O thou Bethlehem, land of Judah, art in no wise least among the Princes of Judah: for out of thee shall come forth a Governor, who shall be Shepherd of my people Israel.

- Matth 2:6
CHRISTMAS ISSUE

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Correction! — pages 31 and 31 were transposed. The second 31 should be page 30.
The True Meaning Of Christmas
Gise Van Baren
South Holland, Illinois

Once again the Christmas season is upon us. Stores temptingly display their wares in the hope of making many sales during the holiday. Is it any wonder that the world wants Christmas? It proves to be a very wonderful and convenient time to promote sales resulting in huge profits for the store owner. The radio presents songs like “White Christmas” and “Silent Night, Holy Night” in one program, as if there were no difference whatever between them. Wicked, divorced Hollywood actors are employed to sing the wonderful Christian Christmas songs. Christmas trees are being lighted, gifts exchanged, cards sent, all of which resembles a smoke screen through which the real, fundamental meaning of Christmas is barely visible for most people.

Almost we are carried along with this tide of false ideas concerning Christmas. It is so easy to forget what is really Christmas. We by nature want to think of it in terms of X-mas. Leave Christ out of Christmas. It seems as if Christmas cannot be enjoyed with Christ present.

One little tot expressed beautifully on a Christmas program what Christmas meant to him. He said:

“Do you know why I like Christmas the best of all the year? Because it is the birthday of Jesus, the Son of God so dear.”

This truth we have heard from earliest youth in our Protestant Reformed Churches. Christ is first in Christmas no matter what the world says or does. Christ not only is first but very really ALL of Christmas. Apart from Christ there is no Christmas. It does not take any Christmas trees or Christmas presents or Santa Claus to add to Christmas. It seems to me that instead of adding to the beauty of Christmas, they very often detract from it.

Christmas is not the celebration of the birth of a mere man. If it were, we would be foolish to celebrate it as we do. It is rather the celebration of the birth of the Son of God incarnate. God out of
His grace to the elect sinners sent His only begotten Son into the world that they might be saved.

We must, you understand, see more in Christmas than the birth of Jesus. It must of necessity be followed by the crucifixion, death and ascension of Christ, else Christmas means nothing to us. Then through the birth of Christ, our redemption becomes a reality. The Second Person of the Trinity comes into this sin-cursed world to save us, poor lost sinners.

Christmas now takes on another meaning for us. It is not only a commemoration of the birth of Jesus, but should be a commemoration of the obtaining of eternal life through Jesus Christ and our freedom from the bondage of sin and death. Paul writes in Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

You are free. Let us not misinterpret this freedom. It does not mean that you may attend church or stay home as you wish. The idea should not enter your mind either that it is your business whether or not you attend society. If you are truly free you will want to attend church and society. That is a part of your freedom. Free you are from the power of sin and death, not free to do as you please.

We are alive through Jesus Christ. That is what Christmas also means for us. Where originally there was only death, we are now partakers of eternal life made possible by the birth of Jesus.

How do we act with this new life? You realize that a living Christian may not go into the world and enjoy all its carnal, earthly pleasures. If you are alive you will give evidence of that life in your daily activity. A person alive in Christ will show it when he goes to work. He will show it when he goes to school. Whatever a person does, wherever he goes, he will give a sure evidence of this life.

You see, friends, Christmas means more to us than just the birth of Jesus. It is through the birth of our Saviour that we receive all the benefits of salvation. We are not only celebrating the birth of our Savior, but we are, or should be, celebrating the fact that through the birth of Jesus we are made alive. It is not the birth itself but the purpose behind that birth which makes Christmas so wonderful. If we see this, then we can have a blessed Christmas. Will you have such a Christmas? Will your Christmas be Reformed?

All our lives we must thank God for such a blessed Christmas. By nature we do not want Christmas with Christ. Thank God that He did not leave you or me decide whether or not we wanted it. Always keep in mind that the birth of Christ is not the work of man but of God. Therein lies our salvation.

How are you going to observe your Christmas? Be careful where you place the emphasis. Many so-called Christians will have their Christmas trees and Christmas gifts again this year while the time spent at church will be only a formality so as to keep them in good standing with the other church members. We
do not say that there is anything wrong with Christmas trees or gifts, but we must be careful where we place the emphasis. Many people, in fact most people, enjoy having an X-mas in which to exchange gifts and have a jolly, merry time. Very few people want to have a Christ-mas. We are Protestant Reformed youth. Is there the slightest question in your mind as to what type of Christmas we must have?

To all our Readers...

We express our sincere best wishes for a blessed Christmas season and for the New Year.

The Staff of Beacon Lights.
Speaking Plainly . . .

Whether our people, and particularly our young people, realize it or not, the awful fact is that the very foundations upon which our existence as a distinct group of churches are grounded are in great danger of being uprooted and torn apart. This is no mere platitude. Much of the material published in the most recent issues of both the Standard Bearer and Concordia should have served to finally awaken all of us to this alarming situation. Without question there are ominous signs in our ecclesiastical sky which can very easily be recognized as the harbingers of troubled times ahead for the people of God who love the truth and who are willing to defend it when distortion and misconception threatens it's purity.

But, dear reader, have these things struck home with you?

For a considerable period of time now we have followed the discussion between our various ministers involved in the debate on the term and concept “condition” and have carefully noticed also the attitudes and positions assumed over against this issue by our people. The result of this watchful waiting has been a growing, fearful awareness on our part that unless each and every member of our churches who is afflicted with a disinclination to concern himself with these questions begins to take a serious viewpoint—and is adequately stimulated into thinking long and hard about them—we are in grave danger of losing our precious Protestant Reformed heritage by default.

Another compelling reason for the need of much deliberate concern for the basis upon which we are organized as churches has been dramatically brought to light in the unhappy situation which has arisen in Canada by virtue of our missionary concourse there among the immigrants. We cannot help but feel the lulling effects of a “laissez-faire” attitude among many of us relative to doctrinal purity has contributed greatly to the woeeful picture across the border.

A third challenge which presently confronts the Protestant Reformed churches is the Brief Declaration of Principles formulated by our last Synod. This magnificent document, setting forth in unambiguous language the fundamental tenets of our Protestant Reformed approach to the teachings of Scripture, is now under consideration by all our churches and has become the subject of detailed scrutiny by our ministers and others writing in our church papers.

With these vital matters thus at hand how can anyone who claims to love the truth and the beloved cause of our Protestant Reformed churches sit idly by,
leaving such things for “others” to evince or uphold.

This writer, in taking cognizance of all these significant happenings on the denominational scene—each of which will assuredly leave indelible imprints on the pages of our church history—proposes (D.V.) to begin a series of editorials on the several subjects mentioned, with the thought in mind that the very nature of our magazine with its emphasis on the practical side of our Christian living, may lend itself in some measure to the need of the hour.

We make bold to offer the humble suggestion, or plea rather, to those of our ministers, too, who have kept silence on these pressing matters, to frankly voice their thoughts on these subjects. While we appreciate the meditative attitude of some who wish for more time to allow their own thinking to “crystallize” we cannot help but feel the time has come to openly discuss these all-important topics. The practice of making vague allusions to matters of such primary concern should by now be giving way to a forthright treatment of the issues at hand.

We remind our readers again that the Open Forum will welcome any contributions pertaining to these issues which reach us. We reserve, of course, the editorial right to comment and will be pleased to attempt to answer any questions which are presented.

—A. H.

IMPUTATION
By Benj. F. Dotson

There’s a statement in Galatians
From the great apostle’s pen,
Dealing with a situation,
That was quite a problem then;
It consisted of an error
Not uncommon in our day;
Men are saved by work of merit,
Which is not the Bible way.

It is called “another go-pel”,
“Not another”, so says Paul,
It is a sly perversion,
Not the Gospel after all;
It is thus a woeful mixture,
Law and works are magnified,
Robbing Christ of all the glory,
Of the cross on which He died.

