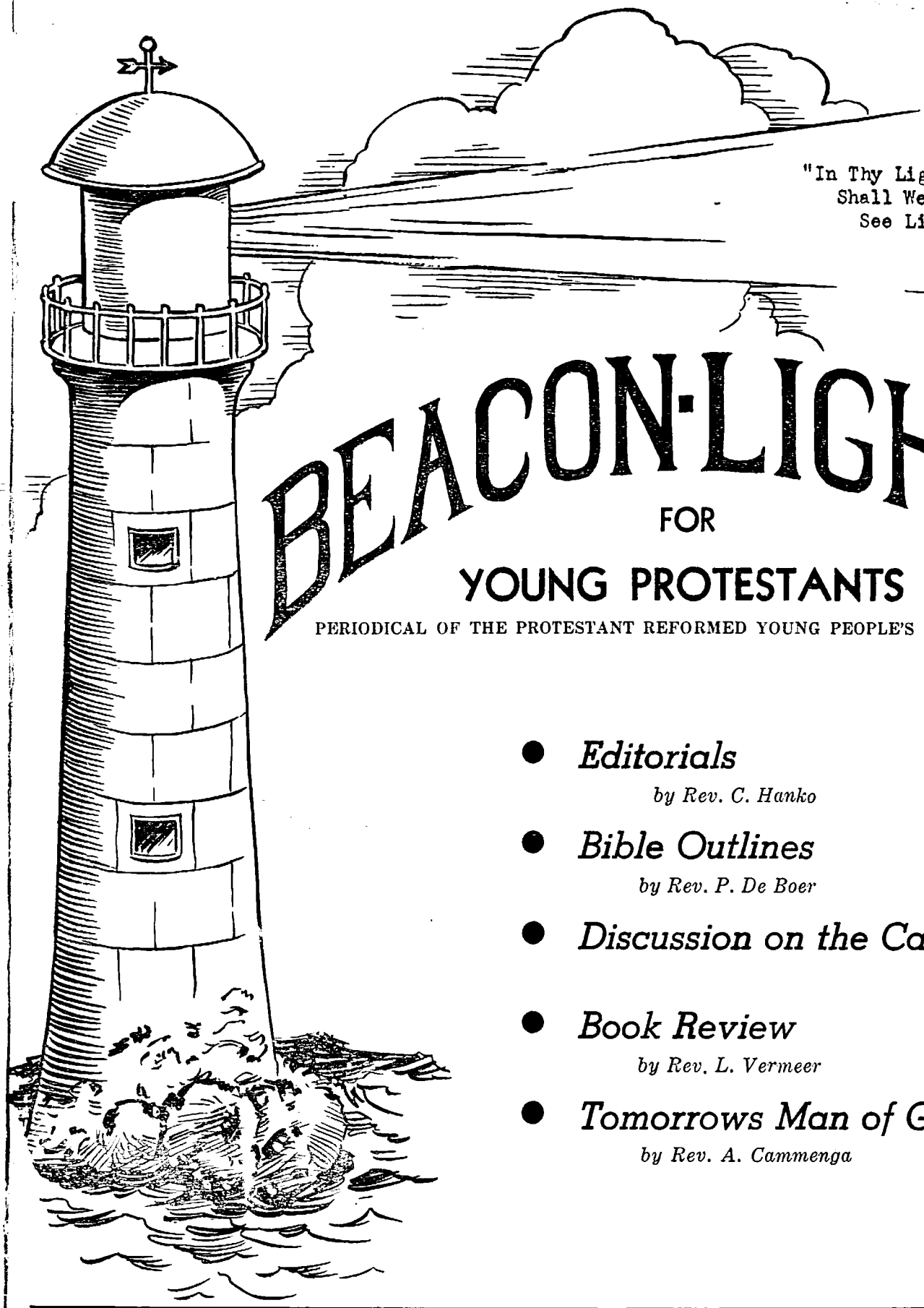

"In Thy Light
Shall We
See Light"

BEACON-LIGHTS

FOR

YOUNG PROTESTANTS

PERIODICAL OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEDERATION

- *Editorials*
  by Rev. C. Hanko
- *Bible Outlines*
  by Rev. P. De Boer
- *Discussion on the Canons*
- *Book Review*
  by Rev. L. Vermeer
- *Tomorrows Man of God*
  by Rev. A. Cammenga

Vol. I JANUARY, 1941 No. 1

BEACON-LIGHTS for Young Protestants

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MONTHLY PERIODICAL OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEDERATION

Vol. I JANUARY, 1941 No. 1

Editorials

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

The Publication Committee of the P. R. Y. P. F. takes great pleasure in introducing the first issue of our new periodical into your midst. *Here it is.* It means to them the fruit of concentrated effort put forth during the last few months to make this paper possible. the removal of what seemed at times to be insurmountable barriers, the satisfaction of having reached a certain goal. But we realize that it means far more to all the members of the young people's Federation. To you it is the first-fruits of the youthful, yet lively and ambitious organization it represents. Not 18 months ago the Federation was organized in South Holland, Ill. Not 5 months ago the second annual Convention was held in Grand Rapids, Mich. Today you have your own paper. And what this means toward filling the long-felt need in our young people's societies can only be surmised.

The appearance of this new periodical is in accordance with the mandate which the publication committee received at the last Convention. *A Stride Ahead.* The Federation went on record as being in favor of developing a Federation paper and laid this matter in the hands of its previously appointed publistitution in which the development of a Federcation committee to be carried out. This, in turn, is in complete compliance with the adopted Conation paper is mentioned as one of the anticipated means toward realizing its purpose. And that purpose, as you may know, is fourfold:

"1. To unite all Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies so that they may work in close unity and secure a sense of solidarity.

2. To seek the mutual edification of the members of this Federation and to strive for the development of talents as becomes Christian young people.

2. To strive to maintain our specific Prot. Ref. character with a united front.

4. To promote the welfare of the Prot. Ref. Churches in which we have a name and a place."

One stride toward realizing this purpose is made. And hereby *Beacon Lights* takes upon itself to serve this purpose.

Beacon Lights purposes to guide you on your course toward your goal. As an airplane pilot wings his way unhesitantly on his course by the sweeping rays of his beacon lights, so this paper designs to guide you on your way through this world of sin and darkness, that you may ever hold your course and unswervingly strive for your goal. Or, to use a more common, time-tried figure, as a ship at sea is in imminent danger of suffering shipwreck on some hidden shoal or treacherous rock unless the beacon lights guide it through the raging storm and murky blackness of the night, so Prot. *The Name.*

Ref. youth must be warned of lurking heresies and threatening temptations which so easily beset them.

The young men of today are the leaders of tomorrow. The young women stand on the threshold of womanhood. Soon your place will be appointed you, wherever God may have planned to use you. And you must be ready. Whether that be in the home, or in the church, or even in the midst of the wicked world, equipped you must be, thoroughly furnished unto every good work!

Prot. Ref. young men and young women have an especially high calling. To them is entrusted the maintenance of their Reformed heritage, the truth of God's Sovereign Grace, so commonly denied and consistently undermined in our time. That Truth cannot and may not perish from the earth, but must be carried on to the generations to come, even until the end.

May this periodical make its own contribution toward that high calling. May it actually be Beacon Lights for young Protestants.

Criticism Invited.

Beacon lights comes to you with no false pretenses. No one imagines that this is a finished product in the sense that the height of attainment has been reached. We would rather consider this the first efforts in "striving for the development of a Federation paper". Practically all those contributing toward this paper, with the exception of Rev. Hoeksema are fledglings in the work and must still profit by their mistakes. Besides, we anticipate expanding the paper with more and better departments as time goes on. Therefore we invite your criticisms. The publication committee cannot receive a better token of appreciation for its untiring efforts than a large "come back" of remarks and criticisms from all of our readers. Who knows but that we may soon be able to introduce the department of "Youth Speaks" in the succeeding issues.

A Word to the Parents.

