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In the Canadian West

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Vancouver, British Columbia, with its adjoining cities and suburbs, is the great metropolis of Canada's far west.

This great city is set like a jewel amid the bays of the Pacific and the towering peaks of the Canadian Rockies. It is a great, a beautiful city, but, like our own American cities, the wickedness of our age is present everywhere.

It was the evening of Christmas day, and through a dense fog, so common to these harbor cities, we picked our way to the home of an immigrant family where we had an appointment for the evening. There was nothing throughout the entire suburban district that told of the real story of Christmas. Surely there were the millions of colored lights decorating the streets, the hundreds and thousands of Christmas trees and gaily-lit homes that witnessed of the yuletide. But what are all these for a witness of the birth of Bethlehem's Babe, the Saviour, our Lord and King? Of Him the streets were deathly silent — even a beautiful Cathedral paid Him no homage. High in its arched window Santa had been perched amid beautiful lighting effects, and just underneath, over the doorway of this "house of prayer", were the words: "Christmas belongs to the Churches," and Vancouver's great daily newspaper commented that this scene had depicted the true meaning of Christmas.

But let's leave the brilliant lights of Vancouver and continue our way through the murky weather, and pick our streets over the hills to the immigrant home on the outskirts of New Westminster. We soon turn down a lane and turn up a narrow driveway. We've reached our destination. Leaving the station wagon, the sound of music greets our ears. There can't be a large number of people in that immigrant home, yet the strains of "Stille Nacht" fill the air as if this chorus of voices consists of a godly number. It was beautiful, that music, beautiful because one could tell that it was sung with deep meaning; the heart
and soul of the singers were in the song. Who could help but think of the words of the Psalmist: “The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacle of the righteous?”

We wait until the music stops... then, knocking at the door we are ushered into the midst of this little gathering. Here are six young couples with a few small children, having their Christmas program! They’re all crowded into a very small kitchen. The big wood-stove is chucked into one corner, immediately next to it stands a table with an orange crate on top, serving as a home-made pulpit, immediately in front of this, on chairs and rude boxes, the little group is seated. The little children (some barely big enough to sing) take their part by singing Christmas carols, some in English, others in Dutch. One of the young fathers takes his place behind the orange crate and tells the Christmas story to spellbound youngsters; a little later a young mother tells a story with a Christmas application... then some more singing, a closing prayer and the program is over.

It was just Christmas in Vancouver... here it was Christmas! Among these young immigrant families one could feel the joy that CHRIST had brought. A perfect joy, in no wise dependent on all the frills and luxuries of our modern Christmas. Untold riches in the midst of earthly poverty... I could not help but wonder: How many of our young couples back home were sharing the real CHRISTmas joy with their little children?

It was a long day, especially for the youngsters. Already before noon they had had their regular Christmas service in this same little kitchen; and now it was five o’clock. Quickly the mothers scamper the little ones off into a room by themselves, for now the little kitchen must serve its original purpose: food must be prepared for all—raisin-bread sandwiches for all.

The men have taken the cue from the ladies... they make room, too, in this over-crowded house; they go outside—there we stand in the thick, heavy fog of Christmas night; of course, as usual: debating the doctrine of the Covenant! “What did the Standard Bearer say?” And “What did the ‘Reformatie’ state?” The fog... the cool night-air forgotten—we are in a heated but friendly debate.

These are the immigrants!

These are the folks we contact day by day!

These debates are nothing new. Over and over again we discuss with these folks the doctrines of the covenant; then from this point, then from another point of view. The debate is always fresh—the debaters are well-posted on their subject.

Thus, week in, week out, every night of the week we are here and then there, sometimes with just a few, then again with a larger number, always discussing and explaining our view of the truth in Jesus Christ. Seldom do we find the door of our cabin again before the clock strikes one and one-thirty in the morning.
Generally contacts are not too difficult to make if we have but one address in a given community. The one immigrant family often directs us to our next party. In some communities, however, the first family is very hard to find. . . .after all, there are so few places where we are really welcome!

It stands to reason that our main objective is to find a place where we may preach the Word. In seeking this we may not be "choosey". Sometimes the Lord directs us only to four persons, then again to forty. Sometimes we are huddled in a little kitchen, like that of New West Minster, then again it is a one-stall garage. Sometimes it is a little country school-house with all the grown-ups perched atop the disks, then it is a very large hall, often too spacious for comfort. But wherever it is and wherever we go it is preaching and teaching, in season and out of season.

You say: "laissez-faire?" No! . . . speaking plainly: just work, real work, hard work! Work that requires much patience, much prayer, much of the love of Christ. But, work, which has the blessed promise of Him who sends us, regardless of the judgment of men, "Your labor is not vain in the Lord."
Explicit Duty - Sacred Privilege

The Protestant Reformed Churches believe that, in obedience to the command of Christ, the King of the church, to preach the blessed gospel to all creatures, baptizing, and teaching them to observe all things which Christ has commanded, it is the explicit duty and sacred privilege of said churches to carry out this calling according to the measure of our God-given ability.

