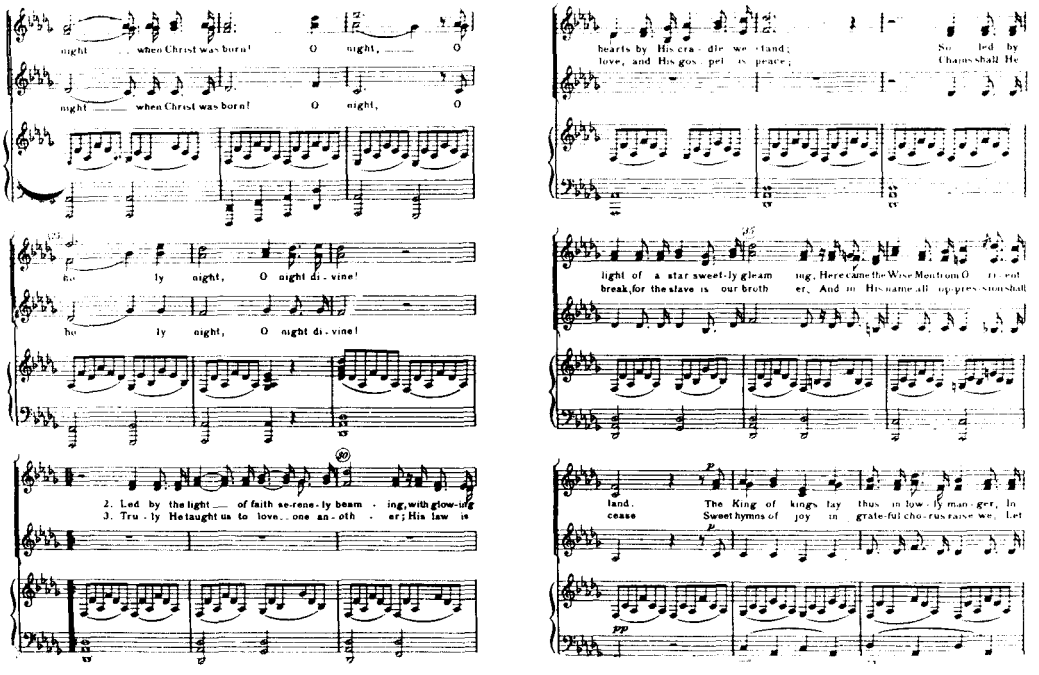
Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

O Holy Night!

BEACON LIGHTS

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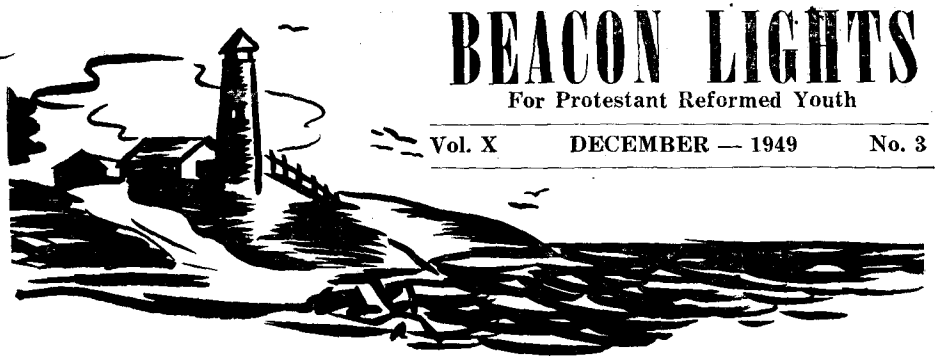

BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

Vol. X DECEMBER — 1949 No. 3

Behold The Star Of Jacob

Rev. Edward Knott
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Balaam, the wicked soothsayer whom Balak king of Moab hired to curse Israel as they were encamped in the plains before Jordan, was forced to speak the true word of God and to bless the people of Jehovah rather than place a malediction upon them as Balak desired. They are a people dwelling apart, a people in whom God beholds no iniquity or perverseness, a people whose land is prosperous and fair. And the king of Moab is angry with Balaam and advises him to return quickly into his own land, for the Lord had held him back from honor in not allowing him to curse Israel for him. Before Balaam returns, however, the Lord speaks once more unto Balak thru him advising him what shall be done to him and his people in the latter day: "I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him but not nigh: There shall come a Star out of Jacob, and a Sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite the corners of Moab, and destroy all the sons of confusion (the children of Seth).

Undoubtedly the prophecy refers, in the first instance, to the time of David when Israel conquered Moab and she was a tributary to the children of Jacob. But the true fulfillment of these words of the son of Beor we find in the Star, the bright and morning Star, that arose out of the loins of David, in the Sceptre, the true living Sceptre, of the house of Jacob that rules over His enemies with an iron hand and utterly destroys all the sons of confusion forever.

We did not see Him, nor behold His likeness, in the time of the wanderings of the children of Israel in the wilderness and their settlement in the land of Canaan nor in the days of the judges. We saw His picture in the sacrifices and offerings, in the tabernacle and temple and the priests, in the blood of sheep and goats that was shed for the atonement of sin. But we did not see Him. We did not see Him in the days of the kings for then Israel was a tree grown in beauty and although it received a mortal wound, it does not die, even when, for a time, it is transplanted in another soil. The tree

must be cut down, must appear to be dead when the Sceptre appears, for "he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." Isaiah 53:2.

The time approaches, and in the quiet stillness of the gray Judean hills, on a clear, cool night, while all men slept, that Star appears, the Sceptre is born. Not in the houses of the rich, in the firmament of royal splendour and princely beauty, in the regal manner of a newborn king did He come, but from humble parents, in poor surroundings, unrecognized and unknown was He born. The eternal King of the house of Jacob was brought forth by the last of the royal line, knowing no man, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger in the city of David his father because there was no room for them in the inn.

And even then we did not see Him. In the moment of the greatest revelation of the Father to us in the Son, in Immanuel, divine God in union with mortal man, we did not see Him. For He was hid, hid in the likeness of our flesh, hid in the form of a servant, hid by the burden of the wrath of God against sin. Oh, indeed, God proclaimed unto the shepherds by the angels and the wise men in the east by means of a star that the Star of Israel has arisen and that the Sceptre of Jacob was born, but still we did not see Him. The great, the mighty, the learned, the priests and the king, nor the people saw Him, nor did they desire to see Him for He was without form and comeliness. In fact, they wanted to be so sure that they would not see Him that Herod murdered all the children of two years and under in the vicinity of Bethlehem, hoping that in this way he had also liquidated the Sceptre of Israel.

He is come and has gone again unto His Father. And still He is not seen. Oh, I know, on Christmas we celebrate, and the world celebrates, the birthday of a baby born in Bethlehem a long, long time ago and sympathizes, perhaps, with Him that better arrangements could not be made at the time of His birth, although it is rather novel to set up and picture the quaint scenes of the nativity in the stable in Bethlehem. But the world does not see in that baby the Star of Jacob, the Sceptre rising out of Israel. They have only a baby in a manger and desir no more.

The eye of faith, however, can see Him, can see Him Who is the Star of Israel, the champion of the cause of the true Israel, our Deliverer, our Redeemer, our Saviour, our Preserver, He Who needs no armies to fight the battles of the Lord but Who is strong in the power of His might and accomplishes all the Word of God. He is the true Sceptre of the house of Jacob ruling over all His people in love, and causing all things to work together for good to those who are the called according to His divine purpose by the word of His power. He shall reign over an everlasting kingdom of peace, having destroyed all the works of darkness and holding sin and the grave and death in subjection to Him.

"I see Him, yet not now, I behold Him

but not nigh . . ." It will soon be Christmas 1949. We will celebrate the birthday of our King. But we do not see Him, for when He finished His work upon the earth He ascended into heaven and we do not now behold Him. But we have the confidence that soon we will no longer say that we do not see or behold Him. Soon in the everlasting perfection of His eternal kingdom we shall forever celebrate the birthday of our King, of Him Who was made like us in order that we might forever be made like unto Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

THE YOUNG PEOPLES' SOCIETY — South Holland, Ill.

Seated, left to right: Viola Holleman, Edith Zandstra, Clara Boer, Betty Zandstra Gertrude Van Baren, Joanne Van Baren, Agnes A. Van Baren, Jeanette Lanting.