Although these introductory remarks are intended for the youth of our Churches who have called this periodical into existence, I am nevertheless certain that many parents would turn away from scanning these pages with a look of disappointment if no single word were addressed to them. Parents are vitally interested in the welfare of their children and believing parents are especially interested in their spiritual welfare. They want to know and have a right to know what their children are reading. Therefore, in the conviction that parents too will examine these pages I want to enlist your services. We need your support in this new undertaking. Not your financial support; in fact, we prefer that young people find ways and means to take care of their own financial obligations as much as possible and that they thereby develop a sense of responsibility. They will appreciate this paper far more if they realize that it has cost them some sacrifice. But we do need your moral support and your prayers. You can cooperate by maintaining an interest yourself and by fanning the flames of youthful enthusiasm. Discuss the contents with your children; remind them, if need be, to read and make use of it in their preparation for the society; give it your wholehearted support.

In Conclusion.

Finally, we would urge all our readers to receive this periodical as your own. Read it and reread it, ponder upon its contents, turning them over in your mind to formulate your own opinions. Do not fail to use it before attending society in order that you may be prepared for the discussion. Discuss it with your friends and get them interested. Learn to use it to your best advantage. And, last but not least, make arrangements to preserve it for years to come.

And may God cause His blessings to rest upon these efforts for years to come and forevermore.

C. Hanko.

HE LEADETH ME

In pastures green? Not always; sometimes He
Who knoweth best, in kindness leadeth me
In weary ways, where heavy shadows be.
Out of the sunshine into darkest night;
I oft would faint with terror and with fright,
Only for this—I know He holds my hand;
So, whether in the green or desert land,
I trust, although I may not understand.

And by still waters? No, not always so:
Oftimes the heavy tempests 'round me blow,
And o'er my soul the waves and billows go.
But when the storm beats loudest, and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standeth by,
And whispers to my soul, "Lo, it is I!"
Above the tempest wild I hear Him say,
"Beyond this darkness lies the perfect day.
In every path of thine I lead the way.

So, whether on the hill-tops, high and fair,
I dwell, or in the sunless valleys, where
The shadows lie—what matter? He is there.
And more than this, where'er the pathway lead,
He gives to me no helpless, broken reed,
But His own hand, sufficient for my need.
So, where He leads me I can safely go;
And in the blest hereafter I shall know,
Why, in His wisdom, He hath led me so.

—*Anonymous.*

Bible Outlines

The Sermon On The Mount

OUTLINE 1

Introduction

FIRST WEEK OF JANUARY

MATT. 5:1, 2 — And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him: and he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying:

The Sermon on the Mount. Thus the fundamental as well as protracted discourse of Matthew 5, 6, 7 is commonly known. In it the Chief Prophet and Teacher of the Church teaches the spiritual nature of the kingdom of heaven.

Sermon of the Theme

The theme or subject of this Sermon, stated in the words of Matt. 6:33 is: The Kingdom of Heaven and Its Righteousness. Throughout the Sermon the spiritual nature of the kingdom and its benefits, of the citizens and the law of their life is emphasized. The term *kingdom* frequently occurs; notice, 5:3, 10, 19, 20; 6:10, 13, 33; 7:21. The term *righteousness* occurs in 5:6, 10, 20; 6:33. Throughout Christ emphasizes the internal and spiritual character of this righteousness of the kingdom, as well the spiritual nature of the kingdom itself. Everywhere he opposes the external and superficial view of righteousness, and the earthly-materialistic view of the kingdom, as held and taught by the scribes and Pharisees.

The entire Sermon is one complete unity, dealing with one central thought which is developed in its several parts. We present the following outline of the Sermon, suggesting that you trace it in your Bible and become thoroughly familiar with it. The outline follows:

I. The Citizens of the Kingdom: 5:3-16
   - A. Their Characteristics and Blessedness—vss. 3-9
   - B. Their Evaluation, Position and Calling—vss. 10-16
     1. Persecuted by the World—vss. 10-12
     2. The Salt and the Light—vss. 13-16

II. The Righteousness of the Kingdom Described: 5:17-7:12
   - A. As in Harmony with the Law Properly Interpreted: 5:17-48
     1. In Harmony with the Law Itself—vss. 17-20
     2. The Correct Interpretation of the Law over Against the Corrupt Interpretation of a False Tradition—vss. 21-48
        - a. As Exemplified by the Sixth Commandment—vss. 21-26
        - b. As Exemplified by the Seventh Commandment—vss. 26-33
        - c. As Exemplified by the Third Commandment—vss.34-37
        - d. As Exemplified by the Law of Retaliation—vss. 38-42
        - e. As Exemplified by the Law of Love—vss. 43-48
   - B. In Respect to our Relation to God—vs. 6
     1. The Respect of God must be out of Love to God, and not to be Seen of Men: vss. 1-19
        - a. As Shown by Almsgiving—vss. 1-4
        - b. As Shown by Prayer—vss. 5-15
        - c. As Shown by Fasting—vss. 16-18
     2. The Service of God must be Complete, i.e. with an Undivided Heart: vss. 19-38
        - a It is incompatible with Mammon-worship, vss. 19-24
        - b. It is incompatible with Anxiety, vss. 25-30
        - c. It Demands Wholehearted Seeking After Righteousness, vss. 31-34
   - C. In Respect to Our Relation to Men: 7:1-12
     1. Refrain from Hasty Judging, vss. 1-5
     2. Respect for the Holy Pearls, vs. 6
     3. Prayer as the Way to Receive, vss. 7-11
     4. The so-called Golden Rule, vs. 12

III. Final Admonitions: 8:13-27
   - A. Strive to Enter, vss. 13, 14
   - B. Beware of False Teachers, vss. 15-20
   - C. The Need of Properly Striving, vss. 21-23
   - D. The Illustration of the Two Builders, vss. 24-27

Some general observations are in place to properly understand this Sermon. The most important regards the all-determining question, For whom was the Sermon intended? In reply it is necessary first of all to think of the audience Jesus had before him. Then it is evi-

For Whom Intended

dent that the *multitudes* (notice the plural, suggesting a very great audience) heard the Sermon and that Jesus taught *them* (7:28). However, the Sermon was specifically addressed to the *disciples*, the blessed ones. By the disciples must be understood the twelve plus the broader circle of believers. (The word "disciple" means "learner", "pupil".) Consequently although many heard, the Sermon was positively intended for the believers.

But even so the question for whom the Sermon

is intended is not entirely answered. We must know whether the Sermon is *for us today.* Perhaps you think this is self-evident, but all commentators do not by any means agree. The present day ecclesiastical world entertains wholly divergent views on the question. In the main these views may be reduced to three: the Premillenarian view, the Modernist view, and the Reformed view. We ought to be acquainted in a general way with each of these views before we go on, so that we may be the more established in the truth as we study the Sermon step by step.

First of all, then, there is the Premillenarian or Dispensational view, so prevalent in our present day world about us. According to this view the kingdom represents something wholly different from the church, is an earthly something and not spiritual. This view teaches that Christ in this Sermon offered the Jews an earthly kingdom in Canaan. The Jews rejected it and so the kingdom is postponed until a future period (the millenium period). In the meantime Christ is gathering a church, but this church has nothing to do with the kingdom. The kingdom is for the Jews. Hence, the Sermon on the Mount is not for us, its precepts are for the future, and unlivable today. Naturally, if this be true a study of this Sermon has no practical value for us whatsoever, simply because it was not intended for us.

