

BEACON LIGHTS

**FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH**



February - 1954

See Back Cover for Special Offer!

BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOL. 14 FEBRUARY — 1954 NO. 1



Reminiscing

ROGER FABER
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Another convention has faded into the past. Our young people's federation has now enjoyed thirteen such conventions and enjoyed them as only young people of the covenant can. Our conventions, by the grace of God, have consisted of all the essentials of any convention, with the invaluable addition of covenant fellowship, and this one did, too.

There was ample opportunity for fun. Anyone who might have watched our activities for even a short time would have seen that good humor prevailed. Particularly at the outing everyone was engaged in games, sports and play. Here was a group slugging a softball around an improvised playing field, a little way off another group of laughing and shouting young people were stumbling over themselves in an attempt to propell an erratic volley ball across the net. The ring of horseshoes could be heard, the shouts and splashes of swimmers and a sudden burst of hilarious laughter from another cricle of young people exchanging stories. The spirit of fun should pervade a convention of covenant mem-

bers and 1953 convention was no exception.

There was sociability. East is east and west is west, but at convention time the twain confute the dictum of Kipling. Acquaintanceship and friendship budded and blossomed as usual. The pancake breakfast was an agreeable and effective "get-acquainted hour." There was a great deal of conversation as the famished delegates and visitors lined up for food. And those pancakes! They disappeared so fast that there was no time for talking.

Spiritual edification was another important constituent of the '53 convention. The speeches, essay and debate all supplied wholesome nourishment for the soul.

As always, the element of Christian fellowship provided the spark of distinctive character to the convention. If a delegate or visitor carried no other memory home with him, he will never forget that young people met in brotherhood and communion in the only real and imperishable unity, the unity in Christ. We cannot thank our covenant Father enough for this priceless blessing.

BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

Published monthly, except July and September, by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

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Subscription price: \$3.00
Entered as Second Class Mail at
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Beacon Lights issues are sent free to servicemen

Parents please note this and see that we have the proper address to avoid delay and insure arrival.

Send all changes of address to

Beacon Lights
c/o Miss Elsie Kuiper
1534 Godfrey, S. W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan



A Timely Text:

And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

— I Corinthians 13:13

A Timely Text:

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.

— I Corinthians 2:12

EDITORIALS

Of Faith and Charity

The well-known poet, Longfellow, once wrote that in this world a man must either be an anvil or a hammer. Perhaps without intending to be neatly summed up the philosophy of living for many a worldly man seeking recognition, success and even security. Either make things or break things. Beat or get beat. Life is a battle of wits. Martin Luther, however, said that Christian life consists in faith and charity. Faith is life to the child of God; it brings him to life and keeps him living. Charity is love to all men in God; patience and humility, longsuffering in the face of persecution and reproach.

Of Faith...

It can be said the grave danger our churches recently faced—of losing by default the precious heritage of the truth of God's sovereign unconditional plan of salvation and the wonderful gospel of a particular promise—has been met by our people and together, in God's own way and in His grace and strength, we have held to the faith. We have been led through the fire of heresy to the present. Though physically reduced in numbers we have triumphed in His cause. We are greatly increased in loyalty and devotion to the truth. Cleansed we are of the creeping, lulling effects of the opiate of a "conditional theology" and of dissension in our ranks. We stand in the fear of God's name. Dwelling together unitedly once again as the peculiar people of God we are revitalized, convicted anew to sound doctrine and with eagerness of purpose we are ready to witness for the

Name of our Lord Jesus, ready to give account to any man that asks of the hope that is in us.

Many indelible imprints have been made in the pages of church history by the recent controversy we as churches have endured. The Declaration of Principles has collated for future generations as well as for us the distinctive development that has marked our Reformed heritage these recent years.

Not of ourselves, but in the mercy of the Lord we have again, as the lineal Reformed church body, rejected all semblance of the errors of those who teach that faith, holiness, godliness and perseverance are not fruits of the unchangeable election unto glory, but are conditions (prerequisites) unto the realization of the promises of God. By word and by deed we have rearticulated the sound doctrine distinctively characteristic of Reformed people of God, that the assurance we have that we possess everlasting life in Christ comes to us through the marvelous work of the Holy Spirit without any "strings" attached. As churches of Reformed persuasion we are dedicated anew to the acknowledgment of the truth that the reality of redemption, sanctification, etc., comes to every believer through the instrumentality of faith, that wondrous, precious gift of God. Through much strife and trouble we have been brought to a richer, fuller comprehension of the beautiful, meaningful language of the Confessions. In contrast to the hollow, echoing clamor for a conditional temporizing of the walk of the believer the children of God have abundant new hope and joy and life in

the experience of "observing in themselves with a spiritual joy and holy pleasure, the infallible fruits of election pointed out in the Word of God—such as a true faith in Christ, filial fear, a godly sorrow for sin, a hungering and thirsting after righteousness, etc."