'We believe that this missionary activity includes the work of church extension, and church reformation, as well as the task of carrying out the Gospel to the unchurched and heathen. However, we are convinced that our present duty lies primarily in the field of church extension and church reformation.'

The above quotations, comprising the preamble to the Constitution of our Protestant Reformed Mission Committee, must necessarily be the starting point for any evaluation one might make of our present missionary program and our denominational extension program. If we concede the words ‘our present duty’ to include the foreseeable future, we have then a specific mandate to guide the activities of our churches in this connection.

Since its inception, our Mission Committee, our missionaries and our churches generally have carried on this type of program and we have given it sound support. It was this mandate that led our Mission Committee to take up the work among the Liberated, to commence preaching and teaching with men and with means. The result of this faithful labor was the organization of two new Protestant Reformed Churches there, each one consisting of a large number of believers who desired an ecclesiastical home and the fellowship of other Protestant Reformed Churches, which we gladly extended to them. This fruit of our missionary labor gave us much to be happy for and to thank and praise God. But this once bright picture has darkened.

* * *

Just recently the Hamilton congregation suspended its pastor, the Reverend Herman Veldman, a faithful ambassador of Christ, who has always served our churches with zeal and consecration, who is today one of the most capable exegetes we have in our circles and who is a thoroughly sound and sincere Reformed preacher. Dear readers, is there still anyone of us who dares to ask where there exists any threat or danger to our churches?

This most regrettable act on the part of Hamilton’s consistory in depriving Reverend Veldman of his pulpit h
lucidly proven the dire need for the Declaration of Principles by which we must be guided in our labors among those who do not embrace the distinctive truth we treasure. It is plain, is it not, that our Mission Committee lacked an adequate measure by which to determine the advisability of proceeding to church organization when the request to do so was treated? In my heart I am convinced that had the Declaration of Principles existed earlier, this most recent Hamilton episode would never have occurred, the very probable reason being that Hamilton would not as yet be in our communion of churches. In all likelihood, our missionaries would still be there laboring among them, patiently propounding our truth to any immigrant or group of immigrants who indicated receptivity to our doctrine and a favorable, interested disposition towards our churches.

Upon its adoption, the Declaration will be a further means—a real help—to our Mission Committee, our Committee for Correspondence and to anyone else who wishes to readily see and adequately comprehend the manner in which we are distinctive and just how it is that we have arrived at the firm and unshakable conviction that we do possess the pure truth of the Word of God. Rather than hinder our association and correspondence with the Liberated element of the Reformed Churches as we labor among them, under the mandate of the preamble and the command of Christ, the Declaration of Principles will implement the work and assist us in the reforming and extending aspects of our mission program.

—A. H.

The January Classis
EAST

Classis East has completed its January meeting, and a busy one it was. The delegates, meeting in the large schoolroom in the basement of First Church, were faced with a great number of important questions and many hours of deliberation were necessary. They met for three full days, January 3, 4, and 5, making a total of eight sessions.

The events of this classis, from the viewpoint of the minute book will appear in the Standard Bearer, and should prove to be interesting. But also from the visitor's viewpoint was this classis stimulating. In the first place, it is always fascinating to listen to the deliberations of one of the broader governing bodies of our churches. The manner in which business is conducted, the debates, and the interchange of opinion, cannot fail to interest the onlookers.

Besides, the general spirit pervading this classis was one of brotherhood. Many questions arose on which there was reason for concern and difference of opinion among the delegates, but a general attitude of love was manifested both in the personal relations between the delegates and in the decisions that they made. Of course, this does not mean that business was conducted in a cold,
indifferent manner. On the contrary, a great deal of warmth and animation was displayed, but this attitude is natural and even desirable when men discuss subjects of importance and concern.

Not only the delegates were interested, but also the lay members of the denomination. All sessions were open to visitors and at all of them visitors were present. In fact, at the two evening sessions the room was so filled with visitors that several had to stand.

We look upon this interest displayed by ordinary church members in the work of their leaders as evidence of a healthy and highly commendable attitude. May the day never come when a meeting of classis evokes no attention in the minds and hearts of our people. —R. F.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Rev. G. Vanden Berg
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Our God. . . .

GOD, the CENTER of all our Living! That is the essence of true Christian Living. By it the existence of the ungodly and the life of the Christian are forever distinguished. The former continue on slippery paths and “God is not in all their thoughts” while the latter think, act and live in “the fear of Jehovah”. The wicked attempt to exclude God from life and they exist from the atheistic principle, “there is no God”. The christian strives to incorporate God into everything he does and lives consciously from the wholly different principle, “God is all!”