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Third row: Gysbert A. Van Baren, Gerrit Holleman, Bart Zandstra, Jacob Boer, Gisebert G. Van Baren, Edward Boer, Sidney Cammenga, Simon Holleman, Lewis Bruinsma, Gise J. Van Baren, Albert Bakker.

Society officers: Rev. M. Schipper, President; Gysbert A. Van Baren, Vice-president; Jeanette Lanting, Secretary; Lewis Bruinsma, Treasurer.

EDITORIALS

An Urgent Need

There are times and situations which come about in the history of the church of Christ on earth when needs of various types arise. At times in the past, there has been the need for leadership to lead the church in the path of reformation. The need for funds in the deaconate during the depression period was also there. The need for adequate church buildings came up and was met. Many other needs of the church have arisen in the past and the needs have always been met in one way or another.

We wish to point out that there is an urgent need among the Protestant Reformed churches which is not being met. It is the need for a theological seminary building. Ever since the Protestant Reformed churches began to train men for the ministry, that training and work has been on an emergency basis. That is, the faculty has been provided and still is provided by ministers who have given such time as they could spare from their regular duties as ministers in the congregations to which they have been called. Moreover, the quarters in which the instruction is given partakes of the nature of an emergency arrangement. Also, no living quarters or dormitory space is available for students outside of Grand Rapids who may desire to attend the seminary but are not able to do so because they cannot supply themselves with living quarters. In addition, the proper library facilities have been and still are very limited. More could be said but we feel that enough has been said to indicate that a need is arising in Protestant Reformed circles to institutionalize a seminary and a normal training school.

Perhaps the reader will feel that this is none of his affair. After all, we have consistories, classis and synod to look after these matters, and besides, we have a minister in our church, so why should I be concerned. We urge upon you the long view of things. We consider it a serious threat to the proper and adequate ministry of the Word in the future if steps are not **taken** today to provide for the ministry **tomorrow.** Furthermore, consistories and synods are not unaware of the problem and some steps are being taken to correct the situation. However, the help of you as an individual and you as a society member and as a member of a Protestant Reformed church is needed to carry this matter to a sucessful conclusion.

We maintain that there are resources among the young people that can be used to good advantage in this cause. First of all, you as an individual should make this a matter of prayer and personal con-

(cont. on page 20)

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Rev. Gerald Vanden Berg
Grand Haven, Michigan

A Living Christian

One would have to confine himself pretty much to a monastic seclusion today, in order to fail to be reminded of the nearing approach of the Christmas Day. Signs which betoken its coming are legion. With chimes and in celestial chords the story of the Nativity is echoed throughout the land. To listen to the people of God sing of it, reminds one of the chorus of angels on that wonderful night in the hills of old Judea. It fills the soul with ecstasy; it delights the heart of the redeemed.

"There is no time with joy
so sublime
As that of the birth of the
King of Earth!"

Who can pass by this holy day unobserved? Even the world in its own way reveals its consciousness of the Day. It, too, with religious effrontery will for a season show that it remembers the Christ child! But it scorns the 'real Christmas'. It cares not for Jesus. Behind and at the bottom of all their celebrity lies their carnal commerce. See them gloat over the heap of coins they have amassed after it is all over. The question to them is, "Was it better than last year?" Such deviltry. They use Jesus when they have opportunity to do so to their own advantage and otherwise they have no use for Him. Do not expect it to be different. "Their god is their belly . . . their glory is in their shame . . . they are enemies of the cross . . . their end is destruction." (Phill. 3). "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." (Rev. 18:4).

Let us together face an important question in connection with the season that is now upon us. The matter is, "What does Christmas really mean to us . . . Christians?"

I hear you respond by saying that it means a commemoration of the birth of Jesus in the lowly Bethlehem crib. You have learned that from childhood and you have never forgotten it. You know the story so well that you can even recite the familiar Scripture narrative of Luke 2 from memory. Yes, you learned that in Sunday School, for you, too, as a child of the church had to take your part in the Christmas program and say your piece. That was wonderful and

good for you too. For now the memory of what you have learned lingers on within you. Or, did you, now that you have grown up and become 'big' forget all that and now must admit you did not follow the beautiful example of Mary who "kept all these sayings in her heart?" Shame on us if that be so!

But how wonderful! We mean, that you know this and that you were providentially placed in this world so that you could be the recipient of that truth from infancy. This should create gratitude in no small measure within us! Indeed! but does it? Or, do we perhaps rebel that we have to be bothered with these things? Shame again if it is so!

However, just to know the story is not enough. The season we commemorate must do more than bring to mind past memories. He who only knows these things and **has nothing more** is only the greater fool. Yes, and what is more, he receives only the greater judgment. So we ask again, "What does Christmas mean for us . . . Christians?"

Do I hear you answer now that you do not understand the question? You thought, perhaps, that Jesus' Birth was all of Christmas? Quite true, indeed, but we must inquire into the 'practical' meaning of that event for us. What effect does Christmas have upon our life . . . upon the thoughts we think, the words we speak and the deeds we perform?

Christian friends, looking at it all in that light we are reminded of the words of the apostle John: "God sent His only begotten Son into the world that **we might live through Him.**" Putting it in our own way we would say, 'God made Christmas so that we may live'. Christmas means life. If we do not feel it, know it and rejoice in it all our festivities of this season are as empty and abominable as the celebrities of the ungodly world. The end of it all will be destruction.

Christmas is LIFE!

Let us understand this! Life is not the experience one has in practicing the universally adopted slogan, "Eat, drink, and be merry for tomorrow we die." Friends of Youth, let me remind you that this is the very prescription of "death". Follow it and you die not tomorrow you are in death NOW. On the contrary, life can be understood only as we reckon with Him "in whom we live and move and have all our being". Fail to consider God and we die. God and life are inseparable. To live apart from God in death is most miserable in spite of the fact that man deceives himself into thinking that with all his modern conveniences and luxuries he has things pretty nice. But you just look at man apart from God; analyze him; watch him and be convinced that he is miserable.

Life is fellowship with God in love. It means that one enters into the very secrets and friendship of God. For us, Christ marks the beginning of that. Without Jesus in our flesh we lie in death, sin and the devil, the Prince of Death, have dominion over us. We are enslaved to the powers of darkness

Death reigns within us. To fully appreciate Christmas one must surely realize this for it is through the sending of the Son of God in our flesh that the way of life his become, not only a possibility, but a reality for us.

Christmas is LIFE!

This is true only because Bethlehem can never be separated from Calvary. These two belong together and constitute the coming of Jesus into the world. Only because He was born, suffered in the flesh, died and rose again, can Christ mean life. Just the fact that a child was born does not yet assure us of Life but the fact that this child was the Son of God and that His birth takes place only with a view to His cross can we see that life for us is already implicit in the life that is manifest in the stables of Bethlehem.

Practically, therefore, this season of mirth and joy ought to quicken within us the consciousness of that life with God we have through Jesus. Especially in this season we must be re-awakened to the life of God. We are in danger of falling asleep. In our slumbers we will lose the consciousness of the Divine-Friend who walks and talks with His children in love. May Christmas then be the very power that leads us to re-dedicate ourselves to the service of the Lord of Glory whose coming into the world we celebrate! May it turn us away from all our earthly pleasure and cause us to find our delight in the House of our God!

Friends, God sent His Son that we might **live through Him.** That means that to enjoy a real Christmas, ALL PASSIVITY in our lives in the church and Kingdom of God must cease NOW and we must LIVE through Him. Heart and soul, mind and will, the strength and power of youth must be expended, yes, all that we are and have must be devoted to the service of the cause of our Lord. That is life! That is Christmas! Don't we begin to feel that we never have really known Christmas perfectly? Oh, but just the beginnings are blessed!

No, we cannot accept excuses to this kind of celebration. God will not hear it! The very fact that you dare to say this or that in objection to serving and living unto Jesus, indicates that you have not and do not yet feel the full power of Christmas. Let me assure you that if we fully appreciated Christmas—GOD SENT JESUS INTO THE WORLD—we would be moved from the seat of passivism and stirred to "living through Him".

Let's think about this, shall we, the next time we "just don't feel like going to society" or "aren't in the mood to prepare our part of the program". It's so easy to say: "Don't want to or Not ready"!

We are not criticizing YOU, Christian friends. We are only speaking from our own experience of the evils that we must cope with and that often disrupt our appreciation of the wonders of God's grace . . . especially a wonder such as Christmas. We want to encourage you to **think seriously** about this: "GOD SENT HIS SON INTO THE WORLD."