Righteousness is not by doing
The commandments of the law,
For the ritual from Sinai
Will reveal the slightest flaw;
But the righteousness demanded
For the judgment seat to come;
Christ for righteousness, imputed,
God’s dear holy, sinless Son.
—from Baptist Examiner.

* * * * *

Our Great Redeemer’s Birth.

Hark! what mean those holy voices,
Sweetly sounding thr’ the skies?
Lo! th’ angelic host rejoices,
Heav’nly Hallelujahs rise.
Listen to the wondrous story
Which they chant in hymns of joy:
“Glory in the highest, glory!
Glory be to God most high!”
LESSON X.
Mordecai Protects The King’s Life
(Esther 2:19-23)

This passage speaks of a second gathering together of virgins. Now that Esther had been chosen to be queen, the need of assembling more virgins seems unnecessary to say the least. The reason for this second gathering is not stated. There are two possible reasons. The one is that at the time that Esther was chosen to be queen, the king’s officers were busy gathering virgins from the far corners of his kingdom, and these virgins were then gathered together in Shushan after the choice of the king had been made. Today such a thing could be stopped immediately by a long-distance call but not in the days of Ahasuerus. The other possibility is that the king was of a mind to continue this practice in order to add to the number of his concubines. Recalling what an evil man he was, it is not a far-fetched thought at all to accept this as the interpretation of verse nineteen.

We are not told either the reason why Bigthan and Teresh were wroth with the king. Their reason has nothing to do with the truth which this book brings to our attention. However, it seems to us that most likely the reason for this wrath was in some way connected with this whole series of events that the king put away Vashti and chose a new queen from the host of virgins presented to him. “We suggest then that they were wroth because, as chamberlains who were connected with Vashti, they suffered a debasement when she was put out of the palace.

Their plot was overheard by Mordecai, and he felt constrained to protect the life of the king. Having no direct access himself into the presence of the king, he notified Esther of this matter, who in turn sent out a message to the king. Esther, who is still very loyal to this Mordecai who brought her up as his daughter, certifies the matter in his name. He does not ask for this, and therefore there is here again an evidence of her loyalty to him though now she is queen of the land and as evidence of the tremendous influence of Mordecai over her, an influence which makes itself even more evident in future events.

Perfectly in harmony with the nature of this king, it is recorded that he failed entirely to reward Mordecai at this time for his deed. One never knows what this man’s reaction will be to any matter. However, there is one thing we may not overlook, and that is that the Almighty and All-wise God has decreed it this way. There is a certain direction in which all things in the court of this
Ahasuerus must go. God is here setting the stage according to His eternal counsel so that future events may transpire the way they did.

Points For Discussion:
1. Mordecai's loyalty. Mordecai was a Jew and the Persians held the Jews in shameful bondage and taxed them heavily. Yet Mordecai saves the life of one of these Persian kings. What do you think was his motive? Was he influenced by the fact that the king was now Esther's husband? Was it fear that all his hard labor to get this glory for Esther would be in vain? Was it because he was seeking a reward? Was it anger or wrath against Bigthan and Teresh or even perhaps jealousy of them? Would you apply Prov. 12:10 to this deed of Mordecai?

2. Exposing crime. Must we expose crime to the authorities when we are witnesses of it? Must we do so only when life is in danger? Suppose the man whose death is plotted is a cruel gangster or a fierce enemy of the church, must we expose the plot? If so why? If not, why not? Assuming that both Esther and Mordecai are penitent and wish to escape the hand of this unbelieving king and once again reveal their religion, would it have been permissible for Mordecai to have kept still? Must we always expose the sins of the brother in Christ to the authorities? Must we, do so to the church, or to the state or to both?

3. The king's unappreciativeness. Was the king obliged to reward Mordecai.

Or was Mordecai doing nothing more than was required of him. May we advertise things we have found to obtain a reward? May we accept rewards?

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LESSON XI.
Mordecai Refuses to Show Haman Due Respect
(Esther 3:1-4)

This passage which constitutes our lesson for this week is more important than it might appear to be on the surface. It gives us a further glimpse of the character of this Mordecai. Little by little we begin to understand the man more clearly.

The king, perhaps following one of his unpredictable whims, promoted Haman above all the princes in his realm. Haman is not mentioned with the seven princes nearest the king which are listed in chapter one. And although this promotion of Haman came some nine or more years after that feast recorded in chapter one, yet it does seem strange that this man should from almost nowhere suddenly be lifted to the place next to the king. Here again the reason for his promotion is not given. Now that no reason is not given we are not tempted to explore it to find the motive for Mordecai's stubborn refusal to show unto Haman the respect which the king demanded. Mordecai is not moved here by jealousy.

But Mordecai does refuse to show Haman the respect due his office. We
can rule out immediately any claim that Mordecai refuses because of a faith in God which forbids him worshipping of men. Not only had Mordecai up till this time shown no faith in God at all, but a look at several passages of Scripture will also show that bowing down to men was not necessarily a transgression of the Second Commandment. Turn back a few pages in your Bible to 2 Samuel 14:4; 18:28 and 1 Kings 1:16. Or recall the dreams of Joseph that his father and his mother would bow down before him. Nor does the statement, “for he had told them that he was a Jew”, contain the reason for his refusal. Note that the other servants in the gate told Haman “to see whether the matter would stand: for he had told them that he was a Jew”. This is the reason for telling Haman and not the reason for Mordecai’s refusal. These segments wished to see whether a Jew could “get away with it”. Much less is his refusal to be ascribed to the fact that he was of the house of King Saul and Haman was a descendant of King Agag the Amelekite. This latter we do not believe to be the case at all. Whatever it means that Haman was an Agagite it surely does not mean that he was a descendant of King Agag. His name indicates that he was a Persian.

Without being able to determine Mordecai’s reason for not doing as the king commanded, we can yet state with certainty that it was a sinful thing for him to do. This was the king’s commandment. It did not conflict with God’s commandments, and Mordecai himself must have bowed himself before Ahasu-
LESSON XII.

Haman Seeks a Fierce Revenge
(Esther 3:5-7)

It appears as though Haman was not bothered by the refusal of Mordecai to bow down to him until he was told by the other servants in the gate. Then Haman began to take note of Mordecai’s attitude towards him. This shows that there was nothing personal between these two men to which we can point as the reason for Mordecai’s action. Personally the men never knew each other. But now that Mordecai has been pointed out to Haman, in fact now that Mordecai identifies himself by being the only one who fails to bow down before him, Haman watches him and every time he sees the stubborn refusal of Mordecai his fury becomes the more intense.

Now this man Haman was the kind of man you might well avoid antagonizing. He had a tremendous capacity for wrath. He was not the explosive type whose “bark is greater than his bite”. He has the necessary devilish self control to contain all his fury within his own soul until he has laid down fully his plans for revenge and is ready to execute this plan. Many a man would have voiced his disapproval and given Mordecai a sharp rebuke with his own tongue or through one of his servants. Many a man would have reached out suddenly and made this Mordecai feel the sting of his power. Judging Ahasuerus’ reaction to Vashti’s refusal to come at his request, we can well visualize the king as having exploded in his fury the very first time he observed Mordecai’s rebellion. But Haman is a far different man.

With a tremendous capacity for hatred and an almost insatiable craving for revenge Haman plots the death of all the Jews living in the king’s realm at that time. And being of a superstitious nature he requests the casting of lot to determine a good day for the destruction of all the Jews. There are men today who claim the stars must be right for this or that and that the stars, their position in the heavens and the like determine war and peace, times when it is wisest to invest money or to desist from large business adventures. So it is with Haman, and the outcome of the casting of lots is that the thirteenth day of the twelfth month is chosen as the day when this ought to take place. This casting of lots was not done to determine the best day to approach the king with this matter but very definitely the day for the proposed execution of the Jews. This is evident from verse 13.