Of Charity . . .

Our faithful service to the Lord in these difficult days of our Protestant Reformed church struggle should also be reflected in the application of charity towards them that spitefully use us. This observation is calling particularly as the contents of the recent Cross Bill of complaint filed by the opposition becomes generally known (in the court case to retain our name and our properties) and as our Protestant Reformed people become aware of the vicious slander to the truth and to our persons which this document contains.

Many of us, perhaps, have still to learn of the tremendous scorn and ridicule directed towards our leaders and us in this latest umbrage. Still more of us have failed to realize in this latest development this group's complete repudiation of the fundamental issues which carried our cause into an organized existence as Protestant Reformed churches in 1924. It is almost incomprehensible, so far, in so short a time, have those who left us already travelled away.

What must we do about these things? How shall we testify against such wickedness? What is our calling? How speak of charity?

It is, of course, ridiculous to speak of 'love for the brother' as pertaining to those who have thus openly shown their disregard for the truth of God's sovereign grace and the principles of doctrine upheld for so long by the Reformed churches. The departure of many of our acquaintances into the path of apostasy and confused rationalization of the pre-

cepts of the gospel leaves no room for compromise and forbearance. Schism in the church calls rather for straightforward speech and discipline. Our primary duty towards these people is one of unequivocal denial of the distortions and false charges they make, when and as they make them. Adherence to and continual witness of our basic principles is our first line of defense. We must prayerfully attend to the worship of our God and to further study of the Scriptures and our Confessions and thus be armed with truth to face them who seek to cause our doctrine shame and hurt. Thus our continual witness round about us will be pleasing to the Lord and will be used by Him to testify against them. Our testimony for truth is love to all men in God; is charity unto those who spitefully use us.

Let us all, who have been kept in the faith pray much for those who have deliberately left the way of truth. Let us remain firm in our attitude of no compromise with them who would corrupt our doctrine. Thus for their own sakes as well as for the sake of truth we may be used of our Covenant God to bring them to the knowledge of their error. Such a forthright position, prayerfully and studiously upheld, and motivated by true love for all men in God, is not a sounding of brass and an off-beat tinkling of cymbals. Rather it is well-pleasing to the Lord our God who keeps His promises and who will save us, His people, to the uttermost

A. Heemstra

Contributing Editors please Note

THE PUBLICATION Committee has adopted a publication schedule for **Beacon Lights** which is to serve as a guide for all those connected with the work. This schedule should prove to be a defi-

nite help to those who are directly concerned with getting out each issue. It should ease the situation which always has confronted the editorial staff in the selection and processing of suitable cuts and photographs as those inflexible deadlines approach and are met each month.

This publication schedule will also give an assist to our regular and special contributors who from now on will receive postal card reminders concerning their material and its deadline date. Perhaps we might add another word or two about this copy deadline situation and its attendant woes for all concerned. Our present production schedule sets the 10th of the month as the deadline for material to be in the hands of our editors. Any material which reaches them later than the 10th does create unnecessary work and disturbs the planning of the issue. The need for systematic procedure becomes evident when we consider the work involved: editing, typesetting; photo-pasting, cutting, engraving; galley proofing; page composition and page proofing. These and many other little tasks have to be completed within this margin of time to get each issue into the hands of our readers on the first of the month. This situation can be particularly trying when two week-ends enter into the picture. With all this in mind we feel obliged to ask once more for the generous cooperation of all our contributors, and that they observe our publication rule of getting us the material on time.

The thought occurs again to us that we should most certainly be appreciative of the effort and energy our ministers and other contributors so willingly devote to the work of serving our people through the magazine we publish; and we are happy to be permitted the opportunity of working with them as together we seek the welfare of our own young people and the church we love.

How noble our task before the Lord . . . 'In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.'

—A. Heemstra

The Empty Forum . . .

Just as you would not have a fox be judge or jury at a goose's trial, those of us on the staff feel hardly able to appraise the results of our work with **Beacon Lights**. That's a job for others. And far better it would be if you, dear reader, would help along by telling us what you like or what you think you like in this magazine.