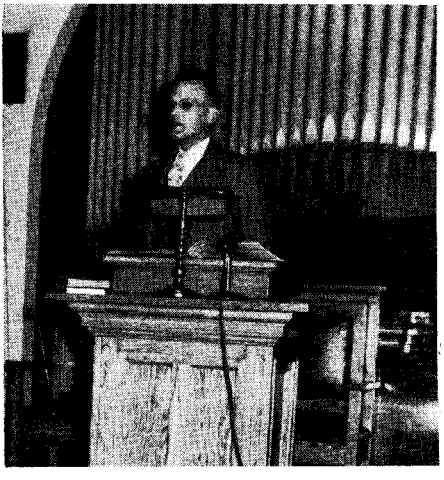
(cont. on page 12)

Reverend John A. Heys

Mr. Bernard Klaver

and

Mr. Cornelius Huizenga



Reverend John Blankespoor

Michigan Mass Meeting

The pictures on these pages, in a measure, tell the story of the wonderful evening of Christian fellowship and joy which was their's as the young people from the Grand Rapids area met together at Hudsonville to observe Reformation Day.

The auditorium was filled to overflowing as we began with praise to God in song—our voices swelling to the great music of the old songs of the church. After leading us in prayer, our Federation president, Rev. Bernard Kok, presented to us the editor of the Bible Outline Department in **Beacon Lights**, Rev. John Blankespoor, who conducted our discussion of the current lesson.

This profitable discussion was followed by a recess during which the ladies of the church supplied us with good things to eat and drink. As we continued our meeting after recess we listened first to an excellent rendition by the Vesper Octette of a Psalter selection based on Psalm 4 and an arrangement of Martin Luther's great anthem "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God".

Our speaker of the evening, Rev. John A. Heys, considered with us the earlier struggles of Mr. Luther for justification for sins.

Miss Mary Vander Vennen sang a beautiful solo accompanied by Mr. Cornelius Huizenga at the piano. Mr. Huizenga also assisted Mr. Bernard Klaver in a trumpet voluntary of "Open the Gates of the Temple."

Our meeting ended as the genial pastor of our host church, Reverend Gerrit Vos, led us in our closing prayer.

—A. H.

The Vesper Octette, left to right: Henry Doorn, Peter Vanden Engel, Fred Ophoff, Ray De Windt, Jack De Vries, Wm. Wierenga, George Vink. Absent: Jack Doorn.

The Preservation Of The Bible

Fran Vanden Berge
Grand Rapids, Michigan

As one travels far and wide over the earth, he finds that things which he may consider important in his own life are unknown or unimportant in the lives of others. He also discovers that important men are important only in certain parts of the country.

However, there is one book which the traveler finds in the farthest corners of the earth. That book is the **Bible.** This does not mean that every African hut has its Bible as every American home might have. But it means that the many translations of the Bible have been widely distributed over the globe. Almost everyone in the world can find at least parts of the Bible written in his own language. The Bible has been the world's "best seller" for many years. Hundreds of thousands of copies are given away yearly. But the Bible still sells by the millions. In one year enough copies were distributed to average forty-seven for every minute of every hour, night and day.

Let us notice how the Bible was brought to us so that we are able to sell it by the millions today.

We know that the Holy Spirit, the **primary author** of the Bible, employed human authors as secondary instruments for the production of the original manuscripts of the Bible. So far as we know all these original manuscripts are lost. What we have now are only copies of earlier copies. The question then is, how sure can we be that our present Bible is an accurate reproduction of the original?

Let us begin by observing that no book in the whole world has the reverent, careful treatment which has been given the Bible throughout the centuries; while at the same time no other book has been more abused or criticized than the Bible. The early monasteries were the great homes of Bible-copying. Every new copy of the Scriptures had to be copied out by hand. Our King James Version has roughly 693,000 words in it. What a tremendous task these copyists had!

Every monastery had its writing roon in which the monks toiled over their precious manuscripts. They knew the holiness of their task. The monks labored with love and kept the Bible alive. The Bible has been copied by scribes who regarded errors of transcription with almost superstitious terror. Its translators thought it not an extravagance to devote a lifetime to their labors. Now, may I ask how many today would be willing to spend their whole life copying the Bible? The ancient Greek copyists counted the number of verses written. The Hebrew scribes counted each word and letter. Discovery of the slightest error, even the mis-writing of a single letter, meant the re-writing of the entire page upon which the error appeared. They spoke aloud each word before writing it. This reverent regard for the work of transcriptio

characterized the Christian copyists as well as the Hebrew scribes.

These Bible-copyists could not always labor undisturbed. Often during times of persecution the Emperors would order that all Bibles be delivered up. More than one martyr was discovered while reading the Scriptures and being brought to account for it. This indicates the extent to which early Christians honoured and defended the Bible as their sacred possession and dearest treasure. Would you or I today be willing to give our life in an effort to preserve a copy of the Holy Word of God? Besides the attacks upon the Bible by the heathen State or by ecclesiastical or political hierarchy of the Middle Ages, there was other opposition characterized by modernism and cialism.

One of the chief enemies of the Bible is ignorance of it. Doubts and suspicions do not arise from Bible-reading, but they are communicated from outside to those who are not acquainted with the Bible. They hold it in contempt and even detest it as a hindrance to education and culture. Had they ever experienced any of the comfort and gladness which the pious reader can draw from its pages, they would be of a different opinion.

With the collapse of the ancient civilization and decay of learning, the following centuries, naturally brought a decline in the reading of the Bible.

The revival of learning affected the Bible in three ways. In the first place it lead to a multiplication of copies of he Bible. Later the invention of the printing press of course made it much easier to reproduce copies of the Bible. The first Bible was printed in 1456 by Johannes Gutenberg. The Bible was the first book ever printed.

Secondly, it produced the study of the original manuscripts which corrected many errors which had come into the Bible by this time. And finally, it promoted a desire to make the Scriptures known to all classes of men directly. This could be done by having the Bible translated in each country into the common language of the people.

The translation of the Bible played an important part at the outbreak of the Reformation. The reformers held that the best method of overthrowing the power of the monasteries and of the Roman Church was to enable the common people to read the Bible for themselves and learn how much of the teachings of the priest had no basis in the words of Scripture. The leaders of the Roman Church, on the other hand, doubted the advisability of allowing the Scriptures to be read by uneducated and half-educated folk. The struggle of the Reformation period was largely concerned with the question of the translation of the Bible.

Besides the preservation of the Bible, its circulation was also necessary and this involved the task of translation. When the Jews began to settle in the various countries of the Greek world they adopted the Greek language and translated certain books of the Bible into Greek. Later as Christianity became the religion of the Roman world, Latin-

speaking Christians soon put the Bible into their own language. The popular German version was made by the great reformer, Luther. The first complete English Bible was published in 1535. The King James and Revised Standard Versions are based on this first translation.

We know that the translations of the Bible are not inspired. The Bible nowhere claims that they will be. On the other hand, we believe that because God intended the Scriptures to be known thoroughly, His Spirit has exercised sovereignty in the preservation of the canonical books and has guided the church in canonization.

In spite of the careful work done by the copyists and translators, errors did creep in. But, what about these errors? Are they such as to disturb our faith in the trustworthiness of the Bible? Not at all! They are insignificant.

Sir Frederick Kenyon writes: "The Christian can take the whole Bible in his hand and say without fear or hesitation that he holds in it the true Word of God faithfully handed down from generation to generation throughout the centuries."

BEACON LIGHTS

— DONATIONS —

Miss Jean Dertien (G. R.)	3.50
Holland Men's Society	5.00
Reformation Day Mass Meeting Collection (S. Hol. & Oak Lawn)	$11.47
Miscellaneous	1.50

CHRISTIAN LIVING

(cont. from page 7)

Yes, GOD did it. He was not coerced. He did not have to do it. He was infinitely happy living His own perfect Triune Covenant life. All that we can say is that it was LOVE that moved Him . . . eternal love!

He sent JESUS. It was His own Son. God did not give a little time or effort but His own dear and precious Son. His ALL!

Into the World! It was a world that hated Him and stood at variance with Him. A world that would kill Him if given the opportunity. And God knew it, for He had determined it to be thus.

Oh, contemplate that. No sacrifice s sublime! No love so great! The longe. that you ponder this the greater your appreciation of Christmas becomes and the deeper your interest in the Kingdom of the Dear Son of God. And as your interest mounts, your activity in the matters of your church will increase and your **life through Jesus** becomes abundantly more rich.