Points For Discussion:

1. Haman’s injustice. Mordecai deserved punishment, but we can all be agreed that the slaying of all the other Jews was unjust. But why was it unjust? We all suffer and die because of the sin of one man, Adam. Why is this just, and why then is it unjust for Haman to punish all the Jews for the sin of one man? Thirty six men were killed at Ai when Achan sinned. Explain how this was just. What would have been a just punishment for Mordecai? Does Scripture demand the death penalty for this? Can
you point to an incident in Scripture where dishonoring the authorities was so punished?

2. Haman's scorn. When we read that Haman thought scorn to lay hands on Mordecai alone we have a very strong expression of what is in Haman's inner soul. He was too proud to be satisfied with Mordecai's death. He thought himself to be too big a man and his position too high to allow such a limited punishment as the death of Mordecai. However there is something deeper here. His plot, if it succeeds, will mean that the promised Messiah from Judah's tribe cannot come. None of God's promises will then be fulfilled. Do you therefore see the work of the devil behind this scorn? Did he personally come into Haman to "engineer" this plot? Do you see any connection between this plot of Haman and what is recorded in Revelation 12? May we accuse the devil of being the instigator of every sin we commit, or are most of our sins committed without a direct personal temptation by the devil or one of his servants? Is every evil thought that arises in our minds and all hatred and scorn that arises in our hearts preceded by a temptation of the devil? Can an unbeliever be tempted into sin since because of his total depravity he can do nothing but sin?

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LESSON XIII.

Haman Seeks The King's Approval

(Esther 3:8-15)

As we remarked before, Haman is the kind of man it is dangerous to antagonize. Though burning with fury he has the will power and capacity for hatred which allows him to wait until the most suitable time to strike a blow of unwarranted ferocity at a most unexpected moment. We may believe that he came in before the king without the slightest trace of animosity toward an individual Jew. He came there as though he were not pleading his own personal case for revenge. We doubt whether Mordecai was even aware of Haman's rage. He certainly knew that Haman did not approve of his actions, but that the more he was scheming such an awful thing was entirely unknown to Mordecai. And Haman does not strike until all things are prepared. Not until he has his speech before the king all worked out does he come in before him.

His whole speech before the king centers around one thought. He presents the case to the king as though it is to the advantage of the king to have all the Jews in his realm slain and that not to do so would be dangerous. He declares two things about the Jews which were absolutely true. But he also leads the king to draw two incorrect conclusions from these facts. He states that the Jews were a scattered people, a separate people, (the word dispersed here means a separate people) and that they had laws diverse from the laws of all other
peoples. The wrong conclusions are that the Jews were people with whom you could not live properly and that they were because of their laws a people that was always rebellious to the authorities. Of course, the natural Jew, the unregenerated Jew is rebellious and dangerous to society, but then so is the unregenerate Persian. But if you take Jesus' parable of the Merciful Samaritan as an example of the believer’s attitude to his neighbour, he is the best neighbour you could desire. And the regenerated child who loves God will not rebel against whatever authorities God places over him. But Haman convinces the king.

Lest the king hesitate because of the cost of the undertaking Haman, who must have been a wealthy man, offers to pay the king ten thousand talents of silver. He may also have had in mind the fact that to take thousands of citizens out of the realm of Ahazerus by means of the sword would mean so many less taxpayers, which would hurt the king’s cause. And so he offers this huge sum. He certainly is willing to pay for the opportunity to get revenge. And having received permission of the king, he and the king sit down to drink wine! But Haman sees to it that the law is sealed with the king’s ring before the king changes his mind. And men are sent to the far corners of his realm with this edict to kill all the Jews on the thirteenth day of the twelfth month.

Points For Discussion:

1. The Jews' social isolation. To what do you suppose Haman refers when he says that the Jews' laws are diverse from those of all other people? They too forbade killing and stealing did they not? Must the children of God be a different people today? Or should we seek all manner of social contacts with unbelievers? Would you say that II Thess. 3:14 demands of us that we have no intimate relationships and fellowship with unbelievers? Are there any professions or jobs today which we simply may not seek today? Is there any evidence today that the Church of Christ in the future will be accused of these things of which Haman here accuses the Jews and will be persecuted with these things as the reason given for such persecution?

2. The believer’s loyalty to the authorities. Why is the believer the one whom the authorities ought to trust above the unbeliever? How do you explain then that many believers are found guilty of income tax evasion, traffic violations, theft and many other things? Can you mention one believer from the pages of history who was a traitor to his country?

3. The king's calling. Justice is surely an unknown word to the king. What should he have done when Haman made this clever speech? What does Article 36 of the Netherlands Confession (see the back part of your Psalter for this document) about the calling of the state? Do you subscribe to all this article?

* * * *
LESSON XIV.
The Jews Mourn
(Esther 4:13)

The last phrase of the preceding chapter tells us that the city Shushan was perplexed. This undoubtedly refers to all its inhabitants and not simply to the Jews living there. The word “perplexed” actually means “entangled”. The idea is that their thoughts were confused. There was no one prevailing thought in regard to this sweeping edict of the king. The Jews had one reaction, the Persians quite another. It is also our opinion that Haman with his fierce capacity for seeking revenge had not made known except to his closest friends the reason behind this edict of the king. And we even question whether Mordecai had definite assurance that he was the cause of it all. He may have seen plainly that he was displeasing in Haman’s sight. How may have known that the other servants in the gate had told Haman that he was a Jew, and yet he might not have known this either. And certainly the Jews in Shushan did not know that Haman was seeking revenge upon Mordecai. Otherwise it surely would be strange that we read of no resentment against Mordecai at all on the part of the Jews. Later verses also make it plain that Queen Esther knows nothing of the plot and that she surely knew not that Mordecai has occasioned it. Haman must have felt that his plot will succeed best if his personal grudge against Mordecai is kept entirely out of the picture. And so he keeps still about it. Just read chapter 5:9, 10. No wonder then that the who. city is perplexed. In fact this perplexity of the city is an evidence that the accusations of Haman concerning the Jews were not true. Had they been true the city would have understood.

The Jews were in deep mourning and revealed this by mourning, fasting and sackcloth and ashes. The believing Jews humbled themselves before God and confessed their sins by their behavior. The unbelieving Jews pitied themselves and mourned for fleshly reasons. The writer of this book does not make a distinction between them in the text.

Mordecai mourned deeply, and well he might. He made one of the most audible manifestations of his reaction. But he did not repent before God. He did not acknowledge his sin. Chapter 6 shows that he still refuses even as much as rise up or move out of the way when Haman came his way.

Points For Discussion:
1. Mordecai’s lament. Would you attach any special significance to the fact that though it is stated of the Jews in the provinces (Jerusalem for example) there was fasting as well as mourning Mordecai is not reported to have fasted? At any rate, do you attribute his lament to a fierce patriotism for his people or a deep concern for the cause of God’s Covenant? Are you able to prove your statement? Is faith essential for all these things recorded of Mordecai, or is the unregenerated man also capable of all these things, even of fasting. Give examples to

(continued on page 15)
Christmas Innovations

It was last March that "Schuiler", in answering a question concerning the proper observance of Christmas, wrote in Beacon Lights: "It seems to me this is a nice subject to write on for Rev. Vanden Berg in his column of Christian Living. Gladly will I forward the letter to him and he might write a few articles on it during the latter part of this year, toward Christmas time."

Acting upon the suggestion of Schuiler, I am going to devote this present article to the purpose of presenting some changes which, in my opinion, ought to be enacted in our Christmas celebrations. I write on this subject not only because Schuiler suggests it but also, firstly, because the subject has been of increasing interest to me, especially as my own children get older and soon will be quite susceptible to the current Christmas "craze", and, secondly, because the thing as such is not 'adiaphorous' but has to do with a most serious and important phase of our life . . . "the proper commemoration of the birth of our Savior". Therefore it also has much to do with our "Christmas Living" for if we do not begin with the proper observance of our Lord's birth, can we expect to correctly evaluate His death, resurrection and glorification? If we are "mundane" with respect to His birth, what is there to assure us that we are not "carnal" in all our worship of Him. I consider the celebration of Christmas vital to CHRISTian Living!