Our department is devoted to the purpose of giving guidance to and stimulating the Christian Living of Youth. Our present article, therefore, is not to be a dogmatic treatise on the subject, “Our God,” but rather is purposed to impress Youth with a deep consciousness of God that the life of Youth may be “before the face of God.”

First we would expose a practical need of this consciousness.

We live in a Godless world. We do not aver that our age is godless but that it is GODless is apparent. The world has its gods, many of them, for she multiplies her idols daily. She worships the things of the world. The apostle expresses it with exactitude. “Their God is their belly . . . they glory in their shame”. In such a world, we Christian Youth must turn away from these gods that infiltrate our lives and serve HIM who is God alone. Moreover
in such a world the danger is more than present that Christians begin to speak about GOD in a rather abstract way while practical life ignores His presence. Thus we might in ecclesiastical circles (church, catechism, societies) discuss with apparently keen interest some of the deepest and richest truths of GOD while in everyday life practically banish these same truths from our consciousness. And when this is done, Christian living is impaired, for in the measure that God is excluded from life, life itself becomes ungodly. Hence, we write “that men may know (experience) that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the Most High over all the earth” (Psalm 83:18).

Youth, what prominence does God have in your life?

He is the Lord of all!

“Know, therefore, this day, and consider it in thine heart, that the Lord He is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is none else”. (Deut. 4:39). Consider this that GOD IS GOD! Let it penetrate every fiber of your body and soul. Don’t ever forget even for one moment that you have to do with HIM who is the Sovereign God of all the universe. Never may we foolishly imagine that God stands in a comparative position to man and then speak about Him as ‘a Higher Being’. HE IS GOD upon whom the very existence of every creature is dependent. He does not ask permission of anyone but “whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did He in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, I all deep places”. (Psalm 135:6).

“And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing; and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, what doest Thou?” (Dan. 4:35).

That is our God! Think of it! Human words cannot describe His greatness. Bear it ever in mind when you think—and plan—and act—and live your life from day unto day. With HIM we have to do.

He is the Sovereign Law-Giver!

Over all His vast creation He has placed His law. To each creature according to the nature of the creature He gives His holy ordinance. Fish and fowl, herbs, plants and trees are all governed by His irrevocable command. And to us God has given the order, “I am the Lord thy God . . . Thou shalt serve Me in love with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength.” That law of God cannot be violated with impunity. As the Sovereign Lord, God not only sees every secret and every open violation against His laws but He also administers punishment. He sends His judgments upon the earth. His wrath is poured out upon all evildoers. That wrath brings death . . . ultimately eternal death. One cannot walk in sin and LIVE. It is simply impossible before our God. The wages of all sin is death.

Such is our God! Think of it always. Especially be mindful of it when you plan the course of your life. Choose your station so that in it you are able to walk according to His commandments and be in His service. Remember it in
the selection of your life mate. Be impressed by the knowledge of it when you seek entertainment and pleasure. Be sure you are in the way of the Lord. Always! Else GOD will judge! Beware lest at any time you arouse His holy anger. Remember: HE IS GOD!

Yes, He is our God, Christian Youth!

As such He exhibits love and bestows peace upon those who walk according to His commandments. He makes them His friends and gives to them the experience of the real essence of life itself which is fellowship with God. That is 'Christian Living'. Only they are happy who have learned to exercise it. To live as a Christian means that the consciousness of God's presence is so deeply impressed upon one that all the actions of that one are, as they were, the actions of God Himself. "It is not I that liveth, but Christ liveth in me". Oh, for the joy and blessedness of that experience. That is LIFE! The attainment of it must be our striving because following our natural impulses we DIE but . . .

Our God is a God of grace!

If that were not so, LIFE would be impossible. "By grace are ye saved . . ." Grace is the power of God that transforms our lives. Through it God impresses us with a keen sense of His greatness and make us desire and willing to serve Him. Humility is its chief earmark. Bow before HIM who is GOD, confess the multitude of sins, repent of former evils, amend the ways of life and make the central aim of life to please GOD. Such is our responsibility and the privilege of grace. Then God becomes the center of all and Christian Living, not a thing to talk about but a thing to DO . . . to PRACTICE . . . to EXERCISE diligently.

Before the face of God!

There we stand! There we think . . . and plan . . . and live! And there we shall be judged . . . by HIM WHO IS GOD!

FOR EVERY NEED

When I am tired, the Bible is my bed; Or in the dark, the Bible is my light.
When I am hungry, it is the vital bread; Or fearful, it is armor for the fight.
When I am sick, 'tis healing medicine. Or lonely, thronging friends I find there-in.

If I would work, the Bible is my tool; Or play, it is a harp of happy sound.
If I am ignorant, it is my school; If I am sinking, it is solid ground.
If I am cold, the Bible is my fire; And wings, if boldly I aspire.