The Open Forum exists for the open discussion of current issues and as a voice for our reader's opinions. Although we are in the dark most of the time we trust the gradual progressive changes we continue to make as we go along—both as to format and content—are pleasing to the tastes and needs of those whom we serve.

But it would still be nice, we think, to occasionally hear from some of you during the course of the year. And what's more, friends, we won't even hold you to the old saw "Admonish your friends privately, but praise them openly". **The Open Forum** will print whatever you write, either-wise.

Perhaps the foregoing bit of whimsy (we really won't get many letters anyway) contrasts rather sharply with the serious, all-important aspect of our job in publishing **Beacon Lights**. We, too, must never, never overlook the primary function of this as well as every other kingdom endeavor: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

—Reprinted from the October 1950 **Beacon Lights**.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Living Out of Good Works

I

Introduction

The purpose of this column in the Beacon Lights, I believe, is to discuss the aspects of the walk of a Christian in this life. In this statement we admit already that the life of a Christian is somehow different than the life of the rest of the people in the world. The things that a Christian does, or the way that he does them, or the motive from which he does them is different than that of the people he comes in contact with every day. This must necessarily be true. It must be true because the Christian is a different person. He is fundamentally different than those who are of this world. It is foolish to talk about christian living to a person who has no interest in the revelation of God. And we must say before we go any further that the reason is this: God has given to His own elect people a regenerated heart, a new heart, and the blessings of the atonement of Christ in his heart by the operation of the Holy Spirit. In one brief word, God has given to His people LIFE. And that means because they are **living** creatures they differ from the people of the world in that these people are dead. The difference is between life and death, spiritual life, and spiritual death. We have that expressed in the title of this rubric: **Christian Living.**

And now the question is, how does a Christian differ in his living from the world? Or how does he walk while he is still in this world, that is different than the walk of others who are no Chris-

tians, who have not the new life of God?

In other words the question contains the whole idea of good works. And it struck me that this might be a good subject to write on because the question of good works is one that is very closely linked with the history of our churches in the past couple of years. Many times we do not even understand what good works are. It is my conviction that it is not enough to say what christian youth may do and may not do. For example: it is not enough to say that covenant youth may not go to shows, may not dance, may not drink to excess, may not read corrupt literature, etc. That in itself is true, but it is not sufficient to say these things. Nor is it merely enough to say that they are not, and give good and potent reasons why they are not the conduct of the christian.

The Christian Reformed Church has attempted to stop the worldliness in the church by passing synodical legislation against movie attendance, card playing and dancing. But that is not the solution of the problem as they see now also. You do not keep young people from worldliness by keeping the movie theater out of town, or evil literature out of the news stands. Worldliness is in a person's heart. If his heart is not right, no book of laws is sufficient to keep him from being worldly; if his heart is corrupt, no social cleanup is enough to make him or her a good person. And on the other hand, if his heart is alive by the power of God, if his heart is a new heart, and he has been renewed by the Spirit, he will have no desire to be worldly. If he is truly

spiritual the movie will have no attraction for him.

Now I know the problem is not quite as simple as that. But the point is that often times we do not understand what is meant by christian living. We do not know what is meant by good works. And worse than that, we don't understand the place of good works in the life of a Christian. We don't understand the relation between the salvation which is given him of God and the good works which he performs. And therefore it seems to me that before we can even discuss concrete things that covenant youth may or may not do, we had better understand first of all these important questions.

This involves such questions as: What is the relation between the law and the gospel? What are good works? From whence do they proceed? What is their place in the life of a Christian? Why are there admonitions in Scripture? Do we lose sight of man's responsibility if we believe that good works are the fruit of salvation? Is there any room for conditions here? What about the "if clauses" in Scripture? What is practical preaching? And many more questions.

At first glance it sounds rather doctrinal, doesn't it? But it is not my intention to be dogmatical in the strict sense of the word. These things are very practical. And also very necessary to understand christian living. We might as well not even write if we do not have a firm grasp on these essentials. And they are problems that are very real. If they were not so very real these very things would not be under discussion in our churches. And there would not now be a deep rift in the church if on these things there was perfect agreement. All these things we shall discuss. It is essential that we do, in the first place, because they are the very fundamentals of christian living; and in the second place, because we must

know these things if we are to defend the reformed truth intelligently over against those who have now denied it. It is obvious that these important questions are not understood by those who openly hold to conditional theology.

It is impossible that we solve all these questions entirely. It is rather that we shall only be able to say a few things about them in the hope that they will be more clearly understood. And that is possible only if we do it mutually. Therefore I would welcome any and all discussion in this subject that may arise. Write in what you think of these things. And if you violently disagree, the column is open to you at any time to express your opinions with the limited room that I have.