First of all then, what must our evaluation be of all that accompanies the celebration of Christmas in our country today and, how much of it, if any, can we as Christians adopt for our own to enrich our own Christian Living, especially during this season? We have in mind such things as "the Christmas tree, the Yule-log, the Mistletoe custom, the giving and receiving of gifts, the Greeting-cards practice, Santa Claus, the decorations and trimmings, and many more beside". Let us bear in mind that all of these things are of "pagan" or "worldly" origin. None of them have their beginning in the historic church of Jesus Christ which is already a strong indication of the fact that our "spiritual fathers" did not feel the need of such practices to enrich their Christmas. You may reason, perhaps, that the fathers did not introduce them because they were already there, which is no doubt true. The fact remains, however, that when new customs and practices of this nature spring forth, they never do so out of the church. It is generally believed that the Christmas tree
is of German origin and was introduced at a sacrifice of Odin (a pagan god). The sacred Oak of Odin is supposedly to have been replaced by the fir tree, dedicated to the Christ Child. Through German immigration the idea was carried to our land. The same is true of other traditions. Surely there is nothing edifying in santa-claus, mistletoe, etc.

What then? Shall we be afraid to ban all such pagan customs from OUR Christmas just because they carry a tremendous pressure of public sentiment? Are we, perhaps, reluctant to make a change in our celebrations for fear of being branded “out of date” or “old fashioned non-conformists”. Or is it, as one author wrote, that we are degenerated so far that Christmas would not be complete for the little folks and would lose much of its meaning for families without Santa, gifts, trees, and the like?” If that is the case we are most sadly in need of many... Christmas Innovations! Personally, we have no use for the contributions of “pagan Christmas culture” and consider them as blemishes and dangerous devices of that enemy of the Christ by which he seeks to spoil the Lord’s birthday.

The next question is, “Is there a need in the Christian’s Christmas for these practices?” Are we not ignoring the fact that we are still IN the world and that it is almost impossible to divorce our children from all association with Santa Claus and his companions? It is no doubt true that there is a big “practical problem” here, but I am somewhat convinced that we create that problem for ourselves by putting a small (?) Christmas emphasis where there should be none at all. Christmas is the commemoration of the birthday of our Lord. Christmas is the annual observance of the Incarnation. That is all! There is no more! Just as Good Friday focuses all our attention on the Cross; Easter turns us to the empty sepulchre and makes us cry out, “I know that my Redeemer liveth”, so Christmas tells us the glad story, “For unto us a child is born... unto us a Son is given...” To add anything is to mar the beauty of the celebration. To cover the spiritual vision of this Divine Wonder with “holly, firs, roast-goose and plum-pudding” is not only indicative of a lack of appreciation for the “real Christmas goods” but is sinful defacement. Surely one who enters into the Christmas season resolves to celebrate only the Christmas event has no need of the assistance of Santa, trees, trimmings and festive banquets, does he? Nor do our children need these accessories affixed to their already “full observance of Christmas” if they are taught to justly learn to know the things God has revealed to us concerning Jesus!

We have one final question. Is it correct to say that all these things associated with the modern Christmas are “per se evil”? We have in mind the practice of exchanging gifts, Christmas dinner with friends or relatives, etc. Our answer is, “Of course these things in themselves are not evil and, therefore, we may also practice them, but there is in them a grave danger.” The danger lies in over-indulgence and that is sin. Ameri-
can business men anticipate doing a $3,000,000,000 retail sales business during this coming Christmas season which is fair indication of how "shopping-mad" the American public is. We can only conjecture as to how much of this is "wasteful spending". The latter is sinful, for the Lord would have us to use the gifts and means that are at our disposal with prudence. If all that is "wasted" in this way annually were deposited in our Foreign Mission Fund, I venture to say that a concrete project would soon be in the making. With respect to the practice of giving, it must always be stressed that the important thing is not the "size and amount" but the "spirit of love and good will" that motivates the act. Without the latter also this practice is abused. We must guard sin as it permeates everything in life.

To conclude we suggest a few innovations where the celebration of Christmas has and is being distorted. Let us put aside every practice that will in any way divert our attention from Bethlehem and the Christ. Following the example of the shepherds, let us forsake our flocks and all that is ours of this earth and "go to see the thing that has come to pass". Let us heed, too, the emulous giving of the wise men and instead of "splurging" on one another, lay aside a special contribution to the cause of God which had its realization in "Christmas". Let us strive toward the spiritual and in doing so put off the material. And may we all not look to see how the neighbor observes the day but rather each one for himself put forth an extra effort to make his commemoration agreeable to Him Whose birthday we observe.

Exercise ourselves toward more Christmas innovations! Then where are the many exertions are God-centered . . . Merry Christmas!

BIBLE OUTLINES
(continued from page 12)

show that this is possible or prove it to be impossible.

2. Mordecai before the gate. No man was allowed in the gate with sackcloth, according to verse 2. Mordecai goes as closely as he may but does not violate this law. Why does he show obedience to the king’s laws here? Is it because he feels the sword already over his head and is not anxious to hasten its descent? Or would you really see some form of repentance here on his part? It is evident that he gathered there so that word might come to Esther of his deep mourning. Now she had been Queen already for five years——this is the twelfth year of the king’s reign—and had hidden her religion all this time. Do you suppose that he is here trying to indicate to her that she must quit hiding her nationality and likewise humble herself before God? Do you see any possibility of drawing this conclusion? Were he penitent wouldn’t we expect to read more of it than we do read here?
Korea?

A question mark is placed after the word Korea. My purpose is to question what Korea means in our present day crisis. Does it mean a possible conclusive victory, or greater responsibilities and more commitments to defend?

Many things are beyond our scope when our foreign policy is under discussion. We are in the dark about the real situation. It is well to emphasize that no matter how great the danger, or how hopeless the situation may seem, the principles of truth and justice may never be disregarded. To pursue a pragmatical course, which I fear is too often done, will never result in peace and happiness. We believe, however, that God controls and uses the decisions of men to further His eternal plan, so that even the course of sin serves His purpose. He uses the plans of wicked rulers to promote the peace and prosperity of His church.

My question about Korea does not concern itself with the application of the principles of justice to our international affairs. My question is merely about the result we may expect. There lurks in the bosom of every parent and every young man and young woman the yearning for peace and quiet. The last war is scarcely over and now we must again send our boys off to the fight. Shall we never have happy homes again? As a society on earth there has always been a measure of that natural happiness, but in the end these shall be taken away from mankind, just as all things that make this life possible shall be withdrawn, and the night of wrath and vengeance shall be upon us and then the wicked shall be cast into outer darkness. “The voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee.” (Rev. 18:21ff.)

Now victory seems still a thing of the future. And even victory in Korea will be merely a respite, as we look at it now. And temporary victory will mean many more responsibilities and problems to be faced.

New Dogma.

Dogma has been defined as teaching which is authoritative. The question as to what gives a teaching authority, sanction, what makes it a dogma, has been debated for ages, even before the time of Christ.

The new dogma I refer to is the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary.

According to a short write-up in Time, St. Anthony of Padua (1195-1231) saw a vision one night in which the Virgin
Mary herself appeared to him and said, "Be assured, my son, that this body of mine . . . has been preserved from corruption of the grave. Be equally assured that three days after my death it was carried upon the wings of angels to the right hand of the Son of God, where I reign as Queen." Last week this became an official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church. In 1946 Pope Pious XII sent a letter to all the bishops, asking whether they thought the Assumption should now be made a church dogma. Most bishops approved. The 1950 holy year will henceforth be called the Jubilee year of the Assumption. After a long feast of celebration, the pope read the bull of proclamation: The presence of Mary in soul and body in heaven is a God-revealed truth . . . Hence if anyone deliberately presumes to think otherwise, let him know that in his judgment he stands condemned, has suffered shipwreck in faith and has separated himself from the church's unity."