Then is God glorified . His purpose is manifest through its being realized in His sons and daughters. He sent Jesus, friends, **that you might live through Him.**

* * * * *

A Timely Text . . . .

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him."

—I John 4:9.

BIBLE OUTLINE

Rev. John Blankespoor
Grand Rapids, Michigan

LESSON XLIV.

"Jesus and Judas Iscariot"

(John 13:18-30)

Jesus, Complete Master of the Situation, vss. 18120.

In the previous verses Jesus has taught the disciples by way of a mighty example (washing the disciples' feet) that they must be servants of each other. Through his work of Jesus, the dying on the cross, they would be made clean. But not all of them. To this expression Jesus comes back in vs. 18, the first verse of this lesson . Judas Iscariot is of course the exception. But the disciples must not think that this was a surprise to Him, or even something inevitable. "I know whom I have chosen". Jesus knew who Judas was at the time of the calling of the disciples, also what Judas would do later. In fact we can and must say that he was chosen with a view to this. The Scriptures must be fulfilled. What Scriptures? Those of David. Here we have an example of the persecution the saints suffer at the hands of wicked men in the church. David is speaking of Ahithophel, who was one of his intimate friends, who ate at the table of the king, etc. Later betrayed him. Thousands of saints have experienced the same thing, betrayed, not by their enemies, but by their "friends". And how this hurts! But Jesus is always the fulfillment of all suffering of all that took place in the Old Testament. Therefore He must suffer like David did, and others, only in the fullest measure.

And the disciples must not think later that this was beyond Jesus' control. Therefore vs. 19. He tells them now, before it comes to pass. Hence this deed will serve His purpose in working faith in their hearts. How easily might the disciples have come to waver in their faith through the success of the treason of Judas, if He had not foreseen and foretold it as lying in the ordered plan of the divine destiny.

Neither must this act of treason cause them to waver, as disciples, in their calling. Hence, vs. 20. They will certainly be ambassadors of the King, with a full commission and power given unto them.
Questions: What did Ahithophel do? Who are the worst persecutors of the church? How must this be explained?

Jesus Points Out Judas, vss. 21-26.

What we read here took place during the eating of the Paschal meal. Jesus now becomes troubled in spirit, not be-

cause the nearness of Judas influenced Him in special way, but because the Father's hour was at hand. The cup must soon be emptied.

But if this is to take place, many other things must happen, and that very rapidly. He must be crucified, the Jews must take Him captive, and to do this Judas must first betray Him, which has already been planned. Therefore the last part of vs. 21: One of you shall betray me. What an announcement! And the gravity of the statement is marked by the amen, amen. The next minute the disciples are looking at each other, wondering who it would be. Perhaps they could detect some evidence of guilt. But Judas reveals nothing, a real hypocrite is he.

But Peter cannot remain silent. In the light of certain data it is most probable that the arrangements of the company on that last night were such, that, facing the open end of the horseshoe-shaped table, we find John reclining (as was customary) on the first couch to our left, then Jesus, then Judas, the latter on the place of honor. Directly opposite from John across the table is Peter. Having heard Jesus' statement, they all ask: Is it I? Matthew puts it this way: Surely it is not I, Lord? Imagine Judas saying that. However, Peter whispers across the table to John to ask Jesus who it is. In answer Jesus tells John, not all the disciples, that he it is who will receive the sop.

As host Jesus gives the sop, dipped in a certain broth according to custom, to Judas, who is lying in the place of honor as guest. And Judas takes it. But things cannot remain as they are. Having announced that one would betray Him, Judas remained with them, still playing the part of a hypocrite. And Judas knows that Jesus knows all things. But still He treats him as a guest, as one of the twelve, as He had always done. But it seems as if now a climax has been reached. Judas must now either burst forth in tears, or become furiously angry. What will it be, Judas?

Questions: Was Judas a believer when Jesus chose him, as some people believe? Do you think Judas was a refined and "polished" man? Did Judas at all times feel that there was a marked difference between the eleven and himself?

Jesus Dismisses Judas, vss. 27-30.

And now Satan entered him. This does not mean that the devil had up to this time not been active in Judas' heart. He certainly had. But according to the meaning of the word the devil now exercised full sway over him, and Judas even as Annanias and Sapphira was **filled** with the spirit of the evil one.

What really happens here is that Jesus dismisses Judas. The Jews would at all expense wait with the killing of Jesus until after the Passover. But God's hour was on the Passover. Judas intended to quietly pass the night and the next day with the disciples. But things must happen. Therefore he must be hurried on to hasten his plans. And Jesus does it with the sop. In a rage he leaves the pla

in the night, to perform the darkest of deeds.

Questions: Some people believe that with the sop Jesus extended to Judas a last kind, loving invitation. Refute this. Did Judas leave this way because he knew that he had to according to God's plans, or because he was filled with hatred and anger towards Jesus?

* * * *

LESSON XLV.

"Jesus about to Depart from the Earth"

(John 13:31-38)

Jesus Glorified, vss. 31, 32.

Rather striking is this first verse. "When therefore he **had gone out,** Jesus said, **Now** is the Son of Man glorified." The contrast is tremendous: Judas goes out into the night; Jesus sees Himself and God glorified by what Judas does. The words sound as though a great weight has been taken off the heart of Jesus. But why? Just because Judas is no longer in their midst? Yes, but also and first of all because now He will be crucified, and so save His people. His death is now assured, His actual redemptive work is now ushered in; and the final act has now begun. Hence, Jesus is literally ringing the glory bells as He enters His passion. What amazing love for His people, but above all for His Father in heaven! He is glorified now and will be glorified in the future.

A New Commandment, vss. 33-35.

This glorification will naturally bring with it Jesus' removal from this earth. Notice how He addresses the eleven: Little children. It is a term of most effectionate endearment, yet connotes the immaturity of those that are so dear. Jesus would go to heaven, and they cannot follow Him at this time, later they shall do so. Hence, the children must stay behind.

But a new commandment He gives them. And what a commandment it is! Love one another. This is the very fulfillment of the law. This love will naturally be the fruit of love for God, and its manifestation. This love is the criterion of discipleship. The world must be able to distinguish us by our love for one another. Someone of the world once said: They love each other without being acquainted with each other. And so it must indeed be. That love will not slander or backbite, nor be jealous or envious. It will cover a multitude of sins of the fellow-saint.

But why does Jesus call this a new commandment? Hadn't they received this commandment before? They had, to be sure. The novelty lies in the **motive power** of the love, which must be the love **of Christ,** which one has experienced. They must love each other as Christ did in all His work, and **with** the love of Christ in them. In that sense it is new. It is a love through **faith in Christ.** Always must they remember how Christ had loved them.

Questions: Do all Christians bear this

earmark of love? What are some of the sins which are the very opposite of love? I Cor. 13. In the light of this truth how do you explain the many manifestations of lack of love among fellow church members?

Jesus' Word to Peter, vss. 36-38.

Peter is not satisfied to give up the presence of the Lord. He will cling to Jesus in spite of Jesus' word. Often Jesus had spoken of going to His Father, yet now that the hour for His going has arrived, and now that he is determined to go along, Peter wants a little more information. But Peter cannot follow Jesus now. Not because he's still an unbeliever, but because His time has not yet come. He must first perform the works the Lord has set aside for him as apostle. Sure, objectively, Peter is ready now. He will lay down his life for his Master. Jesus, however, places in striking contrast what Peter promises to do and what he actually will do. He will do the very opposite of what he says, yes, in this very night before day dawns. Instead of laying down his life he will save it, yes, by denying Jesus. That will be Peter's reaction to Jesus' departure by way of the cross.

Questions: Was Peter merely boasting here, or did he mean what he said? Why was it that Peter was ready to fight in the garden, but later denied Jesus so vehemently? What lesson does the Lord teach us through this example of Peter?

* * * *

LESSON XLVI.

"Believing In Jesus"

(John 14:1-14)

Their Hearts Must Not Be Troubled, vss. 1-4.

We must take notice of the setting of these words, as well as the time in which they were spoken. Chapters 14-17 were spoken by our Lord almost in one breath. They were uttered while still in the upper room, Judas having been dismissed (the Jews now making preparations to take Him) and the Lord's Supper already having been instituted. John does not speak of the latter, undoubtedly because the Synoptics give detailed accounts of this. So we have here a fina' word of Jesus to His beloved twelve, and in them to the entire church of the New Dispensation. It is, what we might call, Jesus' farewell sermon to them. With this solemn background these words must therefore have been of tremendous importance to the disciples, at least later when they understood them.