It is striking that discussion on the crucial points of the doctrinal differences (and I say doctrinal even though there are those who naively maintain that there is only a moral issue or a personal issue) in our churches always resolve themselves to these questions. That is evident from the speeches that were made by those who oppose us and by the writings in the Reformed Guardian. Therefore it would be profitable that we discuss them and thus prepare the way for a fruitful discussion on the question of christian living in all its concrete instances which beset us.

And it is important too, that as young people we know these things. For they are not the subject of conversation and discussion among theologians, but the vital matters of interest to all of us, that we may defend the truths of God's Word intelligently; that we may know the things that are under attack and see their importance, and thus be prepared to take our places in the church and in the covenant. Because when we know then we can preserve that truth in the generations to come.

HERMAN HANKO

TRUTH vs. ERROR

Introduction

Dear Reader:

In the form of this personal letter I am going to introduce myself to you and to this department of the Beacon Lights. The introduction itself is not to be of a personal nature for that would be neither desired nor necessary. I wish rather to introduce myself exclusively in the role of your editor of Beacon Light's Truth Vs. Error Department and therein reflect upon my own attitude toward and purpose in this assignment.

My readers will understand, I think, that it is with a sense of trepidation that I have agreed to edit this particular department. Herein we are to deal with "truth" and "error." Our task is to set forth the "truth" in a concise and lucid way for the purpose of instructing the spiritual and building up the faith. In doing this we will have to gainsay and refute error in the same concise and lucid manner. We shall have to place these two in juxtaposition in order that we may see the radiant beauty of "truth" in contrast to the horribleness of every form of error in order that by Divine grace we may embrace the former and cast from our hearts, minds and lives the latter. Truly, this is a great challenge at any time but most especially so in our present day.

This has been the prodigious task of the church throughout all ages. From it she does not shirk though she approaches it with "fear and trembling." Today we are living in the "last hour" and rapidly approaching the end of the ages when iniquity waxes worse and worse. Evidence of this is apparent to all but the blind. Error not only multiplies but it

becomes more subtil and deceptive than ever before. Whole houses are subverted by the many vain and unruly talkers and deceivers who propagate things which they ought not. (Titus 1:10, 11) Such is the reality of the last days. Over-against all this the "truth" must reverberate with emphasis and clear sounding tone. Our task is "to speak the things which become sound doctrine (Titus 2:1) and to exhort and convince the gainsayers." (Titus 1:9) With a sense of humble awe we embark upon this wonderful voyage.

It seems to us that the caption which appears at the head of our department is in need of a bit of clarification. As it stands it immediately suggests the figure of the militant. In the figure the "truth" is pictured as being on the offensive making its attack upon the defender "error." In actual life and experience the very reverse of this is true. It is the lie that makes its attack upon the truth. From the dawn of creation the truth has stood as an impregnable citadel in the midst of the world in which it has been ruthlessly attacked by the gruesome forces of error. The fact that "one can do nothing against the truth" (II Cor. 13:8) has not diminished the force of this incessant assault but has only made the battle more intense as the fury of error's protagonists is aggravated by their repeated defeat.

And the truth goes marching on!

Would we, perhaps, be more correct then in reversing the terms of this caption and speak of "Error Vs. Truth?"

Before answering this question let us also remember that we do not conceive of the truth as merely the "defendant". The truth does not take an apologeti

position in this battle. In the verbal aspect of her warfare the truth must not be looked upon as one who is compelled to give a defensive answer to every assault the lie makes upon her. The testimony of the "truth" is not negative and apologetic but is very positive and exposes the insidious nature of the foe that dares to attack her. In that light we may leave the caption of this department as it is by changing it we put the "truth" in a wrong light.

The "truth" is always first. She stands eternal. She is before error has existence. Her very presence posits the possibility of error. "Truth alone is paramount. Our emphasis, therefore, may not be to set forth "error" first as she creeps in to attack "truth" but our concentrated vision must be focused four-squarely upon "truth" alone. Truth we propose to see and unveil in her multifarious beauty and only then will we detect the ugly face of error. The truth then will not be presented simply as one that is interested in leading the battle against her foe but rather she will be portrayed as the "reality" that is gloriously adorned over-against all that is false, ugly, unreal and putrid. In that sense "truth" stands against error and in that way we shall humbly vision her that our appreciation for and attachment to her may increase.