—Wesleyan Methodist.

The way to preserve the peace of the church is to preserve its purity.

—Bible Advocate.
LES S O N  X I X  
From Sackcloth to Royal Purple
(Esther 6)

For a reason not stated in the text King Ahasuerus could not sleep the night of the day upon which Haman had come to the conclusion that there was but one thing for him to do, namely, to ask the king for permission to hang Mordecai upon the gallows which he had built. Whatever the reason might have been, we surely can see the hand of God in this. It pleased Him to have Mordecai's life spared. For this man has yet things which he must perform that God's counsel may be realized.

Not being able to sleep he commands a servant to obtain the records of his kingdom and to read it before him. Through the reading of these records the fact that Mordecai had never been rewarded for having saved the life of the king is revealed. The king decided that something should be done about this and that it be done immediately. He instructs his servant to call in whoever is in the outer court waiting for an audience with the king so that he may reward Mordecai. Haman has come into the outer court early in the morning to request the death of Mordecai. What a shock awaits him!

When the king asks Haman what in his opinion would be an appropriate way to deal with the man whom the king delights to honor, Haman, especially because he only had been invited with the king to the queen's banquet, thinks that the king surely can have no one else in mind. And consequently he suggests a fantastic array of honor and glory. He suggests that this individual wear a piece of clothing the king has worn (which was an unheard of privilege and honor amongst the Persians) that he ride on the king's horse and wear the king's crown. And now he is told to go and do all these things to Mordecai!

The king now knows that Mordecai is a Jew and that he is at the king's gate. His servants must have told him. And it surely seems also that he begins to smell something of the plot of Haman. Haman had put the Jews in an awful light, and here this Jew Mordecai had saved his life!

In terrible anguish of soul Haman proceeds to do as the king commands him, and he who planned Mordecai's death because he would not bow and show reverence to the king's right hand man now leads this man whom he detests through the streets of Shushan in the highest conceivable glory which a man could enjoy next to the king! When it is all over
Mordecai returns to the king’s gate, note that it is not before the king’s gate but to the king’s gate. His sackcloth and ashes are not put on again. He has hope. But Haman goes home with a cloth of mourning upon his head.

Points For Discussion:
1. The king’s sleepless night. Can you suggest a reason for this sleepless night? Would you conclude that he feared another attempt at his life since he called to have the records read? Did the fact that he knew that Esther was troubled since she did not tell him her request at the banquet? Or do you think that the fact that he had allowed Haman to make a law began to trouble him? Why do you take the stand you take?
2. The significance of this event. Could we not read this book without this chapter just as well? Why do you suppose Mordecai’s life must be spared? Could Esther not have continued the deliverance without him? Or do you think that the fact that Mordecai is a Jew and that the king finds it out in this way determined the course of following events? Does God speak here to Mordecai, and does He by this turn of events testify to Mordecai that there indeed will come deliverance for Israel from some other place? Is that perhaps the special message in this chapter that God would have us see and learn?
3. Mordecai’s acceptance of this honor. Contrast Mordecai’s apparent joy and satisfaction at this “parade” with the crying of the true church in Babylon that hung its harp upon the willows. Would you expect a man who is in sackcloth because he mourns for God’s Church to be so ready to seek glory and pleasure for his flesh? Or would you try to excuse Mordecai and reason that he saw God’s hand in all this and that God was giving a sign of His protection and of His intent to save Israel?

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LESSON XX.

Esther Pleads For Her People

(Esther 7:1-8:2)

Things occurred faster than Haman could cope with them. He had been greatly humiliated and had gone home to be comforted. Instead of comfort he finds great fears expressed and dreadful talk of his certain doom. But he is not given much time even to contemplate these things. A messenger appears to remind him that he must come to the banquet feast of Esther. It is without a doubt with heavy step that he goes to the banquet. The king had honored a Jew, one of the many he had planned to slay. And the king had found this Jew to be a very loyal citizen. He might well have had a suspicion in his soul that the king knew more than he actually did know. He might even have become suspicious of these two banquets of Esther even though he did not know that she was a Jewess.

At the banquet Esther exposes him as
one who plots her life and the life of her people. Hearing this the king is furious. In the first place, after a sleepless night, he was in not too pleasant a frame of mind. Then no doubt he was fed by the wine he had already consumed. And when now, just having been reminded of a plot to take his life, he is told of a more recent plot to kill his beautiful wife, this is more than he can stand. In a fury he leaves the table to go out into the garden to control himself, so great was his fury. And as for Haman, his position is pathetic and tragic! We cannot help but believe that Mordecai had engineered this dramatic moment. It was his way of getting revenge upon Haman. Haman, realizing that the fury of the king's wrath rules out any hope of a light punishment, turns to the reclining couch upon which Esther is and pleads for his life. The king returns and seeing Haman before Esther misunderstands his actions—judging Haman by what he would have done himself—and pronounces an immediate death sentence upon him.