"Let not your hearts be troubled". Jesus had spoken of the betrayal to come, also that He would be with them only for a little while anymore. Consequently their hearts must have been filled with evil forebodings even though they didn't fully understand what Jesus meant. Most certainly will they be in danger of having perturbed hearts in the near future. With the voluntary surrender, the mock trials, and the horrible suffering of their beloved Master there would be all kinds of

reasons to be troubled, from a natural viewpoint. But no, it isn't necessary. They believe in God, but they must also believe in **Him.** This Jesus emphasizes. Children, Jesus means to say, I go to prepare a place for you. This consists in the glorified Christ doing all that must be done before the family of God's elect can appear with Him in glory. Even today Christ is active in this, by also preparing us. He must also interceed for us before the Father. And when all is ready He will return to take His church unto Himself. Why be troubled? These things are necessary. Believe in **me,** says Jesus.

Questions: How can these words be of comfort for us? What is implied in Jesus preparing a place for us?

Jesus Is the Way, vss. 5-7.

Thomas comes back on what Jesus says in vs. 4. If they don't know where He is going, how can they know the way? This shows how little they understood of Jesus' words. First o fall Jesus is going to the Father, and He is the way and the truth and the life to the Father. The meaning is that He is the way **because** He is the truth and the life. Hence by believing in Him men have the truth and the life, and therefore the way to the Father in heaven. All the emphasis again falls on the words of the first verse: Believe in me. Ye believe in God, believe also in me, that is, in the Father through me. Without this faith they will indeed have troubled hearts, nd not know the way to the Father. The disciples must learn that in Christ, the Son of God, is all their hope, comfort and righteousness.

In vs. 7 Jesus answers the first question of Thomas, whither Jesus is going—namely, to the Father. And who is the Father or who knows Him? Those who know Jesus. Therefore they from now on have known Him and seen Him. Again, in Jesus, their Master, they must seek everything.

Jesus and the Father are One, vss. 8-11.

Thereupon Philip comes with another question, failing to understand the import of Jesus' words. "Show us the Father". Did Philip expect a special revelation of the Father at this time? Most likely, and with this crowning revelation the disciples would be satisfied until Jesus returns. Such a vision of the Father would show them where Jesus is now going and where they, His disciples, are at last to arrive with Jesus' return. But what a request! Again do we see that Philip grasps little of all these things. And again the answer is the same. He that has seen me has seen the Father. All that is in God is revealed in His Son Jesus Christ. He is the image of the invisible God. Doesn't Philip even believe that He is in the Father and the Father in Him? Again, they must believe in **Him!**

The works of those Believing in Jesus, vss. 12-14.

Notice the verily, verily. Jesus is speaking with authority, and what He

says will surely come to pass. But what do these words mean? We do the works that Jesus did, yes, and even greater ones?

What does Jesus mean first of all with His own works? His works of preaching and teaching. This is not likely, because these are always called His words. By works He refers to His deeds of healing the lame, sick, blind, etc. All these naturally were only signs of His spiritual work, which He also taught with His words. These works we shall also do, yes and even greater ones. We shall cast out devils, heal and be healed of our infirmities, and see and give sight to the blind. Naturally, all in the spiritual sense. Spiritually we overcome the devil (think of his powers in the history of Job) remove **mountains** of sin, fight the battle of faith against unbelief and the **world,** mortify the deeds of the flesh, etc. These are the works Jesus refers to. And they are called greater works because the reality is always greater than the shadows, the fulfillment than the types. These works they will be able to do by the power of Christ in them. Christ will be working in and through them.

But who are they that will do such mighty works? All those who believe, says Jesus, yes, believe on **Him.** Through faith in Him the believer is able to do all things. In connection with this faith Jesus also speaks of prayer. We must ask for them, in faith. And whatsoever we do ask in His name we shall receive. Mighty are the works of those who believe in Jesus.

Questions: Do you think that Christians often realize the tremendous importance of their faith (performing such works)? Wonder why not? Compare the Arminian conception of salvation with Jesus' words in these verses. What is the sole purpose of our doing such works through faith? vs. 13.

* * * *

LESSON XLVII.

"The Comforter Promised"

(John 14:15-31)

The Holy Spirit to be given to those that love Him, vss. 15-20.

In this last part of the chapter Jesus i teaching His disciples, and us, the tremendous advantages of His departure, and the Holy Spirit being sent into His church. He will not leave them comfortless. The original has the word orphans. The death of Jesus will not be like that of a father whose children are then left fatherless orphans. His death means His return, a return for a higher and richer union than that before His death and departure.

The Holy Spirit is called the Comforter. Better would be the word paraclete. Now a paraclete is one who takes up a cause in the place of another. In a certain sense an attorney can be called a paraclete, taking up the cause of his client. So Christ will Himself go to heaven, but send the Spirit and as His Spirit take up our cause. In this way Christ wi

return to His own. What will He do then? First of all He will dwell in them, applying all the blessings of salvation. This He will do forever. The Spirit will not depart as Jesus did physically. He is also called the Spirit of Truth. Christ Himself is the Truth, which means that in Him are all the saving realities, all that is in God. This the Spirit now possesses, bears and imparts to His church.

By means of the Spirit they will always behold Him, vs. 19. By His marvelous works they will always see Jesus, spiritually. Even today the church sees Him crowned with glory and honor, Heb. 2:9. By means of the Spirit, coming to us through the Word, we shall live, because He lives. We shall have the true life of God within us, and that is life eternal. In that day (Pentecost) they shall know, experience and taste that Christ is in them, and they in Christ, and also that Christ is in the Father. Marvelous will be the works of the Spirit.

And to whom will He be given? Verse 15 gives the answer. To those that love Him and keep His commandments. Not to the world.

Questions: Why do people often think that the fellowship the disciples had with Christ while on earth was much more glorious than what the church has after Pentecost day? Prove that the opposite is true. Does the world in any sense receive this Spirit?

The Holy Spirit manifests Jesus, vss. 21-26.

In vs. 21 Jesus reiterates the important element of love. Proof of this love is the keeping of His commandments, and His Word. To such Jesus will manifest Himself, through His Word and Spirit. The test is always obvious: a true disciple, one who really loves Jesus, always does more than make pretensions, he cherishes every precept of the Lord and strives to live according to them. This manifestation of Jesus implies first of all a knowledge of Divine love for sinful, depraved creatures. Further it means that we are made sorry for our sins and are given the blessed assurance of forgiveness. Finally it also creates an earnest longing for heaven, to be with Jesus. Most blessed is the manifestation of Jesus through the Spirit. By means of it we will know Jesus as God's Son and our blessed Saviour. Vs. 23 speaks of the same blessed truth, telling us that Jesus will make His abode with them (and us) which means that Jesus comes to live in our hearts, and is at home with us and we with Him. To be sure, the disciples will forget much of this, but the Spirit will remind them of everything He said to them. Not only will He remind them, but also teach them the significance of these things, not only intellectually, but also give them this blessed knowledge in their hearts. Marvelous will the gift of the Spirit be, and most blessed will be the recipients! Blessed it will be, therefore, for the disciples, that Jesus now leaves them.

Questions: Why is it that Christians experience so little of these manifestations? Cf. vs. 21. Through what means does Jesus always manifest Himself?

Peace Jesus leaves with them, vs. 17.

Greetings of peace were customary in those days, on arrivals, but also with departures. What friends at parting wish each other in their poor human way, (for they cannot **give** peace) Jesus actually gives to His disciples with His parting like a sweet, rich treasure for their comfort. Actual peace He gives them because He first of all makes peace through His own blood. Then He will also give it unto them in their hearts. This the world cannot do, it can give wishes but no more. What a blessed Saviour He is! Why then should their hearts be troubled? Notice how Jesus can assure them of this peace with calmness and serenity while the horrible hour of suffering is at hand.

Questions: How do you explain Is. 57: 20? What is the cause of this condition?

The proper attitude towards Jesus' Departure, vss. 28-31.

Here Jesus says that the disciples really should have rejoiced when they heard that He should leave them. Reason? Because the Father is greater than Jesus. There He shall receive far greater power and efficiency for His aims. The Holy Spirit He will receive.

