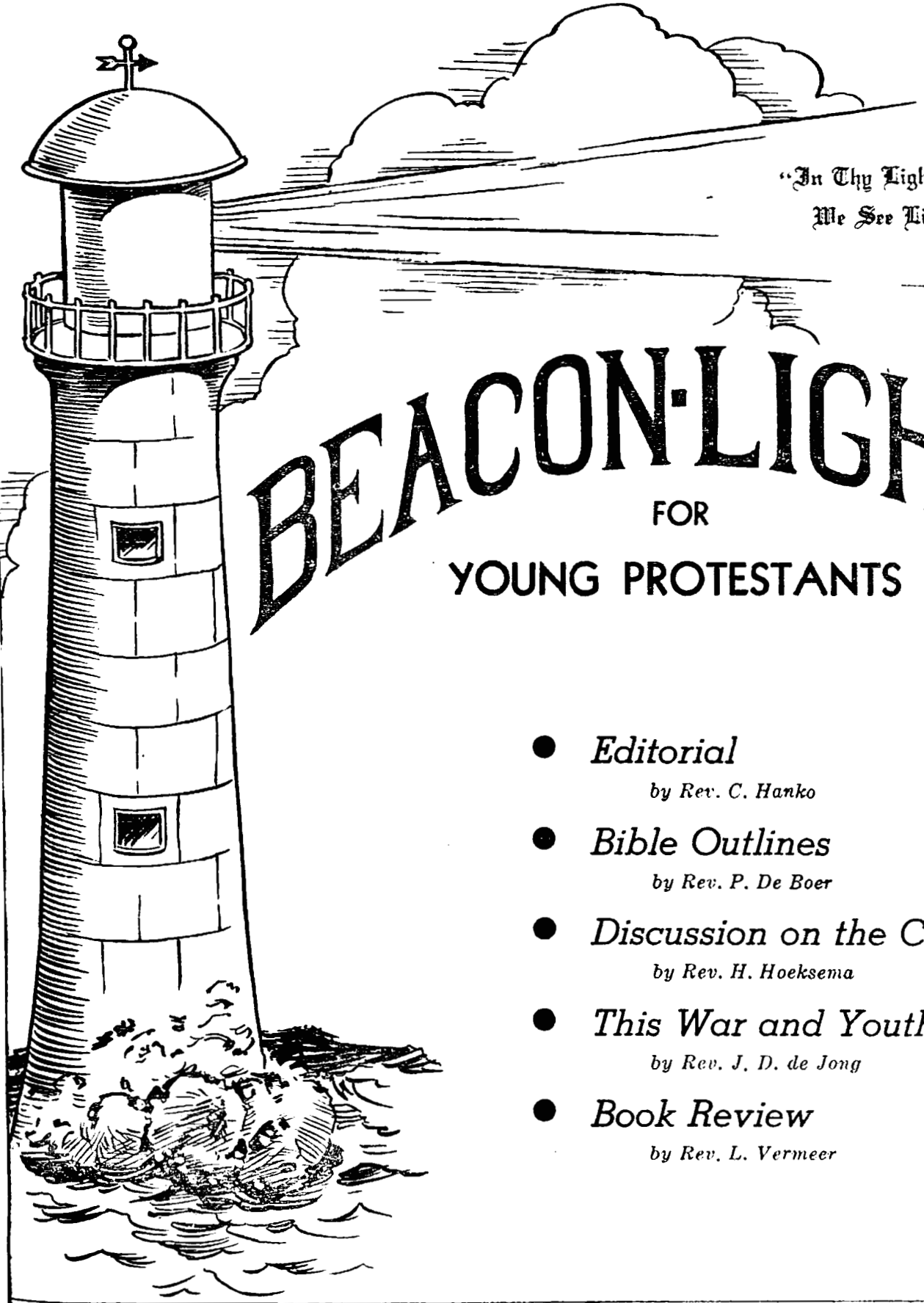

"In Thy Light Shall We See Light"

BEACON-LIGHTS

FOR YOUNG PROTESTANTS

- *Editorial*
  by Rev. C. Hanko
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Vol. I MARCH, 1941 No. 3

BEACON-LIGHTS for Young Protestants

MONTHLY PERIODICAL OF THE PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEDERATION

Vol. I | MARCH — 1941 | No. 3

Editorials

Off To Camp

Conscription is taking effect as America calls its men to the colors. Already its influences are being felt in the church, in the society and in the home. Some of our young men have already left for camp, others are preparing to go, while still others are awaiting their turn.

A Timely Article.

A timely article appeared as an editorial in the issue of December 1, 1940, of the Standard Bearer, under the heading, "Our Boys and Conscription". If any of you have failed to read this article, it will prove worth your while to check back and read it. The editor-in-chief mentions that "when our young men are called, they need have no scruples or conscientious objections". From certain viewpoints, he goes on to say, the army may even have a salutary effect on many a youth. But he also warns against the many disadvantages connected with life in the camp. Separation from the influence and fellowship of the Church and people of God, the religious atmosphere of the army, the recreation and amusement it offers, are but some of these. Such contact with the "world" in its worst form, is not to be deemed very lightly. So that the editor concludes with an admonition that the young Reformed conscript seek his strength in prayer. That he take his Bible with him and read it for spiritual strength, comfort and guidance. And that he obtain wholesome and spiritual literature, and "keep in correspondence with his pastor, his former society friends and fellow members, as well as with his home."

I refer to these things in the confidence that especially those who are personally involved in the conscription will avail themselves of the opportunity of reading the whole article.

What Can Be Done?

But there is another reason for referring to this matter at this time. The question has already been raised, what can be done by those at home for our boys in camp? No doubt, these boys will need the encouragement of every possible contact with friends. They are separated from their Church, their society, their home and companions, and thrown into the company of men who are no fit associates for them, whose very language and actions irritate and fill with revulsion. More than ever they are experiencing what Christian isolation means, to be in the world and yet not of the world. For how long a time is not even so certain. Although the present plans assure the boys that it is but for a year, and although the danger of a foreign invasion is not so imminent, nor yet the possibility of transporting our boys to foreign soil, as long as the war clouds hover over Europe and the talk of war fills the air here, there can be no real certainty Thus, while these boys are going through an entirely new and strange experience, are putting up a fight for their faith as they never before were called upon to do, must bear sneer and ridicule for righteousness' sake, everything possible must be done to help them. What can we do?

It has given me great satisfaction to learn that at least some of our young men in camp are regularly receiving their copies of *Beacon Lights*. That is on way in which the societies can help, simply by sending Beacon Lights to the conscripts of their congregation. While I have also been informed that the Young Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids has made arrangements within the society for correspondence with the boys in camp. That, too, is very commendable. But is it not possible to make our influence much more effective by having the Federation of the Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Societies take the matter in hand? I would suggest the following:

A Suggestion.

