make them strong men and women in the future. Maybe this would be a good thing. Or would it be our purpose to supply them with a good environment and concentrate in character building? I am sure that this could never be our purpose. To my mind, our only purpose could be to emphasize the glory of God through His Word. You say, we could teach the children the glory of God in recreation. But you realize that we could never do this without the Word of God. We may even have to have lectures on this subject and classes with an instructor teaching them.

I said that this camp would not be necessary from the point of view of its
purpose. I believe that this is true because we have ample ways of instruction in our churches; the societies, Sunday School and Catechism classes. It is also not necessary from the point of view of recreation. I think that there are very few families that do not at some time of the summer go to a cottage at the beach, or have picnics at some place, and then these children are under the wing of their parents, and are much better off than under a counsellor at a Youth Camp. The opinion has been expressed that there is the possibility that a counsellor might be more strict than the parents in the home. But, you see that then it is the fault of the parents who are guilty of the sin of neglecting their children from the point of view of discipline. There are also the Sunday School picnics and the school picnics, and here the children are also under good leadership. I believe, therefore, that there are ample ways of recreation for the children.

Finally, there is the danger, and that is, it is so easy for us, as children of God, in the flesh to go along with the Spirit of the age. You know, that it is the tendency of the church today. There are men and women who will go bowling twice a week, but you do not find them at the societies, studying the Word of God with other of God’s children? No, I’m afraid that they are conspicuously absent. You find that throughout the church in the world today. And that is precisely the danger that we will come up against. We must always remember that we and our children have a corrupt and depraved nature. There is always that danger that our children will go to this camp for the sake of the recreation only. Even though you have speeches and lectures, when they go out of the lecture room, what they heard will be put out of their minds.

Because I believe that it is not practical and because we have greater needs elsewhere, and because there is a danger of going along with the spirit of the age, say that we cannot and should not have a Summer Youth Camp.

—Marvin Koerner.

... o ... 

Men in general judge more from appearances than for reality. All men have eyes, but few have the gift of penetration.

—Machiavelli.

... o ... 

Never argue at the dinner table, for the one who is not hungry always gets the best of the argument.

—Whately.

... o ... 

Noise proves nothing. Often a hen who has merely laid an egg cackles as if she laid an asteroid.

—S. M. Clemens.
1950 Convention Program
2nd Church — Grand Rapids

TUESDAY EVENING — August 22
Mass Meeting (8 o'clock)
Special Musical Numbers
Speaker: Rev. H. Hoeksema
“The Significance of the Power of Godliness”

WEDNESDAY MORNING — August 23
Registration
Get Acquainted Hour
Business

— LUNCH —

WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON
Special Number
Speech—“The Danger of Denying the Power of Godliness”
Business
Outing: (4 o'clock)

THURSDAY MORNING — August 24
Special Numbers
Debate
Finish Business

— LUNCH —

THURSDAY AFTERNOON
Special Numbers
Essay and Question
Singing

THURSDAY EVENING
Banquet
Musical Numbers
Speech—“The Possibility of Possessing the Power of Godliness”

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