Vs. 30 teaches that His hour is very near. The **world's** ruler is coming, but Jesus does not fear. In Him He has nothing. The efforts to kill Jesus might easily be resented and nullified if He so wishes. But He will lay down His life in His love for the Father. The world must see in Him His amazing obedience to the Father, and thereby redeeming His people.

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EDITORIALS

(cont. from page 4)

cern for the future of the preaching in our churches. Secondly, the facilities of the Federation can be brought to bear on this problem. Perhaps the largest obstacle preventing us from meeting this need is the lack of sufficient funds to carry this work out. The Federation board can adopt a promotional campaign and acquaint our people more intimately with the situation.

We must not let the bigness of the task dismay us. This work is of vital importance to the church of God and He uses men, often young people, as the means to accomplish His purpose and He uses His church to preach His Gospel. We firmly believe that this is true. We could cite big tasks in the past which have been begun by young people. A shining example is the Reformed Witness Hour on the radio. At its inception this was strictly an activity of the Young Men's Society of Fuller Ave. Church. Your editor is intimately acquainted with the size of the task done there. We could mention other things. The organization and founding of the PRYPF and the publication of Beacon Lights are other examples of what Young People can do.

There is a danger rather that we underestimate our potential and do not use all our powers fully. Let us face this need for permanent facilities to train ministers and teachers and use all our powers given us of God to accomplish this end.

—H. G. K.

NATURE STUDY

Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

The King Of Birds

According to an ancient legend the aged eagle renewed its youth by flying toward the sun until its feathers were scorced and then it would fall into the sea—only to emerge completely rejuvenated. The psalmist David in Psalm 103 also refers to the renewal of youth by a comparison with the eagle: "Who satisfieth thy mouth with Good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles."

This idea of rejuvenation has been the dream of natural man throughout the ages. There are two possible reasons why the ancients embodied this idea in the eagle. In the first place, the eagle is credited with exceptional flying powers and the ability to soar at tremendous heights (a few thousand feet). Percival said in his poem "To the Eagle":

"Bird of the broad and sweeping wing,
Thy home is in high heaven." (sky).

Secondly, the eagle is one of those few animals that reaches the century mark and, consequently, the ancients were impressed by its longevity.

In addition, the eagle is considered to be the most courageous member of the feathered family. Its piercing eye and majestic stature add to its greatness.

According to the book of Leviticus the eagle was classified as an unclean animal because it ate carrion and was carnivorous. Although many have accused eagles of carrying away children there is no actual data to support this rumor. In fact, eagles are able to carry a maximum load of only about ten to twelve pounds —and this only for a short distance. Generally, they prey upon small animals such as rabbits, mice, bats, frogs, and fish. In India a certain species feed principally upon snakes; hence, they are called "serpent eaters". Another species limits itself largely to monkeys. Eagles will attack larger animals on occasion, but they are eaten at the site of the killing.

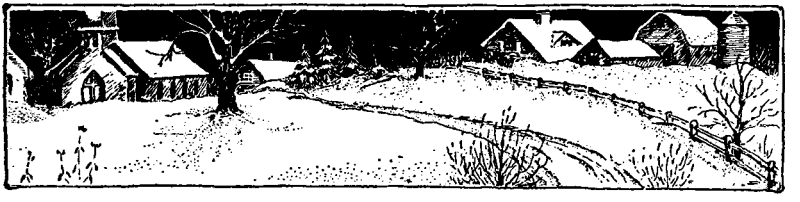
Although the eagles' first choice is a living specimen, it also devours dead creatures. (In some areas they are considered to be a great asset in this respect). It is an enigma to naturalists how the high soaring bird locates small dead animals in dense woods. Some contend it is the sense of smell that guides the eagle, while others maintain it is the keen eyesight.

The large nests are built on crags or rocky ledges or in tall isolated trees. These crude, coarsely constructed nests may be relined from year to year. Often a pair of eagles uses the same nest for more than a decade. Only two eggs are usually layed in this large nest, and they require about four weeks of incubation. When we consider that the young remain in the nest about ten weeks, we readily realize why such a large nest is

necessary for just two birds. Great care is taken by the eagle to instruct her young to fly. Moses in his song in Deuteronomy, chapter 32, uses the eagle as a beautiful example of parental guidance in showing how God led Israel. "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings; so the Lord alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him.

Because the eagle was symbolic of strength and courage many nations have chosen it for their emblems, the first ones being the Persians. The early Romans introduced it as a military standard as early as 104 B. C. by placing a silver eagle on their spears. The bald eagle adorns the coat of arms of the United States which is also used on the Great Seal, and became the national emblem of our country in 1785. Several coins also bear this image. Our neighbor, Mexico, has the fierce harpy eagle called "the winged wolf" engraved on its coat of arms and displayed on its flag.

Thus, all through the ages this "master of the air" has received recognition and a literary and historical romance has been associated with this mighty king of birds.



Think On These Things: . . . .

Truly wonderful and monstrous is the extravagance of our pride. God requires of us nothing more severe than that we most religiously observe His Sabbath, by resting from our own works; but there is nothing which we find more difficult, or to which we are more reluctant, than to bid farewell to our own works, in order to give the works of God their proper place.—John Calvin.

* * * * * *

The reading of the Scriptures as such, without more, will never be able to bring one single soul from death to life. The Scripture by itself is as dull as a diamond in the dark; and as the diamond glistens only when entered by a ray of light, the Scripture has power to charm the eye of the soul only when seen in the light of the Holy Spirit. Christ lives, and by His Holy Spirit He still works upon the heart and in the consciousness of God's elect.—Abraham Kuyper.

Truth vs. Error

Rev. James Howerzyl
Oskaloosa, Iowa

Authority The of the Creeds

In our discussion of denominations and denominationalism we saw last time that there is not only room for creeds, which are an official statement of that which any given denomination believes, but also a need for them. Not simply, of course, as dead statements of the past, written perhaps in the back of our Psalters, to be curiously read before the service to pass the time away, but remaining otherwise a mystery to us, but as living statements of that faith which we possess—which we have received as our heritage om the church of the past, we cherish them, study them, know them, and love them.

Not that we imagine creeds to be infallible, we know better. We know also that as the living church of Christ we must and will continue to be led into all the truth and that thus also our creeds will have to grow and develop and we in our understanding of them. Therefore we turn with our creeds back to Scripture, again and again, in order that we may test them, develop them, check them and learn to love them more and more.

Somewhat along this line we wrote last time.

This however, immediately raises another question, "What is the authority of our creeds?"

In answer to this question we must inist, that in the final analysis, all hat is binding upon the child of God is Scripture. By this I do not mean to overthrow all that I have written above but rather to put it in its proper light. In the final analysis the only authority of the creeds consists in this, that they express the truths of Scripture. If it is or can ever be shown that any creed does not reflect the truth of Scripture it has lost its power and authority and one must not heed it any longer.

This, of course, informs us also that creeds can have no authority overagainst Scripture. Essentially this is Roman Catholicism. In the Romish Church Scripture is not the last court of appeal but rather what the church as institution says about the Scriptures. And in the last instance this is the pope who has the authority to speak infallibly. This can never be the case. The creeds derive their authority from Scripture. They have authority because they express the truth of Scripture. If it would ever become evident that in any degree they contradicted Scripture they must be discarded. Nor therefore, if any point of controversy arises involving the creed, is the mere statement of the creed sufcient, but it must be shown that also in such a disputed point the creed properly reflects the teaching of Scripture.

We may then well ask, "What is the authority, and to what extent are the creeds authoritative?"

And then we would answer by saying

first of all that creeds certainly have authority. Not the first authority of the Scriptures but the derived authority of expressing the truth of Scripture. But do not minimize this fact. From this point of view not only our three forms of unity have authority for us, but all creeds of the historical church, in as far as they reflect and express the truth of Scripture, are binding upon and have authority also for us.

However they have an additional authority in the fact that they express the faith of the church of the past. They serve as depositories of the truth. Once again this cannot be divorced from the fact that they express the truth of Scripture. Rather because I am a member of an historical church, therefore I am bound also to the historical confession of that church for as long as I remain a member. This of course does not mean that I can never question the expression of that confession. Neither does it mean that I may not express disagreement in case it becomes clear to me that Scripture teaches something different. In fact I have a calling, exactly because I am a member of that church, to share my Scriptural light also with the church of which I am a member. This the Formula of Subscription, signed by all elders, deacons and ministers expresses beautifully, "And if hereafter any difficulties or different sentiments respecting the aforesaid doctrines shall arise in our minds, we promise that we will neither publicly nor privately propose, teach or defend the same, either by preaching or writing, until we have first revealed such sentiments to the consistory, Classis and Synod, that the same may be there examined . . . ."