One of the chamberlains who had no love for Haman suggests the gallows which Haman had built for Mordecai, and Haman dies on the gallows he had intended for his enemy. What is more, all Haman's possessions became Mordecai's and Esther's. And so in one day the tables have been completely turned. Mordecai is lifted from the ashes to the place of honor next to the king. And Haman who had occupied this place is no more in the land of the living but has died as a criminal.

Points For Discussion:

1. Esther's behaviour. (a) Esther certainly leaves the impression upon the king that Haman is directly after her life with the knowledge that she is a Jewess. Was this an honest thing to do? And could Haman not claim (if he had been given a court trial) that Esther was to blame for hiding her nationality these five years? Subsequent history in this book shows that the king is moved only for Esther's life and at this time made no provision at all and had no concern for the rest of the Jews. He does nothing for them until Esther makes another plea. Seeing then that Haman's punishment is meted out for his actions as they involve Esther, did he not deserve a trial to determine whether he plotted all this with a view to destroying the queen? (b) When the king misunderstood Haman's actions before the queen, as we note in verse 8, did Esther do right in keeping silent and by not defending him in this thing of which he was not guilty? How do you explain her silence?

2. Haman's punishment. Was his penalty just? Does Scripture which demands the death penalty for the murderer also demand it for those who have only plotted it and have not executed their evil intention? Only after Haman is killed is the wrath of the king pacified. Does this not suggest that he was moved by his wrath rather than by his sense of justice? When a man is executed for his crime, is it a just thing to take his goods from his fam-
ily which is left behind? Is that or is it not a cruel thing?

3. Haman's gallows. Why did Haman plot Mordecai's death by means of a gallows? Why was this gallows so high? Seventy five feet above the ground! Does the place where it stood in any way add to the humility which Haman suffered?

* * * * *

LESSON XXI.

Mordecai's Plan For Escape
(Esther 8:3-9:19)

The laws of the Medes and the Persians might not be altered. And therefore the lives of the Jews and even of Esther and Mordecai were still in danger. For the king might not call off this day which had been declared to be the day when all the Jews in his realm must be executed. It became necessary for Esther to appear once more before the king with her request for the lives of her people. She is deeply concerned and prostrates herself at his feet and with tears pleads for her people.

The king knows of no way out of this situation, but he does know of one man whom he considers not only the most interested in this case but also one who will therefore do his utmost to make this law of none effect without its repeal. That man is Mordecai the Jew. The king has learned to appreciate the sly, crafty and resourceful nature of this Jew. After the king's scribes are called in Mordecai gives to them a new law which is to be sent through all the one hundred and twenty seven provinces. This law is a command to the Jews that they gather together on the day which had been decreed as the day of their execution and that they fight for their life. Included in the law was also the provision that they have the right to take the spoil of those whom they slew for a prey. Thus although the former law of the king was not repealed and could not be repealed, a new law is made which discourages the execution of the former law. The new law makes it very dangerous for those who try to heed the former law.

The result is that when the day came upon which the Jews were to have been slain and exterminated there is such great fear that many who would have gladly slain the Jews refrained from doing so. Indeed some seventy five thousand, eight hundred were slain because they assaulted the Jews. But this is less than an average of 600 in each of the 127 provinces and a far smaller number than would have died of the Jews had not this second law been made. Without a doubt men feared what Mordecai might do to them since he was next to the king.

The Jews had gladness and rejoicing. The dreadful sword that had been hanging over their heads was now gone! And Haman's ten sons are also slain so that they need not fear any further attempt in the future to do the thing Haman had so intensely desired.
Points For Discussion:

1. The gladness of the Jews. We take this first—because it is the most important point to discuss. Let us not forget that this turn of events recorded in this chapter means that the Church of God is safe! God has preserved the seed of Abraham, the Covenant seed and kept the way open for the birth of the Saviour. God’s promises still stand sure! And without a doubt there were thousands of the Jews whose rejoicing centered about this fact. We have several questions in connection with this. (a) The Church is now glad, does that mean that in the dark days the Church could not be glad and was failing to exercise its faith in the certainty of God’s promises? Apply I Peter 1:6 to this incident. (b) Was this a proper way for the Church to celebrate, or was it putting the material above the spiritual? What about our feastings on Christmas and on Thanksgiving Day? Would you defend these practices or condemn them and upon what grounds would you do this? Do you see any danger in these practices? (c) The Church finds itself today in somewhat the same predicament. In some lands these believers are already being put to death because they are a “different people”. What should our attitude be? How can we grow in the confidence that God’s promises will yet be fulfilled? Should we follow Mordecai’s ways and seek deliverance through politics and force?