The strange thing is not that it is stupid and superstitious, as a modern Protestant affirmed to me, for we believe in the translation of Enoch and Elijah. But the real point is that this doctrine is made without the authority of the Bible.

That brings us to the conception of dogma, which is of perennial interest. Since Miriam and Aaron questioned Moses, and the Pharisees and Jews questioned Jesus and in Paul's day contended for their authority, we have had that issue with us.

For Protestants that only is authoritative which is taught in Scripture. "The Bible is the only rule of faith and practice" and Luther defended the liberty of judging of dogmas or councils—"judicandi conciliorum decreta". The Roman Catholic Church after the Council of Trent taught that dogma referred to "doctrines which were authoritative as formulated by the church. At first the dogma of the Immaculate Conception was called a thesis until Pope Pious IX in 1854 defined it as a dogma. In 1870 the Vatican decrees affirmed the personal infallibility of the pope.

Now, it seems to me, there is a slight departure from the usual way the papal decrees are made. With this decree the pope consulted 500 bishops beforehand. Although this may be a more careful course, nevertheless it principally remains the same erroneous Roman Catholic Doctrine.

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST
Schuiler Writes

VOTES FOR WOMEN

Schuiler received three questions but they came several days late for this issue, since at least two of them require definite research before Schuiler can give you his answer to them. The third question is easier (at least, to my way of thinking), and, therefore, I will answer it in this issue. You see, the question referred to has come up time and time again, and he has made quite a bit of study on this subject in the past.

The question is as follows:

"Is it unbiblical for women to vote in spite of the fact that our country says it is our duty?"

A Beacon Lights Reader.

My answer is: Yes, it is definitely unbiblical for women to vote for public office.

There are many things which the ungodly world says is our duty, but which nevertheless are evil. You can and must expect that of the world. They lie in great darkness. Their mind and soul and heart are dark, evil, and not subject to the will of God, neither indeed can be. That the world calls it the duty for women to vote means nothing to me.

But the Bible teaches it plainly. And then I have reference to the text you find in I Tim. 2:12, which reads: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence." I have in mind especially the clause: "nor to usurp authority over the man." For that is plainly implied in the vote. The vote is to exercise authority, and this authority of the vote is over man. There is no earthly reason, either, for refusing the woman to be president of the United States, if we take the stand that women should vote. They allow them to be governors, representatives, and magistrates, so why not president? The right to hold office is implied in the vote.

But there is more. God plainly revealed that the man is the head of the woman. He is created king. And although I admit, that this makes his wife queen, it nevertheless makes the woman—queen subject to the man—king. Such is ordained of God. This becomes plainer when we listen to God's Word as it describes the order of things in the recreated world. In that new world all is elevated, exalted, but the parallel remains. Christ is the head of the church. And its shadow is seen in the true earthly relation between husband and wife. The husband is the head, the ruler, the king of the wife. She is subject to the husband in all things, even as the church to Christ. It is certainly not so that this order prevails in the church, but the very opposite in the world that now is. There is one God and one Lawgiver for both. And God is the true and faithful One, who remains and abides forever.
Sin is the disruption, the turning about, the perverting of all order as established by God. See it in the modern churches: women vote for office-bearers, assume office of elder and deacon and also minister. Contrary to God’s Word, they usurp authority over the man. That is not as it should be. We all know that. And here is the point: as it is in the church, so it should be in the present world.

I know that God has made His exceptions. But let Him do it, and not we. He gave a Deborah to Israel and a Queen Juliana to the Netherlands. And He has His reasons. The Lord wants to shame the men sometimes in some circumstances which should make us men blush. How do you think the men in Israel felt when a woman had to deliver them? These exceptions which God in His wisdom and justice willed to prevail in some cases and times, establish the rule: man is the natural and spiritual King of the woman.

This should make us men very humble, for He did it not because of anything in man. It simply was His good pleasure, and I think He established this rule in created things so that there might be a shadow, type and symbol for the coming Man, Bridegroom, King of the church.

Let us not rebel against God. We only do so to our hurt.

Ask the woman of the world. She has attained to a frightful liberty, right, prerogative. The tears and untold bitterness of heart of a multitude of poor, de-luded and suffering women in our country testify to the awful truth that to rebel against the God-ordained ways pays a proportionate wage. And I am sure that you, our Protestant Reformed womanhood, love Him and His ordained ways.

Sincerely,

Schuiler.

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MAY WE REMIND YOU?

- - -

SCHUILER will answer your question on that social problem.

- - -

THE QUESTION BOX needs questions about doctrinal subjects.

- - -

THE OPEN FORUM prints all letters to the Editor which are intended for publication.

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Conversation. . . .

Never hold any one by the button or the hand in order to be heard out; for if people are unwilling to hear you, you had better hold your tongue than them.

-Chesterfield.
CHOOSING A VOCATION—III.
(Conclusion)

Some of you young people may not have been present when we visited in with John and Jim as they visited the pastor in the manse after the meeting of their society. For the special benefit of these and also for those who were present but who might not have remembered the trend of the discussion, we would recall the following points briefly:

1. That John and Jim are young men standing before life, contemplating their preparation for their life’s calling. They realize that they are making a life’s choice; they are no drifters. Hence, they have very painstakingly discussed the question of a choice of a life’s calling, but find that when they try to look at this question in the light of the Word of God, that they cannot see eye to eye on the question of the proper considerations. John emphasizes the objective, as he calls it, while Jim places the emphasis on the subjective choice.

2. These young men have gone to their pastor’s home to present their problem to him and to seek his advice, so that they may be helped out of their dilemma. At the outset the pastor emphasized two matters of pivotal importance. The first was, that it is of the utmost importance to bear in mind through this entire discussion that we are here speaking of the choice of the living believer in Christ Jesus. And, secondly, that the only rule of life for the believer is the Word of God. All of our choices must be out of faith, according to the Word of God and thus unto His glory.

Thus far the pastor had come when we left him with John and Jim in the manse.

Let us join them once more, so that we may hear the remainder of the pastor’s counsel to these young men.

The pastor continues, by pointing out to John and Jim, that in his opinion, they had really made the fatal mistake to present the matter of our life’s choice as being either a question determined wholly by the objective guidance of God in history as John had done, or to insist that it is wholly a matter of free-choice as Jim had insisted. For the truth of the matter is that our “free-choice” is as much a part of God’s guidance as are the “objective facts of history”! In both instances we are dealing with history and the almighty and omnipresent power of God. For, thus the pastor continues, in our thinking about this question we may distinguish the “objective facts” from the “subjective choice”, but we cannot nor may we separate these two in our actual choosing by faith. In reality these two are never separated. Both are facts about us, our thoughts and decisions are all in the hand of God. To separate
them in relation to the counsel of God is a grave error; to separate them in our actual decisions in life is equally a grave error.

Let us make this point clear to you, boys, the pastor continues.

In the first place we must remember, that it is the clear teaching of the Word of God, that in the Kingdom of God in Christ the rule is: the natural is first, then the spiritual. This truth should not be misunderstood; we should not understand this to mean, that in the estimation of God the spiritual is more important than the natural. Both are important before God; each must be in its own place and order. Just as the earthly creation is before the heavenly, and is made in view of the heavenly (Col. 1:17) so also the natural talents and the external circumstances are there in view of the spiritual proper use of the end in view of the spiritual choice of life's calling. And thus also in the choice of our calling the rule is: the natural is first, then the spiritual.

Now let me show this a little bit more in detail, John and Jim, the pastor goes on to say.