First of all, that the secretaries of the young peoples' societies of all our churches send the name, approximate age, present and former address of each of the conscripts from their congregation to be published in Beacon Lights. This should be done faithfully and regularly as the boys go off to camp. To make double sure, the boys in camp might also forward this information.

Secondly, that the Federation Board arrange a schedule, so that every society is responsible for a certain number of boys in camp. This schedule should be changed sufficiently often in order to give every society the opportunity of writing to almost all the boys. These societies can appoint their own committees of two, who are responsible each month for a part of the correspondence.

The advantage of this arrangement will be that young men from the different churches of our denomination, but in the same camp will be able to contact and get acquainted with each other. Another advantage is, that no one society will be responsible for the correspondence, but the work will be divided among all, thereby creating an endless variety in the correspondence. While, at the same time, if one society proves to be lax, the others will show themselves so much more faithful. And thereby acquaintance, if not lasting friendship will be created between our youth from the various parts of the country.

Shall We Act?

Suppose we put this plan into immediate action, before the summer lull is upon us. Possibly before the next two issues of *Beacon Lights* goes to press we shall be able to publish a list of names. Do not forget to send the name, the approximate age, and both the former and the present address. And I trust that the ever alert Federation Board will take this matter into consideration.

Bible Outlines

OUTLINE IX

The Law of Retaliation

FIRST WEEK OF MARCH

MATT. 5:38-42—Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not away.

Previous outlines emphasized that Christ as the Chief Prophet and Teacher does not at all oppose the law of God, but He opposes *the corrupt interpretation* attached to it by the scribes and Pharisees. The interpretation of the latter could plead antiquity, for it was an explanation handed down from generation to generation. But age is not necessarily a guarantee of validity, tradition does not vouchsafe truth; not all that is old is good. Sin is almost as old as the world, but none the less evil. So, too, it was with the traditionary interpretation of the law—it was a *corruption*, not an interpretation, of the law.

The Old Not Always Good.

In the vss. 38-42 Christ gives *another* example of corrupt interpretation, and warns against it. In this instance, it is the *jus talionis*, the law of retaliation, that is dealt with.

I. THE LAW OF RETALIATION AND ITS INTERPRETATION.—"An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth", vs. 38.

A. Its True Meaning in the Old Testament:

The law of retaliation in its full form reads, "life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burning for burning, wound for wound, stripe for stripe" (Ex. 21:23-25). See also Lev. 24:17-22 and Deut. 19:21.

The Meaning in the Old Testament.

It should be noticed: a. That in none of the above mentioned texts, considered in the light of the connection, is the meaning: "Go ahead and avenge yourselves for wrongs done unto you". b. The very opposite is the case. The texts speak of what the duly ordained *magistrates and judges* must do. The people were *not* to avenge *themselves*. The punishment of a wrong was not in their own jurisdiction but belonged in the hands of God's ministers of justice. c. The "eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth" stated the principle *according to which the judges* were to mete out justice. This principle must not be literally understood, but according to the spirit, namely, that the punishment be according to the crime. Such punishment is: not revenge, but the satisfaction of justice. The authorities, as God's ministers of justice, must judge righteously.

B. The Corrupt Interpretation of the Scribes and Pharisees:

Whereas the Old Testament taught the *public* administration of justice in the law of retaliation, the traditionary view had corrupted it and used the law in order to justify *personal* retribution and revenge. This interpretation defeated the very purpose unto which the law was given. Whereas the law of retaliation put the punishment of crime in the hands of the law courts, outside the sphere of personal revenge, the scribes and Pharisees used it *as a rule for personal revenge*. And this was done, even though the Old Testament itself strictly forbids personal revenge, and that in no uncertain terms. Lev. 19:18, "Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the Lord." See also Prov. 24:29 and Prov. 20:22. How wicked, in view of the clear teaching of the Old Testament, to corrupt the law to allow *personal revenge!*

The Corrupt Interpretation.

C. Present Day Confusion:

A recent commentator correctly points out that this confusion between private and public administration of justice also exists in our own day, be it in the other direction. Today Quakers and Mennonites, Modernists and Post-Millenialists, use the teaching of Jesus in the vss. 38-42 to attack the public ministration of justice. What Jesus asserts of our personal attitude, they apply to the magistrates. The same fundamental error the scribes and Pharisees made, they make. For example, in regard to the government's duty to *punish* (not merely *rehabilitate*) the criminal.

The Individuals versus the Government's Duty.

We must clearly distinguish the personal duty toward injury and the government's duty. No man has the right to avenge himself, no man has the right to punish. This right belongs to God alone. *God does not give that right to individuals: He does not allow them to avenge themselves.* See Rom. 12:19, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." Vengeance as the satisfaction of justice belongs to the Lord alone. However, *God does give the ministration of justice into the hands of the officers of law.* Through them *God* punishes the criminal. These magistrates have no right to administer justice of themselves, but their authority is *delegated* to them by God. Therefore they are responsible to God, and are called upon in God's name to use the sword power to protect the good and punish the evil, Rom. 13. It is an error to deny the ordained magistrates the right to punish crimes as God's servants as much as it was erroneous of the scribes and Pharisees to apply the rule of retaliation intended for the magistrates as a personal rule allowing the individual to take revenge.

II. WHAT OUR ATTITUDE MUST BE TOWARD PERSONAL INJURIES, vss. 39-42:

A. "That ye resist not evil, but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also".

1. This does not mean that a Christian may never participate in war. "Resist not evil" has been understood by Quakers to mean that Christians may never participate in war. Many others have used the text as an argument against participation in war. We remark: a. That war in itself isnot

War Condemned?

necessarily sinful. If it were, then God Himself commanded Israel to sin when He time and again led them to war against the enemy. b. That Rom. 13 gives the State the sword power, which it is commanded to use against the evil doers. There are criminal *nations* as well as criminal *individuals*, and the former as well as the latter must be punished. c. That the New Testament repeatedly speaks of God-fearing men that were soldiers in the employ of Rome (the centurion of Capernaum, Cornelius the centurion, etc.), but nowhere does it say that service in the army is in itself incompatible with the service of God. In brief, although we also condemn all unjust wars, we certainly cannot take the stand that *all* war is wrong, *always* wrong. Besides, as we intimated above, the text does not speak of the duty of *governments*, but of the duty of the *private individual*. God has given no individual the right to take the law in his own hands and punish evil with evil, to retaliate for the wrong done him.

2. The entire verse must be understood in its spirit, not in the letter. Literally understood, it would even mean that evil might not be resisted by preaching, instruction and example! Besides,

Literally?

one might literally turn the other cheek and still not keep the spirit of the law. Neither did Christ literally turn the other cheek, John 18:22. The sense of the passage is: Don't resist evil with evil, don't give "tit for tat", don't treat as you are treated. On the contrary: Reward evil with good, Rom. 12:20, 21. Rather suffer wrong twice than do it once.