The "Pre" View

Secondly, there is the view of the Modernists. By Modernists we mean those that deny the cross of Christ and atonement thereby, that deny the depravity of man, that deny the resurrection, ascension and return of Christ, etc. Positively speaking, they teach that the kingdom is an earthly something, with earthly benefits, which will be established *by man's efforts.* Hence we must believe in the universal Fatherhood of God and brotherhood of men. They claim Christ (they prefer to speak of Jesus instead of, Christ) taught us the doctrine of God's universal Fatherhood better than any of the world's best teachers before him, or even after him. Men must labor to raise the present world kingdoms to a higher level, seek the unity of all humanity, and thus realize the kingdom of peace. Of course, the Modernist does not hesitate to recast the Sermon, to omit what he deems objectionable, and to interpret as he wishes. Nowhere does he find place for the righteousness of Christ accomplished for us on the cross, never does he recognize the God-willed cleavage between righteous and wicked. The Sermon was intended for all men universally; and the kingdom excludes none.

The Modernist View

Finally, there is the Reformed and Biblical view. According to this the kingdom is *"within you"* (Lk. 17:21), consists in doing God's will (Matt. 6:10), is not to be separated from the Church (Matt. 10:25, 26), includes all salvation (Mk. 10:25, 26), will be consummated when Christ appears on the clouds of heaven to make all things new, Matt. 25:34, II Pet. 3:13. Since its origin, life and purpose are heavenly, therefore it is called "kingdom *of heaven*". It is also designated as "the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33) because it is *from* God, *through* God and *unto* God. Hence inseparably connected with the concept kingdom is the concept "righteousness", *the* righteousness, which is more than that of the scribes and Pharisees (Matt. 5:20) and demands nothing short of perfection (Matt. 6:48). According to this view there were citizens of this kingdom since the dawn of history (Enoch, Noah, Abraham, etc.), the kingdom was typified and pictured in the Davidic kingdom on earth, but was spiritually realized when the King was born, the King who established the kingdom in his blood, ascended to heaven whence he reigns and rules, gathering his own until the elect are gathered, then he shall appear on the clouds of heaven to consummate and finish the kingdom and bring it in all its glory. Hence, this view insists that the Sermon on the Mount was intended also for us today and not for some future *period* of glory for the Jews. However, the kingdom is not universal in the sense that it includes all men as the Modernists assert, but is limited to the believers. Only the believers are citizens of the kingdom, the others are excluded. The Sermon therefore speaks to the *church;* its precepts *are livable* today.

The Reformed View

A few more observations of a general nature are in order. They regard the *place,* the *time,* and the *two versions* of the Sermon.

In regard to the *place,* notice: a. It was in Galilee, where the greater part of Christ's ministry was spent, Matt. 5:23. b. It was under the open sky, in God's Great Outdoors" and not amidst the formal surroundings of the synagogue, cf. Matt. 4:23. c. It was on *the* (Greek) mountain. A late tradition claims the mountain to have been the two-peaked hill called Karn Hattin, between Tiberias and Nazareth, but on this we lack certainty. On Mt. Sinai the law was given, on this Mount maintained and interpreted.

The Place

In respect to the *time*: Undoubtedly in the first half of the second year of Christ's public ministry, during which the Saviour's popularity was on the increase and not yet on the wane. Matt. 4:25; Lk. 6:1, 12, 13. According to Matt. 4 it followed: a. The preaching of repentance because the kingdom was at hand, vs. 17. b. The calling of some apostles, vss. 18-22. c. The healing of many sick, vs. 23. d. When great multitudes of people followed him, vs. 25.

The Time

A comparison of Matt. 5-7 with Lk. 6:20-49 brings up the unavoidable question, Do these portions represent *two versions* of the same Sermon or two separate Sermons. Some affirm it, others deny it. Those that affirm it point to the

fact that both follow the calling of apostles, the healing of many sick, both were in Galilee, both were in the vicinity of the mountain, and both are generally very similar in contents. Those that deny point to the following differences: one says Jesus *went up*, the other that he *went down*; one says Jesus *sat down*, the other that he *stood:* one lacks "woes", while the other contains them; while the passage of Lk. 6:38-40 is entirely lacking in Matthew's account. Although there are great similarities, and although we admit these are not necessarily irreconciliable, we are inclined to think that the differences suggest that Christ repeated the Sermon in brief (Luke 6) very shortly after the fuller Sermon of Matthew was spoken. The general setting is such that the Sermons must have been spoken without a great deal of intervening time. Certainly such an important Sermon as this might easily have been repeated by the Lord for the sake of emphasis. If our interpretation is correct then Matt. 5 should be called the Sermon on the Mount, while Luke 6 is the Sermon of the Plain.

Two Versions

Questions: What is the subject of the Sermon? For whom was the Sermon intended? Mention the three views and suggest arguments for the correct view? Did the lack of the formality of a synagogue detract from the solemnity of the Sermon (Matt. 7:28, 29)? Where and when was this Sermon spoken? Are there two versions of the same Sermon? What value is there in the study of this Sermon? Suggest some values?

OUTLINE II

Beatitudes

SECOND WEEK OF JANUARY

MATT. 5:3-6 — Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

This outline treats: first, of the beatitudes in general; then, more particularly of the first four.

I. THE BEATITUDES IN GENERAL:

A. Each Beatitude consists of three parts: an Ascription of Blessedness, a Description of Character, and a Description of the contents of Blessedness.

1. The Ascription. The word "blessed" means "happy" and denotes the enviable state of its possessors. The original has the plural (blessedness) to emphasize the incomparable riches involved. The word does not mean that *other men* consider them happy, nor even necessarily that they think *themselves* such, but states what *God* actually says they *are*. The term never applies to the wicked.

Question: Do the citizens of the kingdom always consciously experience their blessedness? If not, why not?

2. The Description of Character. The various terms "poor in spirit" "meek", etc. do not refer to wholly distinct persons, but to the same persons *from various aspects*. Besides, the citizens of the kingdom are characterized as they are on earth (no mourning in heaven.)

The Three Parts

3. The Description or Contents of the Blessedness. While the first beatitude mentions the contents in general (the kingdom is theirs), the remaining beatitudes mention various *benefits* of the kingdom. Each benefit appropriately fits the characterization (mourners shall be comforted, etc.). These benefits are spiritual, because the kingdom is spiritual.

B. The Number of Beatitudes:

The number has variously been set at *seven*, *eight*, and *nine*. We admit there are *nine* "blesseds", but surely the one of vs. 11 is merely a reiteration of the one of vs. 10, so there cannot be more than *eight* beatitudes. However, we prefer to speak of *seven;* for two reasons: the so-called eighth (vss. 10-12) does not speak of what the citizens are *in themselves* by God's grace, but of what *befalls* them *at the hands of the world*. Moreover, the description of blessedness in this instance repeats the general statement (theirs is the kingdom) and offers no new aspect of blessing as do the others. Hence, *seven*, properly speaking.

the Number

C. Division and Arrangement:

Various groupings of the beatitudes are offered by commentators, but the simplest divides the seven into two groups: the first four and the remaining three. The first group has in common that they all speak of a *lack*, a *want*, and thus are more negative; while the second group of a *possession*, a *virtue*, and thus are more positive.

Division

D. Exclusiveness. The beatitudes assert bless-

edness for the poor in spirit, etc., and this in such a way that blessedness for all *Exclusive* others is excluded. The kingdom is *Character only* for the poor in spirit, *just* for them, and for *none other*. No "common" blessedness with the ungodly.

Question: How does this exclusiveness condemn the Modernist view of the Sermon?

II. The first Four Beatitudes:

A. The First Beatitude—"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (vs. 3).

1. The Poor in Spirit—The following may be remarked: a. Lk. 6:20 simply says "the poor", but from Matt. it is evident that Jesus thought of those *spiritually* poor. Abraham was rich, yet poor in spirit; there are many poor that are not poor in spirit. b. The word for "poor" here is the more emphatic of two Greek words *The poor* and means "beggar", one dependent *in Spirit* entirely on outside aid. c. Although all men by reason of sin ought to know themselves as poor in spirit, it is only the enlightened children of God that confess themselves such. See Rev. 3:17, 18; Lk. 18:9-14.

2. Their Blessedness—the kingdom *is* theirs. They are unspeakably rich. The *whole* kingdom with all it implies is theirs. The rich beggar Lazarus!