John spoke earlier this evening of the fact that he could study well, that he has always been an A-student, and that there was a great need for Christian School teachers, and thus he concluded that the external circumstances were the factors that made his choice. Now it is not possible to enter into all the details of this matter. However, there is one matter of importance to notice here. It is: that the natural-psychological makeup and several abilities of any individual young man or women certainly must be considered by himself in determining his life's calling by faith according to the Word of God. These are simply "musts" in our consideration of a life's choice. Such is evidently the clear teaching of Jesus in the parable of the "talents". Each one in this parable received a talent according to his several ability. And these talents, these several natural abilities are increated by God; they are gifts from God to us, which in turn under the law of God in Christ entail a duty, which at once is a great and blessed privilege by faith. The acknowledgement of this fact makes for a humble and strong life. For if the natural is first, if the talents are God's gifts to us, then they place us under the demand of being good stewards of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. And so the fact of being an A-student or a good B-student in any given field is a basic consideration with us, for such it is with God with whom the natural is before the spiritual.

Then the matter of a free-choice is not excluded. Jim is dead-right when he insists on a free-choice of faith. Such it is. By faith we are free as sons, and in this freedom we choose within the natural that is first. Faith needs this natural even as the heavenly needs the earthly. Thus our choice is a manifestation of our being some first-fruits of God's new creation, having been brought forth by the Word of truth. And so both the objective and the subjective are under the almighty, gracious Fatherly providence

(continued on page 24)
LIFTING THE LID

A Den of Robbers and Adulterers

II.

Life in Hollywood is evaluated in the free indulgence in sexuality and in the free spending of money. This can be seen by taking notice of the advertisements which appear in the various newspapers, magazines, and on the outside of the theaters themselves. Just what do you see? Lustful kisses, profanity, nudity, passionate embraces, luxurious cars, mansions, clothing and jewelry! If life in Hollywood were pure and simple, why do they use sex and wealth to attract the masses to attend the theaters? The closer one gets to Hollywood, the more it stinks. This can be seen by their utter disregard for the seventh commandment. Dr. John R. Rice in his pamphlet, "What Is Wrong With The Movies," quotes Dan Thomas, a Hollywood writer, as saying the following:

"In those days Hollywood wasn't exactly a moral community—and it isn't today, if one accepts the customary standards of morality. The celluloid colony doesn't. That's where it differs from the world at large.

"Since the early days of motion pictures, Hollywood has been a small world within itself—as completely shut off from the rest of the world as if it were surrounded by a high wall. It has its own customs, at variance with public opinion perhaps, but still satisfactory here. The film never has frowned on divorce, never has regarded it a sin for a girl to have an affair, and never has known the meaning of prohibition. A girl with her lover is just as welcome anywhere as one with a husband.

Compare Hollywood with any average town, for example. There if a boy or a girl wanted to have an affair, they must be most furtive. And if it was found out, mothers would prohibit their daughters from having anything to do with the girl in the case.

In Hollywood that's all different. The boy and girl would make no bones about their affair, make no effort to keep it a secret. Either the girl would go openly and boldly to the man's apartment or he would go to hers. And while the affair might furnish a choice morsel of gossip, it would in no way reflect on either party."

The above quotation gives us a small picture of what Hollywood is morally and spiritually. "The Hollywood divorce score for 1949 was the worst in all the forty years of movies. Nora Eddington, divorced from Errol Flynn, went straight to Dick Haynes, Dick Haynes had been divorced from Joan Dru. Miss Dru immediately married John Ireland, who a few days before dropped his previous wife in a divorce court. This chain reaction—all in a period of a few weeks—would have been complete, but for Errol Flynn, who has yet to marry the Romanian princess who is trailing him across Europe." (Evangelist James V
Lamb, The Sword of the Lord, Feb. 10, 1950). Though the average marriage in Hollywood lasts about five years at the longest, yet the movie stars are in good friendship with all their former wives and husbands.

Just what is the qualification for the position of a movie star? It depends upon how well she can break the seventh commandment. She cannot be hampered by such a thing as modesty. In as far as external beauty is concerned, there are at least a thousand girls who are just as beautiful (when properly clothed), talented, and cultured as the average star in Hollywood, in every city of 100,000 population in the U. S. The vast majority of movie stars obtained their jobs because of their “wicked curves” and shapely legs (the women of a generation ago deemed it proper to cover up these members with clothes). “One star skyrocketed to stardom by the simple device of reconstructing bar-room and brothel scenes and rehashing bar-room and brothel language. Another star has been kept on the heights of popularity by taking her, so to speak, on a prostitute’s tour of the world.” (Hell over Hollywood, p. 34).

The thing, that Asaph complains about in Psalm 73 is an actual reality in Hollywood. The outrageous salaries and expenditures are worth noticing. Many stars make as much as $400,000.00 a year. Let us analyze this figure by doing some simple arithmetic. Figuring fifty weeks per year and forty hours per week, this salary amounts to $8,000 per week, $1,600 per day, $200. per hour, and $3.33 per minute! If this does not set you to thinking get this--The person with the highest salary in the U. S. is the movie executive, Mr. Louis B. Mayer. In 1939 he received the modest stipend of $1,296,503.00.

Herbert F. Miles (Movies and Morals) compares the salaries of the movie stars with the salaries of government officials based on the fiscal year 1942.

The total income of three movie stars was more than the combined salaries of the 96 U. S. senators. The income of one movie executive was more than the combined salaries of the 96 U. S. senators. The income of one movie star was as much as the combined salaries of the governors of the 48 states. Another star’s income was more than four and one half times the salary of the President of the U. S. The income of 29 movie stars was more than the salaries of the 599 top government officials as follows: President, Vice President, cabinet members (10), supreme court justices (8), U. S. Senators (96), U. S. representatives (435), governors (48). The income of four movie executives was one half as much as the combined salaries of the above 599 top government officials.

These exhorbitant incomes do not include the vast amounts of money collected from their investments, such as real estate, stocks, bonds, bank accounts, etc., in the form of rent, dividends, interest, and payments. Often these amounts exceed their actual salaries. They can even defy our Federal Government without being punished because their money talks for them. Books such as “Holly-
wood On Trial," by Gordon Kahn, published by Boni Goes of New York, plainly indicate that this fact is true with no exceptions.

Now let us consider the extravagant expenditures of the movie stars. Dan Gilbert (Hell Over Hollywood) gives us some examples:

"One actress had diamonds set in her teeth. Another strutted her dog about laden with more than half a million dollars in jewels. A famous actor gave a $600,000.00 necklace to his daughter on her fifteenth birthday. A movie mogul $75,000.00 for a pair of opera glasses, while his wife received a dressing table worth $65,000.00. At one Hollywood function, cigarettes wrapped in hundred dollar bills were freely distributed among the guests. One star boasts of owning a thousand pairs of shoes. Another owns enough jewelry to open a chain jewelry store. The comedian Ken Murray described money-mad, pleasure-mad Hollywood as "a place where you spend more than you make on things you don't need, to impress people you don't like."

When reading the above facts please bear in mind that Hollywood robs this money from the masses of the common people. Many people sacrifice the necessities of life, such as food, clothing, shelter, education, etc. in order to attend the theater. For money Hollywood will provide all the sex stories, bedroom scenes, suggestive talk, murder stories, robberies, horror, rape, and drunken revelry scenes for which the masses crave. Hollywood not only robs the common people financially but also robs them physically, morally and spiritually. I will say more about this in my next two instalments.

To our church people who attend the theater I have this to say, "You are not only robbing the poor (the money you spend on shows could be used for a more worthy cause), but you are supporting the people which are "morally and spiritually the scum, the smut, the filth of the human race". (The Movie, Rev. R. Veldman). As for me I rather confess the following:

In Thy blest courts to worship,
My God a single day
In better than a thousand
While far from Thee I stay;
Tho' in a lowly station,
The service of my Lord
I choose above all pleasure
That sinful ways afford.

TRUTH vs. ERROR
(continued from page 21)

of God in Christ Jesus. And all things are indeed for the King.

That is the truth of the matter. Then we do not separate what God has put together.

Both John and Jim leave after this rather clear-cut statement of their problem. They are thankful to the pastor for his kind and more matured advice.

Both are certain that life is for them a proving ground of their faith to be faithful in little and to be presently set over much.
Title: — SO GREAT A QUEEN
Author: — Paul Frischauer
Publisher: — Charles Schribner's Sons, New York.