B. "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also", vs. 40:

The text presupposes that *the other man* begins the law-suit. Certainly a Christian should not bring a fellow-Christian into court, I Cor.

Law-Suit.

6:1ff. If the Christian is threatened with a law-suit it is better to be defrauded than in a spirit of revenge and rancor to fight the case out. It is better to suffer evil than to fight evil with evil and to become guilty of hatred and sin yourself.

The word translated *coat* refers to the tunic, the undergarment worn next to the body; while the word *cloak* refers to the toga or over-garment.

Coat and Cloak.

The second was considered more valuable and more indispensable than the first. According to Ex. 22:26, 27 and Deut. 24:12, 13, if the cloak of a poor man were taken as a pledge it was to be returned before nightfall, since it was used by the poor as their covering while asleep.

C. "And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain," vs. 41:

The Greek word for "compel to go" literally means "to force into transport service" and has to do with the postal service of that day.

Postal Requisition.

The Persian arrangements, dating from Darius' time and still adhered to in Jesus' day, allowed the postal messengers to requisition men, cattle or carriages, for carrying on their journey from station to station. Suddenly to have one's services requisitioned for this purpose was surely unpleasant, the more whereas it meant employ for the *Roman government*. The sense of the verse is: Rather than resentfully and with vengeance in your heart going the required mile, it is better of your own accord to go another mile. Again the idea is: Be not overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good.

D. "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," vs. 42:

If a brother in distress asks for aid, don't turn a deaf ear to his plea just because he has

Get Even?

wronged you. Don't use the opportunity to "get even" with him. Don't retaliate previous wrongs. On the contrary, do him good. Crush your wicked desire to revenge yourself.

QUESTIONS: Does the Old Testament teach personal revenge? If not, what does it teach? How is our present day guilty of confusing one's personal duty toward evil with that of the government? Should the public administration of justice have as its guiding principle the rehabiliation of the criminal or the satisfaction of justice? If the latter, does this exclude seeking the former? Is war always wrong? May Christians ever appeal to the law courts in case of a dispute? Is the "passive resistance" of Mahatma Gandhi in India a carrying out of the principle established by Jesus? Does vs. 42 mean that a Christian must lend to every brother always?

Announcement: — The secretary of the 1941 Convention committee requests all the societies of the Federation to send the names and addresses of their secretaries to Miss Margaret Regnerus, 9100 Ridgeland Ave., Oaklawn, *Illinois*. *Please* cooperate by doing so at once. The 1941 Convention committee will soon be ready to announce their plans for the approaching Convention.

OUTLINE X

The Law of Love

SECOND WEEK OF MARCH

MATT. 5:43-48—Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thy enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

There is undoubtedly a close relation between the material presented in the previous lesson and the material of this. The two sections belong together and are so intimately related that Luke 6 intertwines them completely. As far as the thought is concerned we might say that while the previous section teaches *love in its passive form of endurance,* the present section teaches *love in its active form.*

Active Love.

I. THE TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE PHARISEES, vs. 43.

In two respects the Pharisaic interpretation is in flagrant conflict with the law of God. *First of all,* because it *added* something to God's law. The words "and hate thy enemy" occur nowhere in the Old Testament. It may be true that "neighbour" in the Old Testament had reference to the Israelitish nation, but God never taught hatred of one's enemy. Add to that "neighbour" in the Old Testa- Pharisees meant *personal* enemies, those that hated *them.* By the addition "and hate thy enemy" the Pharisees taught that it was perfectly permissible before God to hate one's personal enemies. *Secondly,* the Pharisaic rendition of the law was also a corruption because it *omitted* something. An omission is frequently as serious as an addition, e.g. the omission of the antithesis in most "gospel" hymns is a serious matter; the omission of the atonement by the blood of the cross from the Modernist preacher's sermon is a serious omission. So, too, the Pharisees' omission of the words "as thyself". Lev. 19:18 teaches "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself", c.f. Gal. 5:14. The emphasis clearly falls upon *how* we must love, not upon *whom* we must love. The traditional view omitted the *how* and then laid emphasis upon the *whom.* Consequently they went about asking, Who is my neighbour? Lk. 10.

Addition and Omission.

By the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10), the Saviour definitely taught that it is our solemn duty *to play the part of neighbour, to prove ourself neighbour,* to everyone we come into contact with, irrespective of who he is. By the addition "and hate thy enemy" the Pharisees made the law of God of none effect, and destroyed its very purpose. This corruption of the law was not a mere matter of simple ignorance, but a wicked attempt to adapt the law of God to man instead of vice-versa. Although the law of love is more clearly taught in the New Testament than in the Old—something, by the way, which is equally true of every other Scriptural truth—the Old Testament certainly also taught love, also of one's enemies. See Lev. 19:34; Ps. 4:5; Prov. 24:17; 25:21ff., etc.

II. CHRIST'S INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW OF LOVE:

A. As Such—"But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you" vs. 44.

Notice: 1. That Christ speaks of "*your* enemies". Apparently the emphasis falls upon *personal* enemies, enemies that hate *us,* those we are naturally inclined to hate in return. 2. That Christ teaches us to *love* them. Love is the bond of perfection operative in the sphere of holiness between those mutually holy. Of course, in this case the love is one-sided. Christ does not mean that we should associate and fraternize with those that walk in wickedness. Neither does he mean that we should merely be friendly, etc. He demands *love, true* love. This love must needs reprimand the wicked man for his sin, in the spirit of love, and call him to repentance. 3. That the love demanded must be a *complete* love: in *disposition* (love), in *word* (bless), in *act* (do good), in *intercession* (pray for).

Loving Our Enemies.

B. Why the Citizens of the Kingdom must Love the Enemies, vss. 45-48:

1. "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust".

a. The children of God, and such the citizens of the kingdom of heaven are, must reveal the image of their Father. That image requires that they also love their enemies.

God Loves His Enemies.

God loves His enemies. If such were not the case none would be saved, for by nature all are enemies of Him. God loved His people while they were yet enemies of him, Rom. 5:8. God loved His enemies in Christ, and therefore the elect are saved. As imagebearers of the Father our love must be like His, and not be limited merely to those that love us.

b. "For he maketh his sun. . . ." Common Grace argues from this that God is gracious to all and blesses all. This is in conflict with all of Scripture, Prov. 3:33, Ps. 7:11, etc. Neither does the text say that God loves *all* men;

No Common Grace.

the latter is a *conclusion, a conclusion which is everywhere contradicted by Scripture.* It is true that rain and sunshine happen to fall upon *all,* but this is not the point of the text. The point of the text is that rain and sunshine do not come *only* upon the righteous ,but also upon others. So, too, our love must not be limited to our friends. For further study see by Rev. H. Hoeksema, *The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches,* pp. 317 ff.; *God's Goodness Always Particular,* pp. 184 ff.