Finally the authority of the creeds consists in this that they are not simply dead statements but rather express the living confession of the church and of each of its members. As soon as this ceases to be the case the cause is lost and the creed has really lost its usefulness.

To limit ourselves for a moment to our own churches, we may say that we have three creeds. They and the Scriptures are alone binding upon us as Churches and as members because they express, we believe, the truth of the Word of God. But it is exactly in as far as they are living and conscious expressions of faith that they have significance for us. For after all we develop and grow also in our knowledge and conception of the creeds. And exactly because we know and love and confess that they contain the truth of Scripture we bow before them. And within the limits of such a confession there must be freedom to grow and develop in the truth. Therefore we do not care for nor do we need binding decisions of Synod or Classes to tell us what the creeds teach or how they must be interpreted. (Strangely such decisions are usually contrary to the creeds.) And the power of any interpretation of a creed exactly rests in the fact that it is the belief of the church not in the fact that it has been laid upon the church by some body, be it Classis or Synod. Therefore I cannot agree with the desire expressed recently that we must have additional binding decisions added to the creeds. Certainly the creeds as we have them ar

plain. Anyone who contradicts them can be shown to err. Any questions which arise as to meaning and interpretation may and can be settled on the basis of Scripture. But we must retain liberty within the limits of the confession or we die. And the power of the creeds in our own circles, to limit ourselves to that again, is not that we have some binding decision which limits us to our leaders' interpretations of what the creeds say but is the conviction in our hearts that such interpretation is correct and the truth of the Word of God. For in the final instance recognizing the authority of creeds always returns to this—that we recognize that they contain and express the truth of the Bible!

Illinois Mass Meeting

Our Reformation Day Mass Meeting was held in the South Holland Church auditorium on Tuesday evening, Nov. 1. Approximately sixty-five young people were present to witness an enjoyable evening of spiritual edification and Christian fellowship.

The Reverend Schipper acted as chairman of the meeting. He also led the group singing, which was followed by Scripture reading and prayer.

Our first number on the program was a speech by Rev. Schipper entitled "The Bible and the Reformation". A trio of South Holland, consisting of Laura De oung, Agnes G. and Willametta Van Baren sang "Rock of Ages". One high light on our program was the debate given on the subject "That our churches should return to the Christian Reformed Churches should the latter repent". The affirmative speakers were Agnes Van Baren and Sidney Cammenga of South Holland, and the negative speakers were John Buiter and Louis Regnerus of Oak Lawn. The judges met for discussion and after some debating decided that the negative speakers proved to be the winners. At this time we were dismissed for recess during which the refreshment committee served us barbecues, potato chips, pickles and soft drinks.

After recess we once more assembled to hear an essay on "John Wycliffe" delivered by Clarice Ipema. We were then favored with a piano duet given by Bertha Buiter and Joann Rutgers of Oak Lawn After closing prayer, we again gathered in the basement and were served apple slices and ice cream.

We can truly say we had an enjoyable evening. We are reminded of the words of Martin Luther when he said "I, Dr. Martin Luther, pledge myself to the Holy Scriptures. I solemnly promise to teach them with purity, to preach them faithfully, and to defend them both in writing and disputation against all false teachers. So help me God!" Martin Luther was led by the spirit to develop as well as defend that truth of the Scriptures. Let us defend and maintain the truth that is so precious to us which we have received from our forefathers in the days of the Reformation.

Gertrude Van Baren
South Holland, Ill.

The 1949 Convention Picture

For the information of all who ordered the convention picture shown above we print the following letter received by Rev. J. Howerzyl.

Dear Rev. Howerzyl,

We are very pleased to enclose herewith a glossy print of the Convention picture for publication in Beacon Lights.

At the time this picture is published would you please run an announcement concerning the mailing of the pictures?

Out of the hundreds of photographs mailed to groups such as yours we have received but two or three complaints that they arrived in damaged condition. It should be realized that it is virtually impossible to assure undamaged delivery of every picture by mail. In fact we have found that even carefully packed photographs, insured, often arrive broken or crushed.

Our studio bases its success on trying to do the right thing and we are very anxious to have your people pleased even though we perhaps may never have the opportunity to deal with them again. Therefore, if any photograph has arrived in a condition too damaged to use we will replace it without charge. We can, however, only replace those too badly damaged to use, upon return of the print to us.

Yours very truly,
Sybenga Studio
Oskaloosa, Iowa.

BOOK REVIEWS

Louis Regnerus
South Holland, Illinois

TITLE:—**Bold Galilean**

AUTHOR:—**Legette Blythe**

PUBL.—University of N. Carolina Press

Bold Galilean is a novel of three Roman citizens in Palestine during the second and third years of Christ's ministry. Centurion Gaius, Tribune Lucius, and Marcus, merchant son of a wealthy senator. These three men meet but three times in the course of the last two years of Christ's ministry, yet each time their lives are drastically altered.

Their first meeting takes place on the docks of the city of Tyre. This city is at the time, as you will also recall from Scripture, the dye and glassworks centers of the world. At the time of this first meeting, Gaius is Centurion of the Roman garrison stationed at Capernaum in the province of Galilee. Tribune Lucius is enroute to his new assignment at the Roman post in Caesarea, and Marcus is busy managing his dye and glasswork factories. Lucius arrives in Tyre aboard the same ship that is bringing in a load of slaves for working in the manufacturing concerns of Marcus. It is from this boatload of slaves that Marcus chooses a beautiful woman to be sent to Herod as a sort of inducement for Herod to buy s dyes and woven goods. Marcus also gives to the Centurion Gaius, a lad who is suffering from the palsy, as a personal servant.

During this first brief visit with one another, the author chooses to display the very sharp and distinct differences in the characters of these three men. Marcus is revealed as an arrogant accomplished business man. One who is not averse to making a quick dollar and who uses his slaves and resources to his best advantage in his search for riches. Money, to Marcus, is God; for with money and wealth he would believe he can obtain anything. Lucius is presented as the military man, the soldier. One who would find no fault with anything that would the more display the power of the Roman Eagle. The power of the sword, the ability to rule by brute strength, is the god of Lucius. Over against these two, the author pictures the Centurion Gaius, as an entirely different sort of a man. Gaius does not subscribe to the theory that wealth or power is god. He evidently has seen too much of life in the outer provinces under Roman bondage and has achieved a certain amount of sympathy and understanding for the subject people with whom he comes in contact. Gaius has pity for the slaves and a display of this pity is also instrumental in causing Marcus to make a gift

of the palsied lad.

Their second meeting takes place a year later at Marchaerus, the desert-fortress-palace of the licentious Tetrarch of Galilee, Herod Antipas. They are present at the birthday banquet when Salome dances at her drunken step-father's insistence, and demands as her reward the head of John the Baptist. Herod, earlier in the feast, had offered the Prophet his freedom if he would but cease to denounce the illicit activities of Herod and his family. In reply to this offer of freedom, John had immediately and more vehemently than ever, spoken against the sin of Herod and his household. This caused him to be again cast into prison to meet death but a few minutes later. It is at this feast that Marcus meets the slave girl he had sent to the house of Herod, a year previously, and they fall in love. The girl, Naamah, is not aware that Marcus is the man who caused her to be sent to Herod's palace.

After the feast the three friends go their separate ways and here the story concerns itself primarily with Marcus who has again become possessor of the girl, Naamah. On their way home to Tyre they are set upon by a band of robbers led by the notorious Bar Abbas. Naamah flees to Jerusalem and Marcus is left on the highway to die the lingering death of leprosy, for in robbing him of his raiment his assaulters find him to be a victim of this dread disease.

Following this episode the story deals quite a bit with Christ and His teachings. The slave boy of the Centurion Gaius, is healed by Christ and a while later Naamah is presented as the adulteress with which the Pharisees attempt to seek an offense against Jesus. Jesus forgives her and changes her name to Mary of Magdala. The Centurion Gaius, who by now is somewhat of a believer, finds Marcus in a colony of ten lepers and brings him to Jesus. Jesus heals them all and Marcus is presented as the one leper of the ten who returned to thank the Christ.

It is a year later on a day of darkness and sorrow, that the three come together again. Now in the shadow of the cross at Golgotha. During the past year one of them had listened and believed on a young man who spoke with such compelling force. Another had lost wealth, position and had been committed to the walling dead until The Galilean had stretched forth his hand to heal him. But the third had not known what manner of man this was until he had crucified him.