This is the story of Esther, beauteous Jewess who became Queen at the proud court of Ahasuerus, King of Persia. It is a matter of history, with which we all are acquainted, how Esther and her position as Queen to defend and preserve the Jewish people in their captivity. In telling the story of Esther the author is remarkably accurate in his presentation of the events of that time with regard to their sequence and also their historical value.

When Vashti, the favorite of Ahasuerus was deposed because she refused to obey one of the king's commands, it became necessary to choose a new Queen. According to the author, Esther is urged by Mordecai to compete for the throne because he envisions a Jewess for a Queen as the only possible salvation for Israel in a strange land. While the Jew had been deprived of his freedom, the real threat of annihilation did not come until after Esther was made Queen and when Haman was made a dignitary in the kingdom. The author readily recognizes the Law forbidding Israel to intermarry with the heathen. In his desire to justify the marriage of Esther to King Ahasuerus, Mr. Frischauer advances the theory that she performed this act for the sole purpose of saving her people. This, of course, is contrary to Scripture. Nowhere do we read that Esther was motivated by love for God and His Church to the extent that she felt it her calling to act as the savior of Israel. There can be no doubt of the fact that God used Esther as the means of preserving unto Himself a remnant which had not bowed the knee to Baal. However by no conceivable stretching of the imagination can we ascribe such motives to Esther. If we are to commend the actions of Esher, we also commend every wicked act that the reprobate world has committed throughout all the annals of history, because those wicked acts are the filling of the cup of iniquity and which finally also serve their purpose in the gathering of the Church. If we applaud Esther's deed let us also adopt the philosophy that the end justifies the means and then we will not have to deny ourselves the pleasures of this world which our old man desires with all its heart. If we are to say that Esther performed that which was right in the eyes of God let us also be consistent and refute the teachings of Scripture and let us say that we shall continue in sin, that grace may abound and thus we shall receive
more abundantly of that wondrous grace whereby the child of God experiences a small beginning of that new obedience. Such is the philosophy of those who would believe and teach that Esther acted in accordance with God’s law.

Paul Frischaver has recreated that whole ancient world, with all its pomp and glory—the perfumed courts and gardens, the temples with their mighty idols, the fabulous entertainments that lasted for days. Against the background of debauched luxury, drinking bouts and preparations for war, move the vivid figures of Queen Esther and King Ahasuerus. A distant time and land are reproduced here, vividly and with all the elements of excitement, passion and intensely human characters.

I shall not take time or space to write concerning the events of the story because I feel that the historical events of the time are already familiar to the reader especially in light of the fact that Beacon Lights is now basing its Bible Outlines on the Book of Esther. I would much rather in this case, write a Book Report than a Book Review. As has already been stated, the book does not correctly interpret the events of that time in the light of what Scripture teaches us. This, to a certain extent, causes me to doubt its value to the reader. However I have a very different reason for not recommending the book to be read. The author is very prolific in his account of the debauchery of the time. “So Great A Queen” concerns itself to a very great extent with the carnal, sensual pleasures of a wicked kingdom. So much so that the reader receives the impression that Mr. Frischaver is interested primarily in revealing the total moral corruption of the Persian rule. That there was a festering moral and political condition in the empire is evident from Scripture itself. It is therefore not my intention to either prove or disprove the beliefs expressed by the author in that respect. It is evident however, that he has used the history of Israel in their captivity as a stepping stone to reveal the depravity of the King’s court.

However factual the novel may be in regards to historical data; I do not believe that the erroneous interpretation applied to these events cause them to assume their proper perspective. If we are to respect the teachings of Mr. Frischaver with regards especially as to what motivated Esther to take upon herself the role of Queen, we place an entirely different light upon the deed itself. For this reason, too, I sincerely believe the book has no place in our libraries.

* * * * *

YOUNG PEOPLE
In The
GRAND RAPIDS AREA
Plan to attend the Christmas Eve Singspiration
* * *
Sunday Evening — December 24
(See outside back cover for details)
THE SPIRIT OF REFORMATION . . .

. . . . In Illinois

Our Reformation Day Mass Meeting was held in the South Holland Church auditorium on Tuesday evening, Oct. 31. The Rev. Schipper acted as Chairman for the evening. He also led the group-singing, which was followed with Scripture reading of Psalm 32, and prayer.

Our first number on the program was an accordion solo by Clara Boer. Her selections consisted of “Lord of Harvest, Send Forth Blessings”, and “Faith of our Fathers”. John Buiter then favored us with an essay entitled “Reformation”. This was followed with a reading by Bertha Buiter, also in regards to Reformation Day. A very edifying speech was then given by Rev. G. Vanden Berg, entitled, “Who are the Sons and Daughters of the Reformation.” After the speech Betty Zandstra favored us with an essay, “Reformation Day”. A duet from Oak Lawn, consisting of Joan and Emma Rutgers, sang “Light of Home”. The meeting was then closed with singing of psalter no. 336 and prayer by Rev. Vanden Berg.

After the program, we again assembled in the basement, where the refreshment committee had ham sandwiches and soft drinks waiting for us. Our social hour also included a few games.

We can truly say we had a very enjoyable evening.

May we always defend and maintain the truth that is so precious to us which we have received from our forefathers in the days of the Reformation. Let us always be Reformed in our thinking, teaching and life, so as Protestant Reformed Youth, we may live in the historic line of Reformations.

Agnes G. Van Baren,
Staff Writer.

. . . . In Northwest Iowa

The various societies of Northwest Iowa held a Mass Meeting at our Hull church October 31 to commemorate Reformation Day. The meeting was opened by singing several psalter selections. After the song service a portion of Ephesians 2 was read and prayer was offered by Rev. De Jong. Rev. S. Cammenga was the
BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

speaker for the evening. His topic was: Reformation and Y.u. He spoke to us first of all about the Reformation as such. Secondly, the Significance of the Reformation and finally, how the Reformation is concerned with us personally. Rev. Cammenga pointed out to us that the Renaissance and the Reformation are not one as is often thought to be the case. The Renaissance or re-birth wished to put off all limitations, while the Reformation wanted to put off the yoke of the church, but go under the yoke of Christ. We were also reminded of Martin Luther, how on the Eve of All Saints Day, he nailed the theses which was a means of separating from the Pope’s rule and the Catholic Church. Luther was convinced especially that we can not be saved by our own good works after he searched the Scriptures and read the text in Romans, “The Just Shall Live By Faith.”

Rev. Cammenga closed his address by giving each of us a challenge. First of all, we must pay attention to the preaching of the Word and study the Holy Scriptures, secondly, take part in Catechism, and finally be active in the various societies. It is our duty to remain true to the Reformation and not become lax in the things which pertain to God and His Kingdom. After this inspiring address, several numbers consisting of essays, musical numbers and readings were given by various members of the societies. Rev. Van Weelden closed the meeting with prayer.

A delicious lunch was served by the Hull society after the meeting. It was a well-spent evening, which filled our hearts with gratitude, that we may be called and truly are Children of the Reformation.

Ena Dykstra,
Staff Writer.

* * * *

. . . . In Southwest Iowa

Our meeting was held on Sunday evening, Oct. 29, in Pella, and began with the singing of several Psalter numbers. The Rev. M. Gritters opened with prayer. Our Bible study in relation to the theme of the evening was based on Romans 3, verses 19 through 31. The thought underlying this passage of the Word of God is the wonderful truth that we are saved by FAITH. For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Although the Old Testament saints were forgiven of their sins the atonement for them was not made until Christ died on the Cross. Old Testament saints, who died in the faith, did see however the promises afar off.

The after-recess program, furnished by the Oskaloosa Society, featured a vocal solo entitled “My Hope Is In Thee”, and a discussion on the Reformation was introduced by an essay. Our meeting was concluded by the singing of the Doxology and Rev. J. Howerzyl closed with prayer.