In aiming at this objective we are mindful that most of the readers of our department are "covenant youth." This necessarily will have a bearing upon our writing. From this fact we may properly assume that you are deeply interested in the "truth" and that you put forth a concentrated effort to seek and know the truth. For such are the characteristics of covenant youth. They do not expend their time and strength in the pursuit of the vanities of this world but in the sphere of the church and through the means of societies they endeavor to build themselves up in knowledge of the truth.

Furthermore, to youth the truth has a very special, practical application. It is in these formative years of your life that you are often called upon to make decisions which in their very nature will have an important bearing upon the rest of your earthly life. Imperative it is, therefore, that you be guided in every decision by the truth and that the perverse forces of error be thoroughly combatted ere you render these verdicts. Our purpose in setting forth "truth vs. error" will be to assist you in making the right decisions that will bring present and future happiness and thereby give directive by which the pitfalls of error in which grief and misery prevail may be scrupulously avoided.

In accord with this it will be understood that truth and life are very inseparable. Truth is not an academic thing. It is more than a system of doctrine. It is "the way of life"! To depart from it is to perish. Conversely error is inseparably annexed to death. It is the sure way unto death. Error is not innocent blundering. It's not simply an intellectual miscalculation. It is more serious than that. It is the road to sure destruction.

Our department then could quite properly be captioned "Life Vs. Death" as well as "Truth Vs. Error" for the one is the practical implication of the other. To set forth "truth" is to set forth "the way of life". And to do this is to warn against "error", the way of death. Such is our sole aim. If we may succeed then in unveiling to you just a bit of the beauty, richness and glory of that way of truth and life, our department will have served a worthy purpose.

How shall the young direct their way
What light shall be their perfect guide?
Thy Word O Lord will safely lead.
If in its wisdom they confide.

Sincerely,

Rev. G. Vanden Berg

NATURE STUDY

"**THY WORD** is a lamp before my feet, a light upon my pathway." This word of truth by the psalmist is the key to our study of God's revelation in all things round about us. Scripture points out to us the marvelous workings of our sovereign Father. We learn of creation in the opening chapter of Genesis which tells us of the beginnings of this earth. Proceeding from this account, all the writers of Scripture are inspired to relate the natural and supernatural revelations of God throughout the ages. Moses tells of the burning bush as well as the heat of the desert; Samuel relates David's power in battle and ascribes his success to God; we read of Elijah's difficulties in the desert and his victory over the priest's of Baal on Mount Carmel; Job sees God's hand in his prosperity and adversity; David praises God for works of beauty, love, righteousness, and judgment; and Jesus Himself shows his disciples that He has power over the sea. Thus the Bible abounds with testimony of God's work in the forces of nature.

However, it might be wise to consider an entirely different idea about the origin, working, purpose, and end of this earth. First of all, it is wise because we should know what we are opposing; and secondly because we are inclined to unwittingly accept parts of our enemy's assumptions. This enemy or false philosophy is the theory of evolution.

In simplest terms Evolution can be defined as the theory which explains the origin and development of the earth, planets and living creatures. However, let me

say that this theory has never been proved and cannot be proved true. The worldly man bases his science on this theory and occasionally adjusts the theory to conform to his discoveries, but is unwilling to accept the facts of Scripture. It is pitiful that the unbeliever cannot prove evolution because he depends on it so much. He often cites evidences of evolution and offers them as "proof", but he must twist the facts.

The evolutionist's first assumption is which he cannot prove that there is no God. He rejects the idea of the supernatural and a being higher than himself, through his unbelief. It is true that we cannot objectively prove the existence of God, but we gladly admit that it is a matter of faith. If we can force the ungodly evolutionist to admit that his atheism is also a matter of faith, it will not be difficult to show him that he has no factual basis for his pet theory.

In order to give his theory a sound foundation, the evolutionist found it necessary to give an account of the beginning of things. Here he really got into trouble because he too found it necessary to start the history of the universe and life from nothing. It was contrary to his perverse nature to admit of a god who started all things so he had ascribe the beginning to chance. Most evolutionists believe that the first material was inorganic or dead.

Their third assumption is that this inorganic material evolved into an early form of life. Scientists have been trying to prove through many years that there was such a thing as spontaneous generation. They have failed and we can truth-

fully say that they will never succeed. They have cited many examples of apparent spontaneous generation but it seems that they prefer to speak of this as an unproven fact today and even will say that it is now impossible to create the favorable conditions which existed billions of years ago.