B. The Second Beatitude—"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted" (vs. 4).

1. The Mourners. a. This mourning is a mourning over sin *itself* rather than over its *consequences* as such. All men ought to mourn over their sins but do not. Ps. 51, *The* II Cor. 7:10. b. There is progress from *Mourners* the first beatitude. The discernment of spiritual poverty itself has here become a consciousness of our own blame and fault, and longing after spiritual riches.

2. "They shall be Comforted". The kingdom implies comfort, forgiveness and mercy. Is. 40:1, 2 and John 14:1. This comfort also ultimately means the removal of all the dire consequences and suffering the curse implies, Rev. 7:17. Scripture speaks of the Holy Spirit as Comforter (John 14:26).

Question: Are all tears evidence of true mourning? Heb. 12:17. Is there comfort for the ungodly and his tears?

C. The Third Beatitude—"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (vs. 5).

1. The Meek. a. Meekness is a spiritual virtue (Gal. 5:22), learned of Christ (Matt. 11:29). It implies profound consciousness of unworthiness before God, the absence of "a fighting back spirit". Meekness is spiritual strength, not weakness. b. Meekness implies suf-*The Meek* fering at the hands of the wicked. Think of meek Moses bearing Israel's murmurings. The meek give themselves to be unjustly treated, not out of weakness but out of obedience to God and looking for the reward. The meek man fights, but *for God's cause* and with the *means ordained of God* (spiritual weapons). *Self*-aggrandizement stands foursquare opposed to meekness. c. There is progress from the second beatitude. The mourner realizes the root of all is sin, and hence refuses to co-operate with the world in sin, and willingly suffers for it. He *loses* his life, Matt. 10:38, 39.

2. Their Blessedness—"they shall inherit the earth". They lose it only to gain it. Not however *by merit*, but as *by inheritance*. They have a *right* to it, but this right to it they have as a gift in Christ. Christ earned it. Notice, they *shall* inherit it, implying absolute certainty. Premillenials take "earth" in the sense of "land" (earthly Canaan), and look upon it as a promise for Jews. Jesus makes no such distinction between Jews and Gentiles; there is one fold, John 10:16. The earth is the entire earth, the *new* earth, Ps. 37:11; I Cor. 3:21-23; II Pet. 3:13.

Question: Was Abraham seeking the earthly Canaan as such? Heb. 11:8-10.

D. The Fourth Beatitude—"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled" (vs. 6).

1. Hunger and Thirst after Righteousness: a. The Greek says *the* righteousness, i.e. the *true* righteousness and not that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20), the righteousness *of God* (6:33). Righteousness in brief is the state in which man stands approved before God as completely in harmony with his holy law. Matt. 5:17; Deut. 6:25. Adam possessed it by virtue of creation. We lack it by reason of sin. For *Hungry and Thirsty After* us it is only in Christ, who is our righteousness, Phil. 3:9. Christ is that because: (1) God *imputes* un-*Righteousness* to the believer Christ's righteousness, Rom. 5:1; (2) God *cleanses* the believer from all unrighteousness by the sanctifying Spirit of Christ. Both are related and implied here, although the emphasis falls perhaps on th latter. b. Hunger and Thirst. Both these words point to a natural and intense desire, and are figuratively used for the spiritual desire after righteousness. Ps. 42:1, Is. 55:1. The citizens *crave* for this righteousness in all its fulness, and need it more than bread and water.

2. Their Blessedness—"they shall be filled". "Filled" means "fed", "satisfied". With righteousness, of course. Already now they experience this, hereafter in all perfection. II Pet. 3:13.

Question: Can there be any righteousness for the sinner apart from Christ? How about "civic righteousness"?

OUTLINE III

Beatitudes (con't.)

THIRD WEEK OF JANUARY

MATT. 5:7-12 — "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

This outline deals with the last three beatitudes, and with the position of the citizens in the world.

I. The Last Three Beatitudes:

A. The Fifth Beatitude—"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (vs. 7).

1. The Merciful—a. Mercy means aid for those in distress (either natural or spiritual) and implies love and a readiness to forgive. It is to be shown both in word and in deed (words are not enough, James 2:13-18). b. The citizens of the kingdom not only *show* mercy, but they *are* merciful ones, i.e., it belongs indispensibly to their spiritual character. It is not "put on", but innerly real. c. Mercy is a *Christian* virtue (Matt. 25:34-40); the so-called mercy of the wicked is only an empty carricature of true mercy,, Prov. 12:10, Matt. 22:23.

The Merciful

2. "They shall receive Mercy"—God is merciful to the merciful, Ps. 18:25. This does not mean that we are first and God second, Rom. 9:15-18, I John 4:10, 11; I Pet. 1:3; Titus 3:5. Mercy is the God-given characteristic of the objects of his mercy, Matt. 25:34-40; Matt. 6:12, 14, 15; I John 3:17. Their mercy is richly rewarded with mercy, but it is a reward of grace, and not of merit (Lk. 17:7-10).

B. The Sixth Beatitude—"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God" (vs. 8).

The Pure in Heart. Notice pure *in heart*, i.e., *in respect to, as regards* the heart. The heart is the *spiritual* center and source of man's life, Matt. 12:34, 35; Lk. 6:45; Matt. 15:18, 19; Mk. 7:21, 22; especially Prov. 4:23.

The Pure in Heart

This heart is principally either good or bad, pure or impure. The believers are *pure* of heart by virtue of their new birth, I John 3:9. Out of this pure heart proceeds love, etc., I Tim. 1:5; II Tim. 2:22, I Pet. 1:22. "Pure of heart" does not imply that the Christian never falls into sin as "perfectionism" teaches, I John 1:8.

2. "They shall see God"—This vision is: a. Not a vision of God's Essential Being (I Tim. 1:17; 6:16); but in Christ, according to the rule that he that hath seen him hath seen the Father (John 14:9). b. Not a vision of *physical* sight, but rather of *spiritual* sight. It implies *likeness* (I John 3:2; Ps. 17:15). Only the pure can see the Pure One. c. On earth, in a mirror darkly, but hereafter "face to face", I Cor. 13:12. d. The vision of communion and fellowship with God in Christ.

C. The Seventh Beatitude—"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (vs. 9).

1. The Peacemakers—The text does not say "peaceful" but "*peacemakers*", implying positive efforts in the direction of peace. This does not mean efforts conciliatory and compromising with sin, for sin is division and the very opposite of peace. It is the peace of God, the peace of the cross, the peace of love and righteousness. Peace implies *harmony*, harmony with God and with all things for his sake. The believers have peace, and are to seek peace (*this* true peace). This peace is promoted by waging war against sin, by preaching the Gospel and walking in all God's law. John 14:27; Rom. 5:1; Eph. 6:15; Phil. 4:7; Rom. 14:17, 19; Heb. 12:14.

The Peacemakers

2. "They shall be called the Children of God". Literally, it is "sons of God", and the word is a title of honor and dignity. They shall be *called* that. This sonship is a sonship of adoption, and for Christ's sake. God calls them that now, and will publicly declare them to be his sons in the Day of Judgment (Rom. 8:23).

Questions: Is mercy a common virtue among men? What is Perfectionism? How does the ninth verse contradict the Modernist's assertion of universal Fatherhood and Brotherhood? Are the present day Pacifists the peacemakers?

II. The Position of the Citizens in the World—vss. 10-12. (see your Bible), cf. Lk. 6:22-23, 26;

A. "Blessed are They Which are Persecuted".

1. Notice this persecution is: a. *For righteousness' sake*, i.e., because the citizens do the right, I John 3:10-12. b. For my sake. For *righteousness'* sake is the *same* as for *Christ's* sake, evidently because Christ is our righteousness. Heb. 11:26; I Pet. 3:14, 17.