2. "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?", vss. 46, 47.

The citizens of the kingdom must be, positively speaking, *like their father in heaven;* negatively, *unlike sinners.* If they love only those that love them, if they greet only those

Be Like God Not Like Sinners.

that greet them, they do not differ from publicans. *Publicans* were the tax-gatherer; they were generally abhorred for their cruelty and avarice, and especially because they were in the employ of Rome. They were classified with the public women, etc.; hence Scripture speaks of "publicans and sinners" in one breath. Vs. 46 emphasizes also that unless they differ from publicans and Pharisees, there is no reward. See vs. 12 for "reward".

3. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." vs. 48.

The Greek word for "perfect" means: *complete in every part.* As their Father is perfect, so the citizens of the kingdom must be perfect. This does not imply that moral perfection, absolute sinlessness, can be attained

Be Perfect.

in this life; it does imply that the Christian must strive after it. See Phil. 3:12-14; I Pet. 1:15, 16. Whether this vs. must be construed as a fitting conclusion to the entire contents of chap. 5, or merely as a conclusion to the portion treated in this outline, is debatable. However, it seems more natural to connect up the exhortation with the subject matter of the present outline, in which case the meaning is: Be perfect in love to thy neighbour.

QUESTIONS: Why is it false to assert that the Old Testament teaches hate and the New Testament love? How did the Pharisees corrupt the law of love? Can you harmonize Ps. 139:21, 22 with Matt. 5:44? How should our love to our enemies reveal itself? Does the fact that God rains upon righteous and unrighteous both, prove a favorable attitude on the part of God toward the reprobate? Who were the publicans? Should a Christian strive after absolute sinlessness? Can it be attained in the present life?

HOW TO DREAD SOCIETY

1. Take your time about getting ready to go, if you wish you can even stop to read the paper; it doesn't make any difference if you are a little late, no one should mind the disturbance.
2. Be sure you have not looked at your Bible outlines before you come to Society, so that you will be thoroughly prepared to know nothing about the discussion.
3. Take no part in the discussion, leave that to others. Show no interest whatsoever and pay no attention to what goes on.
4. Be sure you look at your watch every few minutes to drag out the minutes as long as possible.
5. Never take your turn in the program. Either make the excuse that you were not told that it was your turn, or that you had no time Both

(Cont. on p. 8)

OUTLINE XI

Alms Giving

THIRD WEEK OF MARCH

MATT. 6:1-4—Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly.

While Matt. 5:17-48 speaks of the righteousness of the kingdom as in harmony with the law properly interpreted, Matt. 6 does not speak of the *interpretation* of the law, but of its *practise.*

Corrupt Practises.

In the former chapter the Saviour condemned the corrupt law *interpretation* of the scribes and Pharisees; in this chapter the Saviour condemns and warns against their corrupt *practises.* The sixth chapter emphasizes that the service of God must be: a. From the heart, and not to be seen of men (vss. 1-18); b. With an undivided heart, in wholehearted devotion (vss. 19-34).

The first eighteen verses set forth the true observance of righteousness over against the false in connection with: Almsgiving (vss. 1-4), Prayer (vss. 5-15), Fasting (vss. 16-18). The Pharisees made much of these three religious acts; Christ exposes their corruption and exhorts the believers to practise a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees.

I. THE DEHORTATION, vss. 1, 2:

A. "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of men. . . ."

Almsgiving to be Seen of Men.

1. Instead of the word "alms" found in the King James Version of the Bible, the Revised reads "righteousness". If the latter be the true rendition, then vs. 1 is a general introduction to all the first eighteen verses. The fundamental meaning of the section remains unaltered in either case.

2. Jesus condemns almsgiving *to be seen of men.* The point is not so much that others behold our giving, as that it may not be our *motive and aim* to be seen of men. If almsgiving might not be *before men* (in front of men), then it would be wrong to take up an offering for the poor in public. The sin condemned is the *desire and purpose* to be seen of men.

3. Almsgiving that has as its purpose the praise of men receives no reward of the Father.

Has No Reward.

The statement is negative, because such givers usually imagine that God ought to be beholden to them for their gifts. The text therefore says that God does *not* reward them. Positively expressed, God rejects such sacrifices; they are an abomination to Him.

4. "Take heed that ye do not". The danger of unrighteous almsgiving is not imaginary, but very real. For every one of us.

Be On Your Guard.

We must continually be on our guard. Our carnal heart is no better than that of the scribe and Pharisee. Our carnal nature loves to be seen of men. Hence, be on your guard.

B. "Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do. . . ."

1. By the "hypocrites" Christ means "the scribes and Pharisees". See Matt. 23:13-34. A hypocrite is a pretender, an actor, he plays the part of another. He *pretends* love to God and the poor, but he *intends* the praise of men. He acts as though he means to give, while his real intention is to receive.

2. Whether the scribes and Pharisees *literally* sounded a trumpet in the synagogue and in the streets before they gave their alms, or whether this must be understood *figuratively*, is not certain. Some say that the Pharisees actually called the poor together; as swine are called to the trough when the farmer feeds them. However, it is certain that the Pharisees took care that their giving was advertised and noised abroad, that men might praise them.

Sounding the Trumpet.

3. Jesus says, "Verily I say unto you, They have their reward". There is a terrible reality expressed in the words, "They have their reward." They sought the praise of men, they received it; hence, they have been paid in full. No heavenly reward awaits them. On the contrary, they receive punishment for their wickedness.

Paid in Full.

II. THE POSITIVE INJUNCTION, vss. 3, 4:

A. "But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: that thine alms may be in secret".

Almsgiving a Duty.

1. Christ does not discourage almsgiving. Almsgiving, charity, benevolence, is a Christian duty. A Christian not only *must*, but *will* give alms. See Acts 6; II Cor. 8, 9, etc.

2. The expression "let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth" is figurative. It means: Christian giving should be done: not ostentatiously, to be seen of men, but from the principle of love to God and gratitude.

B. "And thy Father. . . . shall reward thee openly":

Rewarded Openly.

1. God rewards righteous almsgiving. However, the reward is not of merit, but of grace.

2. God will reward "openly". The secret things shall be made manifest, by the God who seeth in secret. The reward given you will be an evident one.

3. This reward does not consist in an increase of earthly goods, as some say ("give much and you will receive much"). But it consists in *the blessing of God, in growth in grace,* in this life; in the life to come *an eternal reward.*

QUESTIONS: What is meant by almsgiving? Is all giving almsgiving? In what way are we all exposed to the danger of hypocritical almsgiving? What is a hypocrite? Does this passage militate against signing one's name to a pledge? Does it militate against giving per envelope? Is it true that abundant giving is a sure way to abundant receiving?

How To Dread Society (Cont. from p. 6)

of these do much toward making things boresome.