Accepting these three myths, they find it easy to account for the development of material and life as we know it today. It was the similarity between various animals and man which prompted early observers to connect them genetically. However, they find it impossible to develop another 'kind' from the existing 'kinds' as revealed to us in Genesis. They have trouble with "missing links" and even try to reconstruct fossils of bones to prove their theory. I think all of you have followed the papers recently and were heartened to see that much of this reconstruction has been declared and proven fraudulent.

Evolutionists do not limit themselves to the animal kingdom, but point to much botanical and meteorological 'proof' for their theory. It is easy to see that they point with pride to hybrid developments of flowers and vegetables, but they must admit that there has been no essential improvement that carries over from year to year. For instance seeds taken from hybrid corn revert to productions of inferior plants similar to one or more of the parent plants. We find more difficulty with their purported age of metals of the earth, however.

The meteorological argument has influenced some Christian scientists to admit a fabulous age for the earth. They contend that the earth was "waste and void" for thousands or millions of years. It may be possible, but there is every reason to believe that God has created our earth with these great reserves of metal and minerals and even with apparently different ages, simply to con-

found the wise. We must be extremely careful that we do not accept the subtle arguments of the evolutionist, for we must try everything with the light of scripture.

We need not apologize for our scriptural stand since we have a sound basis for our belief. We admit that we are creationists by faith and that this is also a wonder of God. Creation is the only answer to the wonder of existence because even life is a great unexplainable mystery to the unbeliever. We can answer many of the arguments of the scientist since we get our knowledge from scripture. For instance; similarity of the animals is evidence of only one thing to us, namely that one mighty creator planned and executed the formation of all things and used a similar pattern for all living things.

Thus we return again to the reason for our thoughts on this matter. We stand in an antithetical relation to the ungodly even in our study of natural phenomena around us. With scripture as our light, we shall never fall into the error of evolution which has no room for God.

DWIGHT MONSMA



MILITARY MAIL BAG

MR. EVERETT BUITER
RR 2 Box 120, Tinley Park, Ill.

Hello Fellows

BEACON LIGHTS is again being published. The Military Mail Bag is again looking for letters from you servicemen. We have received no letters for this issue so it will be filled with an introduction.

I should start by introducing myself to you as I now have the duty of taking care of your section in the BEACON LIGHTS. I am Everett Buiter and I attend the Oak Lawn church. I am a former serviceman being back in a civilian status for six months already. Being out of the Army now, I shall tell you a little about my life in the Army. I was taken into the Army on June 22, 1951, and received my training in Fort Sill, Oklahoma in the Artillery branch of the Army.

After six months in the service I was sent overseas. When I arrived overseas I was given a different type of training in Japan. It was in Track Vehicle Maintenance. The school was close to Tokyo. After finishing school I was sent to that place called Korea. There I spent 13 months of duty with an Artillery Battalion in the maintenance section.

It sure was a great joy in May of last year that I could go home again, which all you fellows are most likely looking forward to. It is wonderful to be home again and to be with the people that you love, to have christian fellowship together around the word of God.

Now to say a little something to encourage you fellows to write. We would like to see pages as full as they have been in the past. By the time you receive this issue of BEACON LIGHTS it will be long past Christmas day and New Year's day. Many of you were not home and wish you could have been there. There were also some that were able to be home for those days, and are back in camp again

or even on your way overseas. Where ever you were, we know that with God's help you did have a blessed Christmas.

We know there are a lot of fellows in the service and we at home are waiting to hear from you. Write anything you would like, about where you are, what you are doing, what you think of life in the service.

Maybe you are like some of the fellows that have written these lines before: "It has been in my mind to write BEACON LIGHTS for quite some time, so I'd better get busy," or "It's about time I should be writing a few lines again." Maybe you have just gotten into the service. How about starting out good, and write right away, then keep up the good work. There are many of you who would like to write. I am happy to be able to tell you that I am going back to the States to be discharged. Write us when that time is coming. Rotation is going on now more than it was a year ago. What ever is your place in the service we are ready to hear from you anytime.

The children of God in the service are always before great temptations. When all these temptations are before us we know that God is always near us, we must also be near him. Not that God's being near us depends on our being near to Him, for that He is near us, is all of grace, and therefore nothing in all the world can destroy it, not even our sin. He is always near His people, and that forever that nearness of God is experienced and enjoyed in the time of trial, is not by walking in the ways of temptation, but by walking away from the temptation of the world, and walking in the path of righteousness. May this be your prayer away from home and church. It surely is our prayer at home that you may walk in the ways of uprightness, that you may be assured that this is our prayer always.