Ernest Van Weelden,
Staff Writer.
In Michigan

The annual Reformation Day Mass Meeting is again a thing of the past. Young people from our churches in Grand Rapids, Hudsonville, Grand Haven, Holland, and Hope Church crowded the church at Hudsonville. To you who were not able to be present, I would say that you surely missed a wonderful evening.

In the customary way we sang a few appropriate songs from our Psalter, with Jim Kok directing, after which the president of the Federation Board, John Hof-

man, led us in prayer. He also read a few verses from Galatians 3.

Rev. Vcs, pastor of the Hudsonville Church, spoke on "Reformation Day Thinking in Our Practical Everyday Life." He brought to mind the reason for our meeting and stressed the "theme" of the evening. He inspired many to consider rather the blessings of a great work of God through our forefathers than the earthly, shallow use in "tricks or treats".

Recess was declared, and the ladies of Hudsonville church served coffee, tea, buns, and cookies in the basement. It proved to be an ideal time to get acquainted with those who were there that were unfamiliar, and also to settle problems presented at the meeting. You know, most issues are ultimately decided, not in the meeting itself, but during the periods of adjournment.

The musical portion of the program was not forgotten, and we all deeply appreciated the number which Bernie Klaver played on his trumpet accompanied by Cornie Huizenga. It was entitled "The Holy City".

The Bible discussion was from Esther 2:1-4 following the Outlines found in our
Thief of the Tree

A class of shrubs which depends upon trees for their food has been given the scientific name—Phoradendron. How applicable this appellation is, for it literally means “thief of trees”. These shrubs average from two to six feet in diameter and are generally quite dense producing a willow broom-like effect. They are particularly common on the continents of Australia, Europe, and North America. In all there are some 600 different species of this parasitic shrub. The most common hosts are the apple, the poplar, pine, eucalyptus, and willow trees.

The foliage consists of small smooth thick leaves, which have an olive drab color and occur in pairs on opposite sides of the twig. In the crotch where the twigs join the main stem are clusters of pearl-like white berries. When these berries are ripe they contain a viscous jelly. Hungry birds are readily attracted by the ripened fruit. However they experience difficulty similar to a child eating honey, in that the viscous pulp oozing out of the berries causes them to adhere to the side of the beak. The most attractive berries are also the most sticky. This situation irritates the eater so that he flies away to another tree to wipe off his beak, incidentally depositing a berry containing the seed of a new shrub. The jelly-like pulp hardens and thus forms a protective armor for the winter. The species parasitic upon the mesquit (shrubs in southwestern United States) produces an abundance of small bright red berries on short side spurs. Even the stems turn red. This brilliant coloration makes them attractive decorations at Yuletide.

During the moist spring season the berry oftens and swells. The seed sends forth a root which penetrates the bark of the tree and invades the vascular tissues, where it absorbs the sap and mineral salts of the host. Thus, the very life “blood” of the tree is endangered for the essential elements used in the process of manufacturing food are stolen by this parasitic plant. Phoradendron is considered to be the largest plant parasite known.

The priests of the ancient Celts, called Druids, considered the parasitic shrubs to be symbolic of the spirit because they grew in the air on branches of their sacred oaks. On the sixth days of the first new moon of the new year a Druid priest would cut the parasitic shrubs with a golden sickle. A white cloth was spread underneath the tree to prevent the cutting from touching the earth. Small sprigs of it were distributed to the priests to the people, who made rings and bracelets out of it to ward off the evil spirits.

In medieval times a substance called
Beacon Lights. Instead of having general discussion from the floor as was customary in the past, the discussion was introduced by a group forming a Round Table Discussion. The panel was made up of Roger Westenbroek and Jerry Kok from Holland, and Fred Hanko and Tony Vanden Berg from Fuller Ave. Rev. Heys was their moderator. They introduced the questions, discussed them briefly, giving their views, and then allowed the audience to express any ideas or opinions they had. The discussion centered around the question of the change of heart shown by Ahasuerus; whether or not he had a change of heart at all, and what was then his attitude over against Vashti.

John Hofman made a few announcements requesting 100% co-operation from Young people in the answering of the questionnaires concerning Beacon Lights soon to be sent to all the young people.

Rev. Lubbers led the Young People in thanks to God for His blessings upon us.

Although the windows of most of the cars were waxed when we got outside, October 30 now means more to us than just Halloween.

Herm Hanko,
Staff Writer.

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There are two times in a man's life when he should not speculate: when he can't afford it, and when he can.

—Sam'l L. Clemens.

The Reward

Still youthful, soldiers of the cross,
With life and vigor crowned,
Freed on with vigilance; God's cause
Shall stand, it shall abound,
With blessings which shall never end
Unto that crowning day,
When Christ His angels then shall send
Crown your joy for aye.

The prize of glory, peace and rest
Is given unto them,
Who find their lives here to be blessed,
As Father gives to them;
The cause is sure; it cannot fail,
For God has spoken it,
The power of hell shall not prevail
Against God's Covenant.

God's Covenant, 'Eternal Love'
Shall never suffer loss;
't stands firm and sure, for God above
Has sealed it on the cross;
There, once for aye, our guilt was paid
By Him our blessed Lord;
For on Him all our sins were laid,
Our victory is assured.

Rejoice! Rejoice! and leap for joy,
The Victory is won!
Press on this message to convey
To each and every one:
With zeal, speak of your faith in Him,
That men your joy may see,
That you with all belong to Him
Now end Eternally.

—H. A. Van Putten.
bird lime was made from the berries which was supposed to have medicinal value.

Today foresters look upon the members of the Phoradendron family as serious pests which are threatening our Grand Canyon National Park and the Kaibab National Forest. In Australia it is threatening the Eucalyptus, which is one of their most important trees. Recent experiments have shown that these parasitic shrubs can be controlled by spraying 2,4-D.

"There is a strangler loose in the nation's forests that is choking trees to death. The fatal grip is a toe-hold—a mistletoe-hold."

Yes, friends, this parasitic plant is none other than the popular mistletoe, to which many attach sentiment and romance.

* * * * *

The Necessity Of The Incarnation . . .

The Heidelberg Catechism considers the necessity of the incarnation only, from the viewpoint of its relation to our salvation. This is wholly in accord with its practical character. It is possible, of course, to view this necessity from a different aspect, and to consider it from a higher, a theological point of view. The ultimate reason for all necessity, for every "must", is the eternal counsel and good pleasure of God. It was God's eternal purpose that in Christ as the incarnated, crucified, raised and glorified Son of God, all the fulness of God should dwell bodily. This is not an afterthought of God, so that Christ is appointed only to repair what has been marred and destroyed by sin and the devil; but it is God's first and only final purpose. He purposed to reveal Himself, and to realize His everlasting covenant, and thus to glorify His holy name, in the highest possible degree. And this revelation is to be realized in Christ, the Son in the flesh, crucified and raised from the dead. Thus it is the firstborn of every creature, i.e., the firstborn in and according to the eternal counsel of God, for whom and through whom, and unto whom all things are created. If we consider the necessity of the incarnation from this higher viewpoint, even sin and death, the devil and all the powers of darkness, even sin and death, the devil and all the powers of darkness, are but means unto an end: they are subservient to God's purpose of bringing His Son into the world, and of realizing in and through Him all His good pleasure.

—God's Way Out, by Rev. H. Hoeksema — 32 —
“Wonderful indeed”—is the depths of God’s grace and goodness as expressed in the incarnation; and beautiful is the presentation of it's mystery in “The Mystery of Bethlehem”

—by Rev. Herman Hoeksema

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Special Music by 108 Member CHORAL SOCIETY from First Church
Directed by Mr. Albert Smith

A Short, Inspirational Speech by JOHN HOFMAN
President of the P.R.Y.P.F.

A Marimba Solo by ANDY CAMMENGA

... and of course, lots of singing for everyone lead by ALBERT HEEMSTRA

BE SURE TO BE THEIR, YOUNG AND OLD
9 O'CLOCK P.M. — SUNDAY — DECEMBER 24
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