6. While others are taking their part you can be of great service by day-dreaming or having some innocent fun whispering with your neighbor. You might even stage-whisper your criticisms of those who are always pushing themselves to the fore and running things.
7. And all the while you can think of all the wonderfully exciting things you might be doing, and wonder why you are not doing them at that very moment.
8. As soon as the meeting is adjourned banish all thought of society until the next week.

Ho, hum, those meetings can be such a bore.

OUTLINE XII

Prayer

FOURTH WEEK OF MARCH

MATT. 6:5-15—And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly. But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be ye not therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him. After this manner therefore pray ye ..... For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

I. HOW THE CITIZENS OF THE KINGDOM ARE TO PRAY: vss. 5-8.

A. Not as the Hypocrites Do:

1. How the Hypocrites Pray:

By the "hypocrites" Christ refers to the scribes and Pharisees. As previously stated, a hypocrite is a *pretender.* He *acts* pious but is not. To men he appears very righteous, but God who knoweth the heart sees him in his true character. The Pharisees liked (the word *love* used here really means *like;* it is another word in the original than that used in 5:44 meaning *love*), they *took pleasure in,* praying on the street corners. By street corners are meant *public squares.* Naturally their only purpose was: to be seen of men. See Matt. 23:14, 25-28; Lk. 18:9-14.

Street-Corner Praying.

2. How the Citizens of the Kingdom are to Pray:

a. They are to pray in seclusion. The word "closet" means any inner chamber away from the sight of men. Although the contrast *appears* merely to be between praying in

Inner Chamber. private and in public, the *real* contrast is between ostentatious prayer and prayer from the heart. Hence, this verse does not condemn every public prayer, e.g., congregational prayers on the Lord's Day. However, in public prayers (in which one leads the rest in prayer) the motive must be: not to be seen of men, but love of God.

b. Prayer is answered. God always hears the prayer of faith. If requests are not granted, it is because to grant them would be harmful. When the Christian from the heart adds "if it be Thy will", then he desires only what God knows is good for him. Thus understood, every prayer is answered.

Prayer Is Answered.

B. Not as the Heathen Do: vss. 7, 8.

1. How the Heathen Pray: The heathen make long prayers, and use "vain repetitions". This is to be understood, since they conceive of prayer as a means to placate their gods. Their gods must be won over. Hence their prayers are accompanied by self-inflicted punishments and various self-castigations. Cf. I Kings 18:25-29. The Mohammedans make much use of "vain repetitions". Also the Catholics. The latter do this undoubtedly because they have assimilated this heathenism into their doctrine, and because they too look upon prayer as a meritorious work.

Heathen Praying.

2. How the Children of God are to Pray:

They are not to use vain repetition and much speaking. And this because, "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him". They are to remember that they pray, not to a god who must be placated, but to "your Father". God wishes to be asked, but He does not need to be told or won over. A child asks mother for bread, not because mother does not know its needs, but because it is assured that mother will hear and grant at once what it needs.

Our Father Knows Our Needs.

II. THE LORD'S PRAYER: vss. 9-13.

A. General Observations:

1. The "therefore" points to a conclusion drawn from the preceding verse. Yet, how strange. After "your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him", one would expect: "Therefore ye need not pray at all". But Christ does not draw this conclusion. The Christian *must* pray ,and *will* pray. As the needle of the compass always turns north, as the sunflower turns toward the sun, so the Christian will draw nigh to God.

Prayer Necessary.

2. The Lord's prayer was not intended as a *ritual* prayer, but as a *model and pattern.* Christ did not say: Pray "with these words": but, Pray "after this manner". Christians are to study the principles of prayer therein laid down, and conform themselves thereto.

A Model.

3. This prayer was also uttered by Christ on another occasion. Then in a slightly different form. Lk. 11:1-4. Notice that on this other occasion the prayer was given in answer to the disciples' request, "Lord, teach us to pray".

Twice Given.

4. The Lord's Prayer is characterized by comprehensive brevity. That it is *brief* is self-evident. But note also its comprehensiveness; everything is included.

Comprehensive Brevity.

5. The Prayer consists of three parts: a. An Address—"Our Father which art in heaven". b. Six Petitions. The first three petitions relate directly to God—*thy* Name, *thy* Kingdom, *thy* Will. The second three relate to our immediate needs—*our* daily bread, *our* trespasses, *our* deliverance from evil. c. A Doxology, or Word of Praise—"For thine is the Kingdom. . . ."

Three Parts.

B. The Component Parts of the Prayer:

(We refer you to the explanation of the Heid. Catechism, for study of each of the parts of the prayer. Space forbids us to elaborate on each of these parts in our outlines, especially since we wish to cover the entire Sermon during the remainder of this season. It seemed best to us to so arrange the material that we can briefly outline the *entire* Sermon in the five issues of the Beacon Lights. Societies that continue through the summer might well spend some weeks on this Prayer and make use of the explanation of the Catechism. See Lord's Day 45-52. We suggest that such societies come back to this Prayer during the summer months.)

III. THE NECESSITY OF FORGIVING OUR DEBTORS: vss. 14, 15.

A. A Strange Fact:

In these verses Christ comes back to the thought expressed in one of the petitions of the Lord's Prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we for-

give our debtors". The question therefore quite naturally arises, Why did Christ come back on this and re-iterate the necessity of forgiving the brother? Several reasons might be suggested: First, because the scribes and Pharisees so evidently trampled this rule under foot—there was need to emphasize it. Secondly, because it is human nature to seek forgiveness, without wishing to give it. The disciples need the warning, ever anew. Thirdly, because it is a gross error to separate the love of God from the love of the neighbour. Fourthly, because the true child of God is hereby earmarked that as he has been forgiven, so he will by God's grace forgive the brother.

Why Come Back on This?

B. Meaning: Scripture does not teach that our forgiveness of the brother is the *ground* of God's forgiveness—only Christ's sacrifice is the ground. Neither does Scripture mean to teach that our forgiveness is *first*, and thereupon God's follows—God's forgiveness is logically and in point of time always first. But Scripture does mean that the child of God who seeks forgiveness of God, experiences in his heart that God's grace moves him to forgive. I Jno. 3:14, 17. As then he experiences God's grace inclining him to forgive, so, too, the Giver of that grace surely forgives. Besides, if we do not love the brother whom we have seen, how can we love God whom we hav not seen? I Jno. 4:19, 20. If we are unwilling to forgive, then neither are we earnest in our search after forgiveness. Sin has not become sin for us; we have not repented.

The Relation between Forgiving and Receiving Forgiveness.

QUESTIONS: Why must a Christian pray? If all things happen according to God's counsel, is not prayer superfluous? Why does God refuse some requests? What objections, if any, do you have to the custom of prayer meetings? What should be first in our prayers: God or our own needs? Why is it impossible to receive forgiveness of God, if we refuse to forgive the brother?