The story of the relationship of these three men and the love of the one for the slave girl he helped to condemn to slavery, is told against the inadequate background of Christ's teaching and healing. This is also as it should be. Mortal man cannot improve upon that which we have in the first four books of the New Testament. At times when reading the book one almost feels that the author is using the story of the Christ as a stepping-stone to the more thoroughly reveal the festering political and moral corruption of a conquered and a conquering empire. It is undoubtedly true that the conditions of the time were as they are revealed in the book. However the title suggests

story which would be more in keeping with its implications. Bold Galilean, to my way of thinking, points to Christ. That is, the implication of the title is, this is a story concerning the teachings and works of Christ as He was made manifest unto the world. As such the story falls far short. This too, is to be expected. As was already stated, we cannot expect and have no need to seek a more perfect recording of Christ's work than that which we have in our own Bible.

When the story does concern itself with Christ and His teachings it presents them as a good working philosophy to save the whole world from its past and present ills. This, of course, is untruth. Christ's teachings throughout the ages have been a savor of death unto death to far more than a savor of life unto life. Scripture speaks repeatedly of the remnant that shall be saved. Always it is that little flock.

In its presentation of Christ's miracles the book is neither concise or concrete. The reader receives the impression of being left in mid-air concerning the validity of the Saviour's marvelous works. Always there is disputing following one of His miracles, and that too among his so-called followers. There is in the background the continual questioning and debating as to whether He was the Almighty One or merely some smart magician. There is no definite, concrete declaration of faith in Him as the Son of God.

Inasmuch as the author presents the teachings of Christ as a very practical, workable philosophy, it goes without saying that he also views them from a very Arminian aspect. I do not think an explanation of what that means is needed and I would like to end this review with a word of caution. I do not think it is a book to be read by the younger members of our younger set. To those of you who shall read it, do not expect sound Reformed reading. It just isn't there.

Danger Spots!!

Under the heading 'Baptists in Danger' the Baptist Missionary Evangelist quoted the Rev. F. B. Thorne as warning the churches of the Kansas Baptist Convention against the following:

1. The danger that we shall try to produce great christian lives without great christian truths.
2. The danger that we shall make our decisions upon the basis of expediency rather than on the basis of eternal truths.
3. The danger that we shall concentrate power in a super-organization rather than in individual churches.
4. The danger that we will measure churches by financial standards.
5. The danger that we shall substitute psychological methods for the power of the Spirit of God.
6. The danger that we will place the ministry upon a purely intellectual basis.
7. The danger that we will let our evangelism emphasize reformation rather than regeneration.

—Missionary Monthly.

QUESTION BOX

REV. B. KOK
Holland, Michigan

How must we understand the words of Christ as recorded in Matt. 23:37:

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"

Throughout the ages the enemies of the sovereign grace of God imagined that they had found in these words of Christ a proof for their god-less free-will theory. I say throughout the ages, for we have written proof that as early in church history as the Pelagian controversy, this text was quoted in support of their heretical doctrine over against Augustine, and when the enemies of Calvinism quote this text in opposition to the teachings of the great Reformed, he hurls at them a quotation of Augustine. Also in the days of our fathers of Dordt, the Arminians quote these words of Christ to maintain their heresy of free-will. Hence it need not surprise us that when our leaders in 1924 fought a heroic battle for the truth of God's sovereign grace, over against those who would teach a general well meant offer of grace, that these antagonists of God's sovereign grace, also quoted this text in the imagination that it supported their heretical doctrine. (See Prof. Berkhof's pamphlet in defense of the Three Points of 1924).

As I have already stated when the enemies of Calvin quoted this text in opposition to his teachings of the absolute sovereignty of God, he hurled at them a quotation from the writings of Augustine as follows: "What Augustine replied to them in many parts of his works, I think it unnecessary to bring forward on the present occasion. I will only adduce one passage, which clearly and briefly proves how unconcernedly he despised their objection now in question. 'When our Lord complains (says he) that though He wished to gather the children of Jerusalem as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings but she would not, are we to consider that the will of God was overpowered by a number of weak men, so that He who was Almighty could not do what he wished or willed to do? If so, what is to become of that omnipotence by which He did whatsoever pleased Him in Heaven and on earth? Moreover who will be found so profanely mad as to say that God cannot convert the evil wills of men, **which** He pleases, **when** He pleases, and **as** He pleases, to good? Now, when He does this, He does it **in mercy**; and when He doeth it not **in judgment** He doeth it not." Hence according to both Augustine and Calvin it is profane insanity to teach that the puny will of man can ever frustrate the sovereign will of God.

What then is the significance of these words of Christ? For a proper under-

standing of this text we must remember that by Jerusalem the Lord does not refer to the city, neither to all the inhabitants, but to the rulers, both civil and ecclesiastical, especially the great Sanhedrin, to whom belongs the descriptive characterization of **killing the prophets, and stoning such as were sent to them** by God, and who are to be distinguished from Jerusalem's children. According to the whole context the Lord is pronouncing judgment upon these spiritual leaders. Hence it is manifest that they are not the same persons whom Christ would have gathered, who **would not.** It is not said, **'how often would I have gathered you, and you would not',** as the text is often wrongly quoted; nor **'he would have gathered Jerusalem, and she would not'** as it is sometimes stated; nor **'he would have gathered them, thy children, and they would not'** as quoted by others; but **'I would have gathered thy children, and ye would not'.** Hence it is very evident that the persons whom Christ would have gathered are not represented here as being unwilling, but their rulers were not willing that Jerusalem's children should be gathered. Therefore they had always killed the prophets, and stoned them which were sent unto them, and even as Jesus had said in the 13th verse of this same chapter, "But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in." But in spite of all the opposition and hostility of Jerusalem, the Lord did gather Jerusalem's children, as many as were given Him by the Father, for all that the Father gave unto Him shall surely come unto Him, and he that cometh unto Him He will in no wise cast out.

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The Watchers On Zion's Wall

Mr. M. Van Antwerpen
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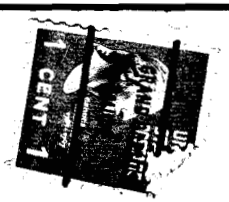
Grand Rapids, Michigan

We read in the prophecy of Isaiah that a watcher stands on the wall of Zion. He is asked, "Watcher, what of the night" And the watcher answers: "The morning comeeth ,and it is still night!" The Sun of Righteousness is risen, and it is still night. That was the strange phenomenon in Israel, the Sun of righteousness was risen, and the light shone in the darkness, and the darkness had comprehended it not! Yet even while Israel remained in darkness, the light of the Sun of righteousness had penetrated into the land of the Gentiles, and the Gentiles were led by that light to seek the newborn King. They came to Jerusalem inquiring, "where is he that is born king of the Jews?" And Jerusalem answered: We know not! All Jerusalem was in confusion, until the scribes instructed them to go to Bethlehem in Judea, since there the Christ was to be born. But even though they could point out the way to the Gentiles, they themselves remained in their darkness. Why? Because they preferred the darkness rather than the light, since their works were evil.

These Gentiles went on their way and behold, the start that they had seen in the East went before them and stood above the place where the Child was. They rejoiced, therefore, with great joy, and went in to worship before Him. Thereupon they returned to their homes. And they never saw the star again. Yet why not? Because they had beheld the Sun of righteousness. And when they beheld Him, the light of that Sun flooded their souls in true and living faith. For that Sun of righteousness is far greater than that wondrous star that announces His arrival. He is the Son of God Who should come into this world. "For God so loved the world, that He sent His only begotten Son in the world, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

But the world we see round about us is the world of sin. That world we may not love, nor that which is in the world, for the world and its lusts will perish in fire. But God loves the world which He has known and chosen from eternity. All men do not belong to that world of God's love and eternal good pleasure. Soon there will be a separation. A separation between faith and unbelief, for he that believeth not is condemned already because he has not believed in the Son of God. But to those who believe He shall appear as the Lord of Glory, to proclaim to His sons and daughters,

Komt, Jehova's lievelingen,
Jezus' volk en arbeidsloon;
Komt, Jehova's gunstelingen,
Werp voor 't Lam uw eerekroon.
Eeuwig zult Gij Hem aanschouwen
In Zijn glans en op Zijn troon;
En, bevrijd van alle rouwe,
Dragen 's hemel's gloriekroon.



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