2. This persecution manifests itself: a. In *words*—"revile", "say all manner of evil against you falsely". b. In *deeds*—"persecute". Lk. 6:22 speaks of social ostracism. Heb. 11:36-38 mentions various forms. This persecution will culminate in the Great Tribulation, Matt. 24:21, 29; II Thess. 2, etc.

The Persecuted

B. "Rejoice and be Exceeding Glad". Why? Not because persecution itself is desirable, but because: 1. Theirs is the kingdom. 2. Persecution for Christ's sake proves affinity with the prophets and shows the genuineness of their faith. 3. The reward in heaven is great, and the short affliction is richly rewarded. Rom. 8:18; II Cor. 4:17.

Question: Is there persecution here today? May a Christian seek persecution? May he deliberately avoid it? Is it possible to rejoice when persecution comes?

OUTLINE IV

God's Evaluation

FOURTH WEEK OF JANUARY

MATT. 5:13-16 — "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savor, wherewith shall it be salted. . . .
Ye are the light of the world . . . ."

The wicked world persecutes the citizens of the kingdom. God, on the contrary, highly honors them. God declares them to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world.

I. The Salt of the earth—vs. 13.

A. The Fact as Such—How to be Understood?

1. The Common Grace interpretation. a. It holds that it is the *preservative* qualities of salt that are on the foreground. As our mothers use salt to preserve foodstuffs from spoiling, so Christians as the salt of the earth are to act as a *checking, preserving* and *improving* influence in society. Through them the corrupt world becomes better. b. Objections to this view: 1. The *preservative* qualities of salt are nowhere mentioned in Scripture, not even here. Salt is more commonly used as a *condiment* than as a preservative, and such was the usage in Bible times, especially as the salt of those days was to impure to act as a preservative. Scripture uses this common idea of *seasoning*, adding taste, Col. 4:6. The text also says, if salt have lost its *savor* i.e., its *seasoning* power. Salt is added at our meals, not to *preserve*, but to make food *tasty*. It improves the tastiness, not the food itself. Hence the preservative qualities are not intended here, but the *seasoning* qualities. 2. Besides, the text speaks of the salt *of the earth*. The "*earth*" does not mean *men and society* at all, but refers to "creation" (plant, beast, etc.). Certainly vs. 5 speaking of inheriting the earth, does not mean to say the Christian inherits "men", but God's "creation". Hence, the text does not speak of checking corruption and improving *men* at all. 3. Neither is it true that Christian influence checks the development of sin, much less that it improves the wicked life of the world. The view of common grace not only errs, but is dangerous and leads to amalgamation with the world.

The Salt

2. The Correct View: The citizens of the kingdom are salt by virtue of being the recipients of God's grace. By virtue of grace they are *savory, tasty*, acceptable to God. And only by reason of grace in Christ, not in themselves. That salt *is* symbolic of grace is evident from Col. 4:6. *They* are salt and *they alone*. And they are the salt *of the earth*, i.e., of creation, because in them all God's works rise as a sweet incense before him. Lev. 2:13 teaches that Israel was to add salt to all its offerings, only then would they be tasty to God. So also creation is acceptable to God if *man* be savory. Before the fall it *was* in Adam. Through sin, the *curse* came and God *rejected* the whole offering (plant and tree, fish and beast were cursed for man's sake). But for his people's sake in Christ, the entire earth rises anew as a sweet incense. When men sinned, God destroyed the earth with a flood. After the flood, the earth shared in Noah's blessing. Creation is redeemed with the elect, Rom. 8:19-21. God's people it is that make His creation an acceptable sacrifice in his sight. They and they alone make it *tasty*.

B. The Obligation and Duty Implied:

Priviliges imply obligations. Believers must *be* salt, and not lose their savor. The salt of Jesus' day was very impure and soon lost its seasoning qualities, and then was worthless. Christians must abide in grace. Although true

believers *cannot* fall from grace, they are kept of God in the way of admonition. We need warnings continually. Churches can lose their savor. They do when they lapse into mere formalism, or as the modernistic churches become social centers and nothing more. Israel lost its savor in the days prior to the captivity. Then they lose their distinctiveness, and are good for nothing. Absolutely worthless in God's sight. Even harmful.

II. The Light of the World—vss. 14-16.

A. The Fact As Such:

1. Even the word "world" does not mean "men" first of all, but it means *creation as an ordered whole*, with all its relations, etc. Cf. Rev. Hoeksema's *The History of the Prot. Ref. Churches*, pp. 335, 336.

2. Of that world, the citizens of the kingdom are *the light*. Light here means *spiritual knowledge of God*, and includes *holiness* and *every other Christian virtue*. I John 1:5. God is Light; Christ is the Light of the World, John 8:12; Christians are light *in the Lord*, Eph. 5:8. The wicked world loves the darkness and does not come to the light. John 1:4-11; Eph. 4:18, 18; Eph. 5:8-14.

The Light

B. The Duty—to shine forth. This implies the calling of the church to preach the gospel and give testimony to the light. But also the duty of "good works", vs. 16. So Christ as the Light shone forth when on earth: so believers must do continually to the end. They can only do this in living fellowship with Christ. Be "Beacon Lights".

C. The Purpose—Why Shine? *Primarily*, of course, that the Father may be glorified. God is glorified when the grace of God shines forth from us, not when we walk in sin. The glory of God must be the conscious purpose of the citizens in the world. Spiritual life is not simply a question of our salvation, but of *God's glory! Secondarily*, that *men* may glorify your Father. When fellow Christians let their light shine, other Christians glorify God by bringing him the praise, Acts 4:23, 24ff. Besides, God sometimes uses our good works to gain others for Christ, I Pet. 3:1. Surely, God uses the preaching of his Word to bring men to the light, so that they repent and turn unto him. Add to this, that even the unrepentant that come in contact with this shining must glorify God, even though it be unwillingly. In this life (Dan. 6:25-27), especially in the day of Christ's Return.

Questions: What is the error of Common Grace? Can Christians improve the wicked world? Is this their calling? How can salt lose its savor? Why are Christians the light of the world? How must they shine? What is the purpose of their shining? How is this purpose accomplished.

THEY SAY . . . .

Many men can argue over religion they do not have.

* * *

Owls have acquired an unearned reputation for wisdom simply because they look profound all the time and hoot only occasionally.

* * *

Like castor oil, advice is always easier to give than to take.

* * *

The meanest dog in town wags his tail for food and then snaps at your heels when his belly is full.

* * *

Have your rubbers handy, but don't spend all your time looking for rain.

* * *

When you feed the cow on weeds, don't blame her if the milk isn't sweet.

* * *

The first intimation we had that he was losing his mind was when he promptly returned a book we had loaned him.

* * *

Rheumatism in the knees keeps many folks from kneeling, and rheumatism in the soul keeps many of us from praying.

HOW TO BE PERFECTLY MISERABLE

1. Think about yourself.
2. Talk about yourself.
3. Use "I" as often as possible.
4. Mirror yourself continually in the opinion of others.
6. Listen greedily to what people say about you.
6. Expect to be appreciated.
7. Be suspicious.
8. Be jealous and envious.
9. Be sensitive to slights.
10. Never forgive a criticism.
11. Trust nobody but yourself.
12. Insist on consideration and respect.
13. De mand agreement with your own views on everything
14. Sulk if people are not grateful to you for favors shown.
15. Never forget a service you may have rendered.
16. Be on the look-out for a good time for yourself.
17. Shirk your duties if you can.
18. Do as little as possible for others.
19. Love yourself supremely.
20. Be selfish.

(This recipe is guaranteed to be infallible)

Discussion on the Canons

QUESTIONS

1. What are Standards or Confessions?
2. Should a Church have Confessions? What is their value and purpose?
3. Do Confessions have the same authority as Scripture?
4. Do they not bind the conscience of the Christian?
5. Can Confessions be altered? In what way?
6. Which are the Standards of the Reformed Churches?
7. What is the difference between the Christian Reformed and the Protestant Reformed Churches as to their Confessions?