* * * * * *

(P.S. — Although there are five Sundays in the month of March, we have prepared only four outlines for the month. Because of the late appearance of the first issue of the BEACON LIGHTS, all the Societies are at least one week behind schedule. By omitting one outline the Societies will have opportunity to "catch up").

Discussion on the Canons

These notes have been contributed by Rev. H. Hoeksema and edited by Rev. C. Hanko.

QUESTIONS on Articles 17, 18.

46. What does article 17 say about children that die in infancy?
47. Does the Bible teach anythiing definite with respect to this?
48. What should be our answer to them that murmur at the doctrine of election? Article 18.
49. To what should a believing contemplation of election and reprobation lead us? Why?

ANSWERS

46. Article 17 seems to teach that all children of believers that die in infancy are surely saved. However, it may be remarked:
(1) That for such an absolute statement there would be no ground in Scripture. The Bible certainly teaches that not all the children of believers are elect. Only the children of the promise are counted for the seed. This must also be borne in mind when it teaches that children of believers are holy. And Scripture does not clearly teach that all the children of believers that die in infancy are saved.
(2) That, however, upon closer consideration it is evident that article 17 does not make such a statement. In the first place, it does not speak of all confessing believers, but of godly parents, that is, parents that walk in the way of God's Covenant, receive their children from the Lord, earnestly consecrate them to God and purpose to instruct them in the fear of the Lord. And secondly, it looks at the matter from the viewpoiint of these parents and merely expresses that they have no reason to doubt the salvation of their children.

(3) That it is our conviction that here we are dealing with a matter that strictly falls under the category of the secret things that belong unto the Lord our God.

47. The above is also the answer to question 47. The example of David and his child that was taken away, and of Jeroboam and his son do not shed any light upon this question.
48. Our answer to them that murmur at the doctrine of election should not be that we make an attempt to defend God. If the doctrine of election and reprobation is denied we can quote Scripture to prove that it is true. But if anyone murmurs at this doctrine we should do as Scripture does and appeal to the high sovereignty of God over against mere man.
49. A believing contemplation of the truth of predestination must always lead us to glorify and adore God with thankful hearts. The reason is, that it is this doctrine that maintains that God is all and man is nothing, and our salvation is to be attributed only to the wondrous and glorious grace of the Most High.

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CHAPTER II.

QUESTIONS on Article 1.

50. With what does the second chapter of the Canons deal?
51. How is this subject related to that of the first chapter?
52. What, in general, is the teaching of the Arminians with respect to the atonement of Christ?
53. What attribute of God is mentioned in article 1 of this second chapter and why?
54. What follows from the justice of God with respect to the only way in which we can be saved? Article 1.

ANSWERS

50. The subject of the second chapter of the Canons is the atonement of Christ.
51. It is related to the subject of the first chapter as cause and effect. The doctrine of election or the denial of this doctrine necessarily determines our view of the atonement of Christ, with a view to the question: for whom did Christ die?
52. In general the teaching of the Arminians regarding this subject is that Christ died for all men without distinction, in His and God's intention.
53. Article 1 makes mention of the attribute of God's justice, because it is by virtue of this attribute that sin must be punished, and forgiveness of sin can be granted only on the basis of complete satisfaction. God's justice, then, makes atonement necessary unto salvation.
54. It follows that satisfaction, i.e., suffering the punishment of sin is necessary unto salvation.

* * * * *

QUESTIONS on Chap. 2, Artt. 2, 3.

55. Why cannot we ourselves make satisfaction for sin? Article 2.
56. Who, then, made this satisfaction, and how?
57. What does it mean that Christ was made sin for us? What does it not mean?
58. What is said of the death of the Son of God in article 3?
59. In what sense can we speak of the death of the *Son of God?* Did Christ die as to His divine nature?
60. How must we understand that the death of Christ was sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world? Did Christ suffer more than was necessary for the salvation of the elect?

ANSWERS

55. We cannot make satisfaction.
(1) Because we constantly owe our all to God and would never be able to pay any debt with God.
(2) Because we are dead in sin and can never bring to God a pleasing sacrifice. Yet such must be the act of satisfaction. It must not merely be the bearing of the punishment, but the active, willing suffering of that punishment from the motive of love in perfect obedience.
(3) Because we could never bear eternal punishment and live.
56. God's only begotten Son in the flesh, however, was able to make this satisfaction,
(1) Because He was without sin Himself and perfectly obedient.
(2) Because His death has infinite value. He could bear the wrath of God and live.
(3) Because He was ordained the head of

His people and could die vicariously in their stead.

57. That Christ was made sin does not mean that He became in any way sinful, for He was perfectly righteous and holy. But it does mean that He stood judicially at the head of His sinful people and that God treated Him as if He were the sinner, causing Him to bear our punishment.

58. Article 3 speaks of the death of the Son of God.
(1) As the only and most perfect sacrifice. It is such because it was brought in perfect obedience to God from the principle of the love of God, and hence, it was blameless.
(2) As being of infinite value. It is this because it is the death of the Son of God. This is to be understood, not as if He died in His divine nature, but so, that the Person of the Son of God died in His assumed human nature.
(3) That it is sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. This is not mean to express that Christ died for all in the world; nor even that He suffered more than is necessary for the satisfaction of the justice of God. But it does mean that Christ's sacrifice is of unlimited value. If it had pleased God to save more than the elect through the death of the Son of God, no other sacrifice would have been necessary.

59. Christ died, not according to His divine, but according to His human nature. Nevertheless, it was the Person of the Son of God that so died in His human nature.

60. Christ did not suffer more than was necessary for the salvation of the elect. But the death of Christ is of infinite value, because it was the death of the Son of God, and because of this it was always sufficient in power of expiation.

This War and Youth

by Rev. J. D. De Jong

The Attention of Youth is Demanded. . . . .

We are rapidly becoming accustomed to the fact that war rages in the world today. Technically we are not at war with any nation, and, consequently we are able to avoid for the present ,at least, the pain, the sorrow and the distress that direct, armed participation carries with it. This latter also explains the possibility of our indifference. Nevertheless we are forced to take cognizance of this struggle. Both the character and the scope of this conflict prevent us from ignoring its reality and its implications.

The character of this war can be determined somewhat from the sentiment expressed by Adolph Hitler in a recent speech. He said in effect that "at present there are two worlds that stand opposed to each other, the world of the "have-nots" and the "haves", the totalitarian world and the world of the democracies. With the democratic world we can never reconcile ourselves." It is therefore plain that more than territorial ambition is at stake in this conflict. It is also a conflict of principles, basic ideas. And as Reformed Youth you can never ignore a battle of opposed idealogies.

Still more concrete is the scope and extent of this war. Geographically it is reaching into Asia, Asia Minor, Africa and Europe. From our American point of view the main contestants are Great Britain and Germany. We are more concerned with happenings in these two countries than we are with the events taking place in Italy and Greece, in China and Japan, or in and around Egypt and Ethiopia. This gigantic struggle approaches us in various ways. In our modern, interdependent world the parts very definitely affect the whole.