"The Shield of Faith"

Post-banquet Speech

After a delicious banquet dinner and a brief recess we went into the auditorium of Fourth Church for our post-banquet activities. Rev. H. C. Hoeksema, the speaker for the evening, highlighted the evening by delivering a very well prepared, forceful and inspiring speech.

We were reminded by Rev. Hoeksema that in the figure of the Shield of Faith we have a further description of the full armed soldier of Christ. We were especially impressed with the fact and the infallible truth that the Lord **enables** and **calls** the soldier to the fight by His almighty Word and Spirit. We were further told that only the sword of the spirit is used in offensive warfare while all the rest of the armour of the full-armed Christian is used in defensive warfare. The shield of faith also falls into the category of a defensive weapon.

Rev. Hoeksema chose to treat his topic under the following points:

"The Shield of Faith"

1. What is it?
2. Why necessary?
3. How used?

Speaking from Holy Writ, we were told by Rev. Hoeksema, that the **Shield** is really God according to the saints of all ages. Behind God we may safely hide. We cannot possibly be harmed. This too according to divine providence.

We were reminded also, that the shield is called **faith**. Faith which is a means for our preservation. We were told that we must not understand faith in the Antinomian sense wherein the contention is that if we have faith we are freed from the obligations of the moral law. This idea is that we must sin exceedingly so that grace may abound. God forbid! In the true child of God there is no such assivity. This doctrine does not make

the child of God profane because the law is written by faith in the heart of God's covenant people.

When the question of what faith is confronted, I believe Rev. Hoeksema gave a very wonderful definition. Here it is.

1. Faith is a gift and **is gift of God alone**.
2. Faith is the spiritual tie by which God unites us to Christ and we live no more out of the old man but we live through faith out of Christ.

This shield of faith is further characterized by the fact that it looks away from self and looks to God. The shield also is a quenching shield which quenches all the fiery darts of the wicked one. The devil's attacks can be characterized further in a three-fold manner.

1. Deceptive attacks.
2. Attacks aimed at a weak spot in the spiritual life of the Christian.
3. Attacks which are destructive and dangerous.

The devil also uses means to destroy God's people. He, the wicked one, hides behind them but nonetheless works thru them. They are, to state a few:

1. The World.
2. Lie—False Doctrine, if possible clothed in garb of supposed truth.
3. Lust of the Flesh.
4. Violent means.—Suffering, death and imprisonment for Christ's sake.

So using all these means, we were told, that the devil attacks Young People according to their several characters and weaknesses. How true this all is and how wonderful and necessary it is that the true child of God be admonished of this and be admonished further unto perfect faith and obedience through Christ Jesus who has saved us to the uttermost.

Therefore we were told that we need a shield not because we want one by

nature for we would rather have the shield of the world which really is no shield. But we do need one and we take the shield consciously when God comes through His Word admonishing us. He comes to a believing heart who will do so.

And so we were told that we must exercise this faith. How?

1. Study the Word, the Holy Scriptures.
2. Through constant prayer.

We don't have to be afraid of the shield. It is our only **hope**. We must hide behind it and we do. We use it. How? We turn that shield into the path of the enemy to ward off all the fiery darts of the wicked one. What a heritage we have. What a glorious victory through Christ who has redeemed us by His blood using His means which he gives unto His elect children; **Faith**.

And how could a speech be more fittingly closed than by the reading and reciting of that glorious 4th stanza of our Convention Theme Song, Psalter No. 242. What a glorious, wonderful, saving truth it expresses for us the People of the Lord.

"All glory unto God we yield,
 Jehovah is our help and shield;
 All praise and honor we will bring
 To Israel's Holy One, our King."

Reporter — Agatha Lubbers



Summary of Convention Debate

ALICE REITSMA

Debates are fun for those who take part in them and for those who listen to them. And the debate to which we listened on Thursday morning at the Convention of our Young People was a very interesting one. Shirley and Ruth Dykstra upheld the affirmative on the question, "Resolved: that doctrinal controversy is advantageous for the Church of God," while the negative was maintained by John Bos and Herm Woudenberg.

The first affirmative defined the terms doctrine, controversy, and advantageous. Doctrine was defined as the teachings of a particular group, **doctrinal controversy** to oppose those teachings with arguments, and **advantageous** as favorable or profitable. The negative agreed to these definitions. The first affirmative also pointed out that it is essential for the Church to have doctrinal controversy since it is the only way in which pure doctrinal preaching will be maintained in the Church. The text as found in II Timothy 4:2 was cited as proof: "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine," and it was maintained that reproving and rebuking and exhorting would be impossible without doctrinal controversy.