2. The right granted the Jews. In connection with the last question above, did the Jews have to be given the right to fight for their lives, or does every man have that right even when the government unjustly demands his death? May we kill to defend our own life? Is that denied us in Luke 6:29? Or does the Old Testament Church have this right while it is under the shadows while the New Testament Church has not the right.

* * * * *

LESSON XXII.
The Feast Of Purim Instituted
(Esther 9:20-10:3)

The marvelous escape of the Jews from the extermination that Haman had planned for them is in the eyes of Mordecai worthy of a yearly celebration. And so, as the ruler who is next to the king, he gives a decree to the Jews that they celebrate on the fourteenth and fifteenth of the month Adar of every year this victory over the enemies of the Jews. The feast is called the Feast of Purim. It derives its name from the fact that Haman had lots (purim—which means lots, the singular being pur, even as cherubim is plural for cherub) cast to determine the best day for the execution of the Jews.

Let it be noted, however, that this is a purely nationalistic holiday and that it is not at all a feast of the Church. we may be sure that God does not ap-
prove of this celebration. Not once do we read of this man-instituted feast in the Scriptures outside of this book of Esther. It did not come from God. Nor did it even arise in the heart of the church as the Spirit led the Church to rejoice in the works of God’s hands and to seek to praise Him for His protection and grace. We read that Mordecai sought the “good of his people” and spoke “peace to all his seed.” Though the original says that he sought the “good” of his people, we believe that the translator correctly grasped the import of this word and was not wrong when he wrote that Mordecai sought the “wealth” of his people. It was earthly good which he sought for Israel, seeking to have them enjoy the pleasures of Egypt in Shushan, seeking to keep them here and to make life pleasant for them here, rather than urging them to return to the Temple and to God. And significantly enough, nowhere is there in this book and confession of the sin of despising God’s promises by remaining here in heathendom. Nowhere is there any consciousness revealed that Israel deserved such a threat upon its life because so many of its citizens were carnally minded and had no concern for Jerusalem’s walls and the temple’s ruin.

This brings us to the few concluding remarks about this book which are necessary. There are, as is plain from all we considered, three main thoughts which this book serves to emphasize upon the mind of God’s people. The first is this that God will fulfill all His promises in Christ. Today there are sinister plots to destroy the Church, and all through the ages the devil has been using men (and women) to attempt to make the fulfillment of God’s promises impossible. In the Old Testament times, according to Rev. 12 his efforts centered around the attempt to prevent Christ’s birth. After He was born, he sought His death before He could die the accursed death of the cross. Today he seeks to destroy the faith of the Church so that the promises of God are not realized to the individual elect. In this book it was plainly an attempt to prevent the birth of Christ and with it, of necessity, the salvation of the entire Church. Could he have prevented that, then all the saints already in heaven would have to be cast out on that 13th day of the month Adar in the 12th year of this king’s reign. The end of the world would have come there! Therefore, the main thought of this book is that God surely will allow no one and nothing to prevent Him from realizing ALL His promises. The main thought is this: His mercy doth endure, ever faithful, ever sure.

The second main thought is this that in His sovereignty God will use men for the good of His Church whether they know it or not and whether they like it or not. Esther and Mordecai had no interest in the Church, simply in the nation of Israel. Ahasuerus loved Esther for her beauty and Mordecai he exalted for Esther’s sake and because he had spared the king’s life at one time. But all three were used to save the Covenant seed.

Another main thought is that God’s

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Isolationism.

The most startling bit of news with respect to the war policy that our country should pursue is, as you all realize, the speech of President Hoover. This speech gave the impetus to the men of the Republican Party which have always had the essential points of the old isolationism.

Many ideas advanced by this group are thoroughly sound. It is sound, for example, to make a plea for balancing the budget. It is also sound to require that the allies which we wish to defend promise to defend themselves first of all.

Nevertheless the principle which is the motive of both sides of the debate, between isolationism and globalism, is self-preservation. It is evident, it seems to me that if we abandon all that former president Hoover advocated, that is, virtually nine tenths of the world land mass with the majority of the peoples of the world, we are no longer free in this world, in the sense that we desire to be free.

That self-preservation, must be viewed too as men often interpret it. Men mean by self-preservation self-assertion, in the practical application of it.

Considering the situation of the world and the solutions that are offered by men for the preservation of a society which is divided by selfishness, we as Christians know the answer. The defendants of global strategy may be more mistaken than the isolationists in this that they will be defeated sooner, because their policy does not take into consideration the facts. Notice, I say may be. No one but the expert is able to possess all the military facts. The disappointing thing is that the experts differ. It also may be that we become the rulers of the world for a very short time through our global strategy. Just at this moment I can also see the possibility of our becoming rulers of the world if we adopt for a time isolationism. That is, that we wait until Communism has shown its evil force to the peoples of the world and in their desperation they finally turn to us who would have become more able to enter in after having had time to prepare ourselves.