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8. What is the meaning of the word Canon?
9. What was the occasion of the formulation of these Canons of Dordrecht?
10. What are Pelagians? Arminians? Remonstrants? Contra-Remonstrants?
11. How many chapters do the Canons contain? What is the subject of each?
12. What do you understand by divine predestination? By election? By reprobation?
13. Can you prove the doctrine of election from the Bible? Reprobation?
14. Why does chapter I begin with a statement of the sin of all men in Adam? see art. 1.
15. What, according to this first article is the standpoint of the Canons Supra- or Infralapsarian?
16. Of what does art. 2 speak?
17. Can men be saved outside of the sphere of the preaching of the gospel?
18. To whom is the gospel preached? see art 3.
19. Why is not the gospel preached to all men? Why not only to the elect?
20. What distinction is caused by the preaching of the gospel? art. 4.
21. What is the significance of the preaching of the gospel for the reprobate unbeliever?
22. Are children also saved by means of the preaching of the gospel if they die before the age of discretion?
23. What does it mean to receive and embrace Christ? art. 4.
24. Whose is the guilt of unbelief? Whence is the gift of faith? art. 5.
25. Why do some receive the gift of faith, others not? art. 5.

ANSWERS

1. Standards or Confessions (creeds, rule of faith, symbol) are comprehensive formulas, expressing with ecclesiastical authority what a Church or group of Churches believes to be the truth of the Word of God. They are called standards or symbols, because they are criteria of what is taught and confessed in the Church or churches uniting around them; and because they declare publicly the faith of that church or those churches. They are called Creeds or Confessions from the viewpoint that their contents are the object of the faith of the Church.

2. A Church should have standards or confessions, chiefly because it is the calling of the Church as well as of the individual Christian to confess the name of Christ and the truth as it is in Jesus and to preserve the truth in generations even over against every attack of error and false doctrine.

Their value and purpose:

a. As summaries of the truth revealed in Scripture they are an aid to the understanding of the Word of God.
b. They preserve the labor of the Church of the past in expounding the Scriptures under the guidance of the Spirit.
c. They are a basis and bond of union among believers and churches that subscribe to them.
d. They are a means for the instruction of the children of the church in sound doctrine.
e. Their purpose is to declare unto the world the faith of the Church and preserve the Church from error.

3. They certainly do not have the same authority as Scripture. Scripture has original and absolute authority; confessions have derived authority, i.e. only as they are in harmony with Scripture and relative, i.e. it is admitted that a standard or creed may be changed and expanded, according as the Church gains a fuller insight in the Scriptures.

4. This is the indictment brought against creeds by all their opponents, such as Unitarians, So-

cinians, Quakers and Rationalists. They claim that creeds interfere with the free interpretation of the Bible and bind the conscience of the believer by the doctrines and institutions of men.

This would be true if the creed is placed above Scripture instead of being subordinated to it; and if subscription to creeds were not the free choice and act of every believer. Any Christian is at any time at full liberty, should his conscience so dictate in the light of the Word of God to break with a creed, which implies that he breaks with the Church professing the same.

5. Confessions certainly can be altered and often are altered, either because the Church develops and grows in the knowledge of the truth, or because the faith of the Church must be defended against new errors that arise.

The alteration must be based on the Word of God. If it is not it is a corruption.

The alteration may be suggested or requested in the regular ecclesiastical way by an individual member or group of members.

The alteration must be officially approved and adopted by the largest representative gathering of the Church.

The alteration even so must be submitted to approval or tacit acquiescence by the members of the Church.

6. The standards of the Reformed Churches are: The Heid. Catechism, The Netherland or Belgic Confession of Dordrecht.

7. The difference between the Christian Reformed Churches and the Protestant Reformed Churches with respect to their Confessions is, that the latter merely acknowledge the Three Forms of Unity, the latter, since 1924 have added Three Points of doctrine to the Reformed Confessions, which are essentially corruptions of the Reformed Symbols.

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8. The meaning of the word Canon is rule. Applied to a Confession it is a rule of faith, or of the truth. This is, therefore the meaning in the title: Canons of Dordrecht.

9. The occasion of the formulation of the Canons of Dordrecht was the teaching of James Arminius and his followers in the last part of the sixteenth and the first part of the seventeenth century, which implied a denial of the truth of predestination and related doctrines.

10. Pelagians are followers of Pelagius, a heretic of the fifteenth century, who taught that man has a free will to do good by nature, denying original sin and total depravity.

Arminians are followers of Arminius of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who taught that God's election and reprobation depended on foreseen faith and unbelief and related errors.

Remonstrants, the Arminians of the sixteenth century are called, because a representative group of them in 1610 drew up a document which they called a remonstrance, in which they briefly set forth their belief in five formulas of doctrine.

Contra-remonstrants is a name applied to the Reformed fathers of the sixteenth century, because they formally answered and opposed the Remonstrants.

11. The Canons contain five chapters, as follows:

I. Of divine predestination.
II. Of the death of Christ and the redemption of men thereby.
III-IV. Of the Corruption of man, his conversion to God and the manner thereof.
V. Of the perseverence of the saints.

12. Predestination is God's eternal counsel with respect to the eternal destiny of His rational-moral creatures; men and angels.

Election is God's sovereign, eternal, and gracious decree to ordain and save some to eternal glory in Christ and in the way of faith.

Reprobation is God's sovereign, eternal and righteous decree to ordain some to eternal damnation as punishment for their sin.

13. Election: Rom. 8:29, 20; Eph. 1:3, 4, 11; II Tim. 1:9; II Thess. 2:13-15; John 6:37, 39, 65; 10:27-30; Rom. 9:15, 16, 23.

Reprobation: Prov. 16:4; John 10:26; Rom. 9:17, 21, 22; I Pet. 2:8.

Both: Matt. 11:25, 26; Rom. 9:13, 16, 18.

14. Because the Canons present the doctrine of election as the decree of God according to which He chose some to eternal life out of the fallen human race. It is the purpose of the Canons to maintain that God could righteously do so, because He might have left all in their sin. It follows, that the doctrine of reprobation is presented as meaning that God left others in their sin.

15. It is evident. then, even from this first article, that the standpoint of the Canons is Infra-lapsarian.

Infra- and Supra-lapsarian are two views, both acknowledged to be Reformed, of the decree of Predestination. The terms are derived from the Latin: supra, i.e. above, infra, i.e. below and lapsus, i.e. fall. By these terms is expressed, that predestination is before the decree of creation and the decree of the fall. The order in the decree is, therefore, as follows: 1. Gods determination to glorify Himself. 2. Predestination, i.e. the decree to glorify Himself in vessels of honor and vessels of dishonour. 3. Creation, i.e. the decree to create all things good. 4. The decree of the fall.

Infra-lapsarianism presents the order as follows: 1. God's determination to glorify Himself. 2. The decree of creation. 3. the decree of per-

mitting the fall. 4. The decree of predestination.

Although the Canons proceed from the Infra-lapsarian viewpoint, the Supra-lapsarian view was never condemned and always acknowledged to be Reformed.

Better it is to proceed from the question, what in God's decree is purpose or end, and what is means unto that purpose or end. Then we have the following order in God's decrees:

1. God determined to glorify Himself.
2. He predestined the Church in Christ.
3. He predestined the reprobate to serve the realization of the Church, as chaff must serve the wheat.
4. He ordained all things in heaven and on earth to serve the realization of election and reprobation.

16. Article 2 speaks of the manifestation of the love of God in the sending of His Son into the world, for the salvation of them that believe. Notice, that the Canons approach the doctrine of election from the viewpoint of the salvation of believers. The following is the line it follows: a. Man is fallen. b. God will save them that believe in His Son. c. He calls to faith by the gospel. d. He gives the faith to whom He wills. e. He wills to give faith to the elect only.

17. There is no Scriptural ground for the position of some, that even in the heathen world, outside of the sphere of the preaching of the gospel, there is salvation. We may surely believe, that God will send His gospel wherever there are His people. The apostles were sometimes forbidden to preach the gospel in a certain place; while in other places they must labor for some time, because God had much people in the place.