The increasing severity of this international, world-wide conflict renders this situation still more acute. All "experts" agree that an "all-out" Spring offensive is to be expected in Europe wherein Germany and her allies will exert themselves to the limit to crush the British empire. In fact, it is possible that this Spring offensive is well under way when these lines appear in print. We have heard rumblings from the Orient of late, causing us no little concern as to the security of

our position in the Pacific. Our President, Mr. F. D. Roosevelt, summed up his view of the danger of the present day for America when he said, "Never before, since Jamestown and Plymouth Rock, has our American civilization been in such danger as now. . . . This unholy alliance of the axis powers aims at a program of world control."

Certainly we as American youth must be concerned about this war. On the basis of the above we can not pursue an ostrich-like policy, hiding our heads in the sand to avoid reality. Our attention is demanded!

Youth is Affected in Many Respects. . . . .

Our thinking is perhaps first of all affected by this war. By means of radio, press, and pulpit this thing is constantly brought before our attention. The chief topic of conversation has shifted from a consideration of the weather and its consequences to a discussion about some phase of the war. Meanwhile we are besieged with pro-British propaganda, all of which colours our opinions to a large extent. Sympathy and antipathy is aroused. Our atmosphere is charged with the currents and cross-currents of international strife.

Youth is affected still more particularly, however, by our own national program for defense. Now that we are awakening out of our lethargy, millions upon millions of dollars are being spent to prepare ourselves in the event of actual combat. This program calls for an enlarged army and navy, and increased production of war materials. Both of these phases of our national defence directly involve our youth. Our young men and women are called upon to work in our large industries. Our young men are compelled to shoulder arms for their country. Then there is the unpleasant truth that if war should actually mean armed participation by soldiers of America, our young men, the "flower of the nation", will be obligated to sacrifice their very lives if need be, on the battle-fields. War means exactly that.

But, you say, at present we are not required to fight, nor to suffer and die as if we were actually participating. And what is more, our government promises to do all in its power to avoid bloodshed. Yes that much is true. Nevertheless we all must agree that our present "aid-to-Britain" policy is extremely dangerous. Reality is that war may be entered upon at any moment. Of course we all hope that this may never happen, yet we must not comfort ourselves with false illusions. This present struggle is of such a character and so tremendous in scope that we cannot help but be affected in many ways. Let us then be wide awake to the implications and possibilities of this war.

Youth will Share in the Aftermath of the War. . .

That this war will produce great changes in the world as we know it today is quite generally maintained by students of political and economic science. In event of a totalitarian victory the results that will follow are easy to imagine. Germany and Russia under Hitler and Stalin furnish us with excellent examples upon the basis of which we can readily visualize the changes that will take place in countries conquered by these powers. Should Britain survive, the old order will nevertheless suffer change. Democracy and capitalism as exemplified by the English is believed to have seen its day. Far reaching changes are in store, and these changes will affect youth. New problems will have to be faced, in a certain sense a new world will make its appearance, and a new period in the history of mankind will be realized. And although these changes may begin in Europe or in any other part of the world, America will certainly be affected.

This aftermath will also carry disease, famine, depression, both physical and financial, and other dire consequences along with it. These things invariably accompany war. And they too will embrace America, even though we should be able to avoid actual combat.

These consequences are of tremendous importance for youth. They will affect youth in respect to their jobs and their conceptions: they will change the picture of their entire life. The old generation will die out, but it remains for youth to carry on.

Our Youth should View this War as a Sign of the Times. . . .

Whatever the future may have in store for us as Christian, Reformed youth we must view this war as one more "sign of the times". For us the future is not an unknown quantity. We know that the Lord will bring judgment upon the nations by means of wars and rumors of wars. And even though the purpose in the minds of the warring nations is to establish their way of thinking and their way of life by means of force, God

uses such means to realize the purposes of His sovereign good pleasure.

Youth is idealistic. Nevertheless in times such as these it is well that we take a realistic view of the facts in the present situation. For one thing it is increasingly evident that the world is being swept along toward that new order termed in Scripture as "the kingdom of Anti-Christ". Also, the fact that peace will erelong be established between the nations does not mean that peace is in store for the Church of Jesus Christ on earth. Let us not entertain false, deceptive notions unawares. The concentration camps, the secret police or "Gestapo" as they are called, as existing *today* in Germany and Russia, are only beginnings of worse things to come. For it is the plain testimony of Scripture that the last days before the end will be filled with tribulation for the people of God.

Shall we stand? Only if we heed the call to equip ourselves with the whole armor of God, preparing ourselves spiritually to wage that spiritual warfare that can only result in victory. That demands recognition of the seriousness of our calling. Still more, that demands that we always remember that our God rules over all, that His counsel must be fufilled, and that the final climax of all things will take place at the glorious return of Christ to redeem us forever from the powers of iniquity. On the basis of such faith we can be optimistic in the midst of a chaotic world, knowing that we are of Christ, and that Christ is King forevermore.

J. D.

Book Review

THE VISION, by Paul Hutchens. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan. Price $1.00.

The title of this book suggests the plot, which concerns a certain Rodney Deland who had a "vision". At first he strove after it, then lost it through a sad love affair but finally regained and acted according to it.

Rodney's ambition to use his talent to sing in the service of God's kingdom is the "vision". It was his ideal to become a worthy servant of God. He had been inspired to this end by his father who had given his entire life for the cause of the kingdom of God. Before the father's violent and so-called "accidental" death, he had often witnessed for the truth and many a heart had been touched and inspired by his "songs of truth". After his death Mrs. Deland often spoke to her son of continuing the good work which his father had begun. Thus it was that Rodney came to see the "vision" of glory in which he could take a leading part. He realized that through the use of his God-given talents he was called to work to the furtherance of the kingdom of God in the world.

Two factors caused Rodney to loose sight of his "vision" temporarily. He fell in love with a talented young lady whose so-called religion was in reality no religion at all. She adored the beautiful; the "beauty" of this world was her god. She worshipped this "beauty" with passionate service. To the sin of the world, including her own, she gave no consideration. This girl had a tragic influence on Rodney as did also the professors of the university at which he was studying. They served him with stones instead of bread, speaking of a better self in every man. Supposedly, man was struggling on the long, upward trail, through a process of evolution, toward God—or rather, to some goal that these men called God. Through these evil influences Rodney's faith began to waver, and finally to fall. At first he realized that there was no "key-note" in this modernism, for there was no true Lord and Saviour. Gradually he became unfaithful and was swept along with the modern current. He lost his vision and its "key-note"—Christ and Him crucified. He no longer had a gospel to bring through his music and song.