Nevertheless, the Christian knows the answer, a world divided against itself and separated from God cannot long endure.

The Error of the Fatal Flaw.

That is the heading of the article in Time magazine about Dean Acheson, the much criticized Secretary of State.
He is described as a very able Secretary of State, as intellectual, and considered abroad as, “the best the United States has had in modern times.” Nevertheless, the Time magazine analyzes his mistakes.

Dean Rusk, Assistant Secretary, is quoted as saying, “There are probably some major problems of international relations that are beyond human capacity to think through. There are hundreds of major premises pulling in all directions... the policy is constantly haunted by the error of the fatal flaw.”

It reminds me of that other “fatal flaw” of mankind, to put trust in men who are bound to make the error of the fatal flaw.

THE POINT OF VIEW

Two boys went to gather grapes. One was happy because they found grapes. The other was unhappy because the grapes had seeds in them.

Two men, being convalescent, were asked how they were. One said, ‘I am better today’. The other said, ‘I was some worse yesterday’.

When it rains, one man says, ‘This will make mud’; another, ‘This will lay the dust’.

Two boys examined a bush. One observed that it had thorns; the other, that it had a rose.

Bible Outline (con’t.)

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ways are not our ways and that we must and may leave the execution of His counsel entirely up to Him. Jerusalem was so far away from Shushan and knew nothing of what was going on in this far off land until the decree arrived proclaiming the death sentence for all the seed of Abraham. And also unbeknown to these Israelites who loved God, and undoubtedly prayed without ceasing unto Him, these events were transpiring in rapid succession whereby God wrought deliverance by using those who themselves would have been offended in Christ who did nothing to deliver Israel from the bondage of Rome. In fact He uses Esther and Mordecai whose ambitions are to become Queen and Prime Minister of a heathen kingdom to realize the Kingdom of Christ.

Space for points for discussion fails. We suggest that you search through the Scriptures for other instances where the devil in one way or another seeks to destroy the Church and God overthrows his deeds through men, both believers and unbelievers. See how many you can find and how often the devil assaulted the Church and was defeated. You can begin, of course, with Cain slaying Abel. Why can you begin here? And then, if time permits, consider the meaning of this book for us in these days when World and False Church seek to destroy us.
Concerning: Temperance Preaching.

In our former instalment in this department (see January issue of Beacon Lights) we listened in to a controversial discussion, between two ministers in a mid-western town, on the subject of "temperance" and "temperance-preaching". The one minister we have called the Rev. Fundamentalist, the other the Rev. Reformed-Calvinist. The Rev. F. is very much in favor of abstinence from all intoxicating drinks. Fact is, that he would advocate the drinking of grape-juice at the Lord's Table. However, the Rev. C. does not agree. To him every creature of God is good and nothing is to be rejected while it is received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer.

Now this matter had become a real issue in this little midwestern town. The issue had come to the fore due to the anticipated coming of a preacher-lecturer on the subject of the "Evil of Intoxicating Liquor". As was to be expected, there were fundamental considerations of the faith, as it is in Christ Jesus, that entered into the discussions between all of the ministers who did any thinking on the subject.

But let us listen in to the discussion between the two ministers.

The Reformed-Calvinist is speaking. He is very basically opposed to the "temperance-preaching" as this is commonly done on many a pulpit in the name of Christ, and as this will be done by the speaker, who will visit the town. For the Rev. Ref.-C. does not believe that the Scripture teaches that the use of wine as such is wrong, is sinful. He believes that only the sinful use of wine is sinful. And he is quite certain that the determining of what would be the sinful use of wine must not be gauged by the amount that one drinks; although he hastens to add that the godly use of wine will be temperate in a godly manner, and from high and lofty considerations. But, he repeats, that the standard that determines the proper and good use of wine is not the amount. One may drink only a sip of wine and do so sinfully. On the other hand one may drink wine, without being given to much wine, and still drink more than a sip and use it in a godly way. It is his conviction that the starting point in determining what is the good and proper use of drinking strong drink is the rule: all that is not out of faith is sin! For good works in the Christian are those, which proceed out of a true faith, are performed according to God's law, and are done unto God's glory.

"But" asks Rev. Fundamentalist, "does
also the use of drinking of wine fall under that rule”?

The Rev. Ref.-C. is of the conviction that wine is a good creature of God, and that it must be received with thanksgiving, for it is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer. And he is further convinced, that all the ill-use of a thing is no argument against the proper use of it. And, therefore, he maintains that a Christian is in duty bound to use also the gift of wine in the service of God. Not to be able to thus use it is not an indication of strength, but that it is indeed an indication of spiritual weakness. It is the weakness of the conscience due to the repeated manifestation of the weakness of the flesh.