18. The gospel is preached to whom God wills. For, it is God that prepares the field for the preaching of the gospel; it is God that prepares His Church to preach the gospel; it is God, too, that in due time prepares men and calls them to preach the gospel. After all, it is Christ that gathers His Church.

19. The gospel is not preached to all men. In fact, there are comparatively but a few that ever hear the gospel. Ultimately it must be preached to all nations, but it needs not be preached to every individual. The reason undoubtedly is, that the gospel must be preached only in those places and at that time, where and when God has His elect in such places. Nevertheless, the gospel is not to be preached only to the elect, even if this were possible. The reason is, that God wills that also some reprobates shall hear the gospel, that sin may become fully manifest as sin.

20. The distinction between those that believe and have eternal life; and those that do not believe and are hardened. A distinction that must ultimately lead to the conflict of Christ and Antichrist.

21. The significance of the preaching of the gospel for the reprobate unbeliever is: a. That it reveals the perverseness of his sinful nature. b. That it hardens him in sin. c. That it aggravates his guilt. d. That it makes his condemnation heavier.

22. Children are not saved through the preaching of the gospel, if they die before the age of discretion. Regeneration in the narrower sense is immediate.

23. There is a difference between receiving the gospel, or Christ and embracing Him. Receiving Him rather looks at the matter from the viewpoint of that act of Christ whereby He imparts Himself to us and He prepares place for Himself in our hearts. Embracing or accepting Him rather looks at it from the viewpoint of the activity of saving faith, whereby we appropriate Him as our personal Redeemer.

24. Unbelief is sin. Of all sin, also of the sin of unbelief man is the author. He will not come to Christ, because he is wholly depraved. For the same reason, faith is solely the gift of God. No man would believe unless God would work the power of faith in him.

25. This is solely to be attributed to God's sovereign election and reprobation. No other considerations enter in. It is on this point that Reformed people radically differ from all others. Only when this is maintained can absolute predestination be accepted as the truth.

AS THOU GOEST, STEP BY STEP

Child of My love, fear not the unknown morrow.
Dread not the new demand life makes of thee;
Thy ignorance doth hold no cause for sorrow
Since what thou knowest not is known to Me.

Thou canst not see today the hidden meaning,
Of My command, but thou the light shall gain;
Walk on in faith, upon My promise leaning,
And as thou goest all shall be made plain.

One step thou seest—then go forward boldly,
One step is far enough for faith to see;
Take that, and thy next duty shall be told thee,
For step by step thy Lord is leading thee.

Stand not in fear thy adversaries counting.
Dare every peril, save to disobey;
Thou shalt march on, all obstacles surmounting.
For I, the Strong, will open up the way.

Wherefore go gladly to the task assigned thee,
Having My promise, needing nothing more
Than just to know, where'er the future finds thee:
In all thy journeying I go before.

Book Review

We do not doubt but that our first venture into the field of book-reviewing will be marked with imperfection. However, we have determined that we shall improve, and consequently we welcome constructive criticism of our work at any time. We feel that this department will fill a deep need in the lives of our covenant youth. Our purpose and aim with this department of our new periodical is, first of all, to create in our young people a desire to read that literature which is of a high order, the reading of which will be beneficial for them. Even these days when the cry "I have no time" is frequently heard, we surely must devote part of our time to the development of ourselves intellectually. To serve that purpose this department will not only review certain books, but will also issue from time to time short lists of recommended reading material. From these lists our young people can choose various kinds of books for reading and-or study. These books will include wholesome fiction, worthwhile autobiography and biography, sound historical works, and other books of interest and value to our youth.

We hope that this department will supply a long-felt need among the organizations comprised of our youth. Very often a minister in our churches is confronted with the serious question: "If all this modern literary trash is so very harmful to our young people, what then would you suggest as good reading material?" The answer to this question is an aim of this department. We would regard ourselves well compensated for our labors if our Protestant Reformed youth should develop a definite desire for reading, and thus heed the admonition of Scripture to "buy out the time". One hears of the so-called "problems" that are connected with the entertainment of youth today. We would warn our young people, however, not to be deceived into thinking that there is such a problem. Rather, we would admonish you to study the Scriptures, and advise you to develop your mind by the devotion of your spare time to reading and studying good, clean, wholesome literature. And so we close our introductory remarks with a prayer that our feeble effort may achieve its purposes and aims with the blessing of our Covenant God.

L. Vermeer.

REVIEW: "Lighted Horizon" by Edith Snyder Pedersen, Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1940, 191 pages, price: $1.00.

"Lighted Horizon" is the title of a truly fascinating story involving three sisters as the main characters. They are Helen, describes as pretty and dark, Judith, the family "scape-goat", and Ruth, blond and selfish, the youngest of the three.

Although this book centers about three young ladies our young people must not conclude that this book has interest only for the girls. For the lives of these three sisters are intertwined with those of three young men, who enter their lives very naturally. The greatest feature of the book lies in the marvellous portrayal of the various characters. Surely the authoress excels in this respect. Though the three sisters were very different in respect to their characters, nevertheless the story pictures very strikingly that not one of the three could find true happiness without the living Christ. Throughout the story this main thought is brought to the foreground.

The life of Judith depicts the awful consequences of married life without Christ. Although she and her youthful husband, Alan Varley, find life seemingly pleasant enough at first, and, although both of them possessed a great deal of so-called "righteousness", nevertheless they soon found themselves leading a life of ever deepening sinfulness. It becomes apparent that Alan especially is very weak morally. He submits to the evil of an excessive use of intoxicating liquor and fails consequently in his responsibilities as a father and a husband. Their superficial joy made way to a realization of hopelessness and a tragic recourse to a "life in the gutter". Judy seems self-sufficient in her own private world of external goodness and morality at first, but, when she realizes the truth of the fact that "except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of heaven" her heart is rent with sorrow and distress. She is then brought to the realization that heaven's joy and peace is not from below but from above. Her infant daughter, Bernice, is the instrument in the hands of the Lord that brings her to the realization of these things. We are then told how that the mighty power of God's grace enters their lives, knitting them together as they had never thought possible before. Alan, brought back as a firebrand plucked out of the burnng fire, and reunited with his small family, tastes, by the grace of God, a little bit of heaven with them. The story goes on to depict the gracious workings of faith in the lives of Helen and Ruth also. Certainly the authoress is successful in her attempt to picture our God as a might fortress, and the tremendous comfort Christ affords to all of the sisters, even though they differ radically in respect to their characters. This story is integrated with a strong plot, in which you will lose yourself very easily, I'm sure.

However, I would warn our young people to beware of a wrong presentation of the nature of saving faith in this book. The writer proceeds as though faith is the basis of the salvation of the characters portrayed. Saving faith is never the basis of our salvation, but is the divine means

whereby the God of our complete salvation imparts this salvation to His people.

The approach of the authoress is time and again Arminian. If you will critically bear in mind this approach, and the fact that you have to do here with fiction, I can heartily recommend this book to our young people for recreational reading. Let's remember that the main object of the book is to impress upon the minds of youthful Christian readers the fact that under no circumstances can true happiness be obtained except it be in the way of faith in Christ and His redeeming work.

Material we would recommend for more serious study:

1. William Smith, LL. D., *The Old Testament History*, and, *The New Testament History*. Both of these works of Dr. William Smith can be procured at the William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., or at the Zondervan Publishing House at Grand Rapids, Michigan. These two books should be in our Society and personal libraries. In them you fill find a clear, understandable history of God's Covenant People throughout both the Old and New Dispensations. Many maps and charts accompany them, as well as tables and explanations of the different weights, dimensions, et cetera of Holy Writ. These books can be very valuable in your study of the Scriptures, both for Society Lessons or for your catechetical home-work.