After tremendous spiritual struggles, Rodney finished his training period and acquired a position in a church. Here he met LaVera Webber, the daughter of the pastor, who was to be instrumental in bringing him back to his "vision". Rodney soon became strongly attracted to her. She did not care for the deceitful beauty and culture of this world, as the first young lady had, but was interested in the truly beautiful things.

It was the integrity of her soul that made Rodney realize that she had been tried by fire and had not been found wanting. She was as pure gold, with a truly beautiful view of life and of the world. This awakened in Rodney his former love for God and for His kingdom of grace.

This brief sketch is sufficient, for it is not our intention to tell all of the story. The story will grip you while you read of the struggles and temptations of this young student of music. Interest is sustained throughout the many trials Rodney experiences. The happy ending, in which the hero finds true peace of heart and mind, is to be appreciated. A great lesson is taught in Rodney's choice of a wife with whom he can be assured of the favor and blessing of God.

One thing which I am sure our young people will notice, is that the entire story centers about the doctrine of salvation rather than the fundamental truth of God's sovereignty. As was stated in a previous review, it is also true that in this book, the faith of the characters is presented as the basis for their salvation. Thus the author, though thoroughly opposed to modernism and upholding the fundamental view of salvation by the blood of Christ alone, yet has the wrong approach. However, we can recommend this book to our young people with the admonition that they remember that they have to do with fiction. Also that this fiction is not written by a Reformed man with a Reformed view of the truth.

L. Vermeer.

The Age Of The Maccabees

CHAPTER II

THE PONTIFICATE.

Rival Competitors for the High Priesthood.—

The office of high priest being thus, as we have seen, a powerful and lucrative position, became the occasion of much unseemly wrangling and conspiracy. There were two families in particular that made themselves notorious by their scramble for the coveted prize. These were the families of the Oniadae and of the Tobiadae. Each had its own party principles and party cries. The Oniadae were of the old traditional stock that gloried in all that separated the Jews from their neighbors. The Tobiadae, again, belonged to the new Hellenising party, that were for a freer intermingling in the life of their neighbors. The one believed it best for Israel to be true to herself and tenacious of her cherished ways. The other held it injurious to the national interests to stand aloof from intercourse with the world. Both parties had, therefore, much to say for themselves. There was good on both sides so far as principles went. But neither of them had overmuch sense of honor or rectitude in their methods of work. One of the Tobiadae named Simon—himself a priest of some considerable rank — during the pontificate of Onias III, conspired against Onias to oust him from his office, and with that in view pursued certain scandalous tactics, part of which was to send secret information to King Seleucus touching a vast store of money existing in the Temple, that might be safely seized for the replendishment of the scanty royal coffers.

The king did not need to be told the news twice, but immediately despatched a messenger, one Heliodorus, under the colour of visiting certain cities of Phoenicia, to fetch the store of treasure. Heliodorus came to Jerusalem, and was received courteously enough by the authorities of the Temple. Upon intimating the true purpose of his mission, he was at once informed that the money referred to did not belong to the priests, but to a fund for widows and orphans which had been entrusted to the custody of the Temple. Heliodorus, however, pressed his master's claims. When the citizens of Jerusalem heard of the king's demands, they rose in tumult against the audacious proposals. The priests too invoked Heaven to look down and defend the rights of the defenceless. The high priest behaved as a man distraught. Heliodorus, inspite of all, determined to force a passage into the sanctuary of God and rifle the money chests. On the day he was expected to perform this act of sacrilige and robbery, the people ran out of their houses in frantic excitement, women covered with sackcloth

lined the streets, the gates and walls of the city and the windows of the houses were crowded with excited multitudes, who all cried out to heaven to avert the impending disaster. Heliodorus persisted in his resolve to lay hands on the sacred treasure.

But, according to the circumstantial and perhaps somewhat coloured narrative of 2nd Maccabees, a fearful judgment descended upon him in the very act. At the moment of his wicked triumph, an apparition is said to have been seen, that caused all who beheld it to fall fainting to the ground. There appeared in the air a horse with a terrible rider, which ran fiercely at Heliodorus, and smote him with its forefeet. At the same moment there stood by the guilty man two powerful youths, on each side one, who scourged him till he fell to the ground. Speechless he lay, and would have continued to lie, but he was restored to life and consciousness through the intercessions of Onias, who made atonement for him. The Temple treasures were thus miraculously saved at that time, and when Heliodorus returned to his master, and was asked who might be a fit man to be sent once again for the Temple treasures, Heliodorus replied to the king, "If thou hast any enemy or traitor, send him thither, and thou shalt receive him back well scourged, if he even escape with his life: for in that place no doubt there is an especial power of God. For He that dwelleth in heaven hath His eye on that place and defendeth it, and He beateth and destroyeth them that come to hurt it" (2 Macc. iii. 37).

Let us now return to Simon, the author of this black conspiracy. When he saw that he had failed in his attempt to grasp the high priesthood for himself, he resorted to a more open course of tactics. He boldly accused Onias to the king, blaming him with working some underhand trickery, and so bringing the mission of Heliodorus to grief. Although there was not a word of truth in the charge, Onias felt bound to hasten to the court at Antioch to clear himself, feeling that he could not maintain his office as high priest under a charge of treason. It happened, however, that at this time (175 B.C.) King Seleucus died suddenly, having, as was said, had poison administered to him. The deceased king was succeeded by Antiochus IV., surnamed Epiphanes, under whom the affairs of Onias became involved in a deeper mesh of difficulties. It transpired that the new monarch refused to confirm Onias in his appointment as high priest, choosing to confer the office on Jason, an unworthy brother of Onias, Jason having, in fact, bought the appointment by a liberal bribe. Thus the dignity of high priest, once the synonym of a holy and unworldly life, was bought and sold and plotted for by bands of scheming men. It carried with it too much wealth and power to be desired for its own sake: and the holder of it could hardly avoid falling into the snare that lies before all intriguing ambition, of fearing God too little and humouring royalty too much.

3. *The Priesthood of Jason and Menelaus.*—The price which Jason paid to King Antiochus Epiphanes in return for the appointment to the high priest's office amounted to several hundred talents of silver. By such corrupt means he supplanted his own brother. As we shall see, he was paid back in his own coin by another supplanter later on. Apostate, as well as Simonist, Jason not only bought the high priest's office, but came to an understanding with the king to turn aside his countrymen from the strict habits of their own pure faith to the degrading pollutions of Heathenism. For this wicked conduct the chroniclers of the time can hardly find language severe enough to condemn him. They dismiss him from their narratives as a "profane and ungodly wretch and no high priest." Dante (*Inf.* xix. 85) refers to the "ungodly wretch" in his *Divine Comedy* in scornful terms. Speaking of a certain Pope, who was a notorious Simonist, he calls him: "Another Jason he, such as we saw in Maccabees."

To be continued.

BEACON LIGHTS

For Young Protestants

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