Another point made by this speaker was that the Reformation brought about by Luther was certainly by means of controversy, and she challenged her opponents to prove that this controversy was not profitable. The challenge was met by the negative with a statement of agreement. They admitted that some doctrinal controversies are advantageous as in the case of the Reformation of 1517 when the church was corrupt, but the point they wished to make was that such controversies as the one which is splitting our churches at present is not advantageous



because our churches are not corrupt. They apparently were debating the proposition from the point of view of our present church strife only, and felt that they merely had to show that this present controversy which is taking place in our churches is not advantageous. They did this by pointing out how this controversy is hindering the growth of our churches since "you can't multiply by dividing," how it is disrupting the pastoral work in the congregations, the mission activities of the churches, how it jeopardizes the future of our churches, how it brings on financial burdens, how it causes friction and unpleasant relationships in families and among friends.

In answer to this the affirmative agreed that controversy and fighting for the truth will surely bring with it friction and suffering, but that we must not be afraid of this. Christ says, "Think not that I came to send peace, but a sword."

Rather late in the debate the negative made the point that they wished to substitute **conversation** for **controversy** and thereby maintain a pure church without all the serious implications of a split in the denomination. However, the point was not brought out strongly and clearly enough to offset the argument of the affirmative that **conversation** will necessarily lead to **controversy** if we are holding fast to the truth, and are willing to fight for it, putting on "the whole armour of God."

The five ministers present judged the debate and decided in favor of the affirmative. As is usually the case, the "real" debate took place on the side-walk in front of church after the meeting was dismissed. In that debate the speeches were not timed, the speakers did not address the chair, no judges' decision was rendered, and, of course, no summary was requested for Beacon Lights.

The Sword of the Spirit

Rev. M. Schipper

Rev. Schipper began his speech by relating the familiar story of the youth, David, who came before King Saul offering to fight Goliath. He refused the armor of Saul, preferring to fight with the weapons to which he was accustomed.

The point is that we cannot go forth to the battle to which we are called in any other armor than that which God himself prepares and gives us.

The topic is announced as **An Arm of Defense and Particularly of Offense in the Battle of Faith—The Sword of the Spirit.**

1. The Sword of the Spirit—The Word of God.
2. The Necessity for That Sword.
3. The Idea of Handling That Sword.

1. The sword is the word of God. Two words are used in Scripture for the Word of God. The one, **logos**, has to do with the thought or counsel of God, while the other refers to the expression of that idea. The sword of the Spirit is the word of God which is declared and also revealed to us. The center of that Word and revelation is Jesus Christ. The purpose of the word is to redeem us in Christ and to bring all things to his eternal glory.

The Spirit refers to the spirit of Christ who gives that sword unto his church. When this sword strikes it cuts in every direction. This is the Word of God, which is also a savour of life unto life and of death unto death.

2. It is this sword of the Spirit which we take as part of our armor. A man without a sword to fight against the enemy is himself liable to destruction. Without a weapon of offense his armor is incomplete. And indeed we do have a battle to fight, a battle wherein the enemy is described as three-fold: the devil, our

adversary; the world in which we live, with which we cannot make friends; our own nature, our greatest enemy.

We as Protestant Reformed young people have a specific understanding of the Word of God. We understand it in a richer, deeper, fuller sense than any other young people. God has particularly singled us out to receive the truth. Especially today in our churches is this sword challenged. We need this offensive weapon as we have received it of the Holy Spirit. Particularly do we need it in the light of our own history and history as it is being made today in our churches.

Only two things can bring this battle to an end: the day of our death or the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore put on the whole armor of God. Take up the sword of the Spirit by a living faith, believe it, and fight.

3. Being clad in armor and having a battle to fight still does not make one a soldier. He has to know how to use the weapons, how to handle the sword. God

has provided various media for the training of His soldiers.

1.) The preaching of the Word. God demonstrates the use of this sword through the preaching.

2.) Catechism. We are trained to handle efficiently the sword.

3.) Societies. These are the voluntary training camps of the covenant youth. Here we learn to use the sword to withstand every wind of doctrine that blows in among us.

Equipped with this sword, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. Christ has won the battle for us, before we even began the fight.

Rev. Schippers ended his speech by exhorting us "to take up this sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God. Learn it, know it, take it to your heart, believe it, live by it, and then die by it for yours will be the victory. No enemy can withstand the mighty Word of the Lord our God."

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