2. *The Acts of the Synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches*, in session June, 1940. No!. . . . this booklet is not meant for older people, but also for our *youth!* The official language of our Synods is English, which enables our young people also to read and to acquaint themselves with the doings of our churches. In it may be found statistics and other interesting information concerning our denomination. Our Societies would do well to keep one or two copies in their libraries and thus provide all of their members with the opportunity to keep up with the progress of our churches, of which they form an integral part. You can procure your copies from the Rev. Peter De Boer, Holland, Michigan.

3. "*The Standard Bearer*", should be subscribed to by each Society and kept on file for future reference and Bible study. We beseech our youth to read "*The Standard Bearer*" also. In the sixteen volumes now completed you can find the best commentary on the Scriptures obtainable. The English articles and the Meditations appearing in this "Reformed semi-monthly" magazine are worth the price of subscription alone. Two dollars and fifty cents ($2.50) sent to Mr. Ralph Schaafsma, 1101 Hazen Street, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan will deliver "*The Standard Bearer*" to your society for one year. Let's make work of subscribing to this magazine immediately!

L. Vermeer.

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Tomorrow's Man of God

Scripture often speaks of the man of God. When it does so in the Old Testament it has reference to the prophets, priests and kings. In the New Testament this limitation no longer exists. "The man of God" is not some prophet, apostle or evangelist, neither an elder, deacon or minister, but it is the Christian.

The Christian is the man of God because he is wholly of God. All that the Christian is and ever shall be is freely, sovereignly and only from God. God ordained him to bear the image of His Son. God purchased him to be His own peculiar possession through the blood of Christ. Through the Holy Spirit God implants in him the life of faith, calls him from darkness into light, makes him willing and ready to serve Him. In the midst of the world he lives to the glory of his God, fights the good fight of faith, loves and defends the truth of His Word. In whatever station or calling of life you may find him the glory of God's grace is marvelously revealed in him.

This, too, is our calling as covenant young people. We are today's men of God for tomorrow. The men of God who today are at the helm will soon be released from their post. The battle for the men of God, who today are on the front lines, will be over sooner than we realize. The men of God to whom we look up today for guidance and counsel will soon be called to their reward. The places now occupied by the men of God in the midst of the Church and the Kingdom will ere-long be found vacant, ready and waiting for us to fill them.

Today's men of God for tomorrow are we because God continues his covenant in the line of generations. The ranks in the army of the living God are not filled by volunteers, neither by conscripts from here and there and everywhere. The army of the living God is an army of royal, military race. To Abraham and his seed is the promise of the covenant: amongst his children, and in the families of all believers we find the men of God. The young man, the young woman born of Christian parentage, are the men of God today who will fill the ranks in the army of Christ tomorrow!

Glorious task!

Our task, tomorrow!

Will we be ready? Will our training and equipment be sufficient to enable us to heed the call and carry on? Let us not deceive ourselves with self-sufficiency lest we find ourselves in the predicament of unpreparedness. Preparedness should certainly be our watchword, for our task is not an easy one. Our station and calling in life will be one in a world of darkness. To be sure, tomorrow's world will be darker, more evil than the world of today. Powers of evil, more insidious than ever, will surround us. False philosophy will try to seduce us, and we may easily, so very easily go astray. Therefore, we must be trained carefully, wisely, correctly. The best training is none too good.

There is but one means by which we can so be trained. That means is the Word of God. That Word is divinely inspired that it might prove an unfailing means to be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, whether we are in society, shop, office, school, church or on the farm or in the military camps of our nation. In all our daily work, wherever we are or whatever we be, it must be evident that we are "men of God", called out of darkness into God's marvelous light to proclaim His praises.

What a glorious opportunity our young people's societies, our catechisms, our churches offer us to enable us to be trained thoroughly! Even now this little magazine, which makes its first appearance, becomes another means to that end. Hence, I'm sure we will gladly welcome it, read it, study it and work and pray together that it may truly prove to be such a means.

Are you, am I making good use of this preparedness program for the man of God? If we truly are men of God we shall. We shall by God's grace put forth all our efforts to learn from God's Word how to become prepared and we shall use every opportunity to be instructed therein. Let us never forget that the time to furnish "tomorrow's man of God" is TODAY.

"To-morrow is not far away, nor is the goal you seek,
To-day you should be training for the work you'll do next week.
The larger work is just ahead, each day new changes bring,—
Suppose that place were vacant now, could you take charge of things?
Some day there'll be a vacancy with greater things to do,
Will you be ready for that place, when God shall call on you?"

A. Cammenga.

Exciting Quotations

SCIENCE . . . .

A. M. Harding, Ph. D., *ASTRONOMY*,

New York, Garden City Publishing Co., Inc., 1935

THE CHARTER OF SCIENCE IS FOUND IN GENSIS

"Who can study the science of astronomy and contemplate the starlit heavens with a knowledge of the dimensions of the celestial bodies, their movements and their enormous distances, without bowing his head in reverence to the power that brought this universe into being and safely guides its individual members? From earliest times the most religious people have been the astronomers—those who had some idea as to their relation to the universe.

Astronomy and religion cannot be separated. No minister of the gospel can explain some parts of the Bible without some study of the universe. The Bible is not a textbook on science and it was not written for that purpose. However, it contains many scientific statements that are absolutely correct. In fact if the author of the book of Job was not an expert astronomer of his day, he at least knew much more about the subject than the average person gives him credit for knowing. Buried deep within the pages of this book are many hidden astronomical truths that are evident only to those who have made a special study of the universe.

The Charter of science is expressed in the first verse of Genesis, "In the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth." In our study of arithmetic we found it necessary to memorize certain multiplication tables which we were told were necessary before much progress could be made in this field. We have learned from experience that the facts expressed in these tables are true in any language and on any part of the globe. When we come to make application of the multiplication tables to the complex problems of modern life we sometimes arrive at contradictory results, not because our tables are in error, but for the simple reason that we have made improper deductions from them.

In a similar manner we may work out a scientific theory which turns out to be quite erroneous although based upon correct premises. No truer statement can be found in any scientific textbook than the one expressed in the first verse of Genesis and no true scientist would attempt to go behind that statement. If any errors creep into the development of the science of astronomy they are due to our mistakes and cannot be charged against this fundamental hypothesis upon which we base our deductions."—Pages 386, 387.

RELIGION . . . .

G. Campbell Morgan, *THE TRUE ESTIMATE OF LIFE AND HOW TO LIVE*,

New York, Fleming H. Revell Co., 1903

(This is a collection of sermons delivered by this famous preacher, and published in book form under the above title. Not long ago we read that the author, although well advanced in years is still drawing large congregations of listeners to his Wednesday evening meetings in distressed London.)

THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT OF HUMAN LIVES

"Jehovah our God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain." (Deut. 1:6.)

"Beloved, let me remind you that the divine goverment is a very definite fact. God is absolute monarch wherever He is King at all. His government is autocratic. He does not consult us as to what He shall do with us, where He shall send us, what He would have us to do. Moreover, His government is an imperative government. He never permits us to make compromises with Him for a single moment. He speaks the word of authority. He marks the path without ever consulting us, and having done so, our only relationship to that government is that of implicit, unquestioning obedience.

Now, consider what this government means. Imagine the stir that must have been created in that camp when the Lord came, "Ye have dwelt long enough in this mountain." Imagine how tents would be struck, and camels loaded throughout the whole of the camp. The people, who had been living there for a little more than a year, were suddenly rooted up and ordered to move away. Think how at the sudden proclamation of that word of God all social and family arrangements had to be set aside. That word touched every tent and touched every soul and wherever families had arranged to meet together at a certain time for social intercourse, the whole plan was swept away. The divine voice had spoken, "Ye have tarried long enough," and no engagement is of sufficient importance to hinder the divine word. Tents must be struck immediately. All the minor arrangements of every-day life, important in their place, must be set on one side, because the word of the King is supreme, and is sufficient in itself to set aside every arrangement that these people have made."—Pages 127, 128.