The Rev. Fundamentalist cannot deny this. He admits that wine is a good creature of God, just as water and food is, that Jesus changed water into wine at the wedding-feast at Cana. But he says: “Look at all the wrecked homes and lives” due to the use of strong drink. Is it not a proof that it is better to be a teetotaler? He would prefer to be on the safe side. And he repeats once more: that it is more Christian to be a teetotaler than to be one whose life is wrecked by strong drink!

It is here that the ire of the Reformed-Calvinist rises. Says he: “Rev. Fundamentalist, I wish to state here most unequivocally that it is not more Christian to be a total abstainer than to be one who indulges freely if neither one lives out of the faith in Christ Jesus. The one uses it sinfully and the other does not use it—only he does so sinfully in unbelief! Neither one of these walks on the “safe side”, but both walk under the wrath of God, refusing to take refuge by faith in Jesus. And both perish in their sin of unbelief of teetotalism and of over-indulgence! Let us not be deceived. Evil communications corrupt good manners. The Life of faith is not simply a walking on the “safe side”, a certain speculation between two consequences, choosing the lesser of the two evils. But faith is walking as seeing the Unseen, even in the question of the proper use of His good creature. And the walk of faith is “safe”, only it is not simply the safe side of the question, but it is a walking squarely in the middle of the road, of the ways of the elect, in the ways of God’s precepts and commandments. For, in Scripture, temperance is not the self-control of the slave of sin, but it is the self-control of the free-man in Christ Jesus. It is self-control that walks in liberty and thus does not walk in the license of sin. This self-control is such that a man possesses his soul in patience, and therefore is not given to much wine.”

Such is the truth of the Gospel according to Rev. Reformed-Calvinist.

And he insists that we shall have to obey this Gospel in the spirit of prayer. Then we shall not be as those with whom wine mocks (Prov. 20:1) but as those who have joy in Christ in their hearts through the Holy Spirit unto God the Father, who is the Maker and Giver of every good and perfect gift, including wine. For God giveth wine to make glad the heart of man.

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Mercy Dust

Have you ever considered what an extremely important part minute particles play in the lives of individuals? Are we disdainful, perhaps, of mere dust?

On August 27, 1883, Krakatoa erupted throwing tons of fine volcanic ash into the sky. Winds dispersed these light dust particles to a height of fifteen miles into the atmosphere surrounding the earth. For more than two years lurid red sunsets, produced by the presence of this volcanic ash, resembled distant fires. Scientists claim that the temperature of the Northern Hemisphere was lowered a few degrees for nearly a decade due to the absorption of part of the sun's heat by this layer of dust particles.

Possibly some of you recall the dust storm in 1934 at which time an estimated 10 million tons of tiny particles were carried across the eastern half of the United States. The threatening dark clouds from the Dust Bowl shadowed many extended areas, while individuals watched with awe at this ominous phenomenon.

Several decades ago students of the soil discovered that the size and shape of the soil particles determined its ability to hold water, air, and heat. In recent years the electron microscope has proved to be a very valuable aid in determining the character of the individual soil particles. Granules can be seen and measured which are less than 1/100,000 of an inch in diameter. A new branch of science which specifically deals with the study of fine particles is called microaneristics. Already three universities have established laboratories for this study, and the practical significance of this work is of great importance.

Many relatively incombustible substances when divided into fine particles display amazing energy. Powdered aluminum flares into brilliance and produces great heat while burning. Likewise, magnesium has the same qualities and is used in fire bombs. Caution must be taken when handling finely divided coal, wheat, and sugar. Charges of static electricity accumulated by the friction of moving air and particles has resulted in the explosion of a flour mill or grain elevator.

During the construction of the Grand Coulee Dam a leak developed which was extremely hazardous. It was stopped by forcing a fine volcanic clay called bentonite, into the porous sand. The absorbent clay expanded and plugged the pores, thus reducing a sizable loss of 30,000 gallons per minute to a mere trickle.

Another example in which the absorbent power of fine particles is used advantageously is in the case of the gas-mask. The finely powdered activated charcoal absorbs deadly gases in less
than $\frac{3}{10}$ of a second and allows the oxygen to pass through.

More common-place still is the deposit of chalk on a blackboard or lead on a paper when writing. Can you explain why this happens? Briefly, we can answer this by stating that the absorption of particles is chiefly due to the electrical charges between surfaces when there is friction.

From the standpoint of health the presence of minute particles in the air in large numbers due to smoke and metallic dusts is very detrimental. A survey in New York City revealed as many as 80,000 particles present in $\frac{1}{2}$ cubic inch of air. When this figure is multiplied by 5 million—the amount of air an average person breathes per day—one realizes with what a tremendous amount of foreign matter a respiratory system must contend! Country air, however, is comparatively free from these contaminating particles. Undoubtedly this explains why the lungs of the average individual living in the country are more pink and free of foreign particles, while the lungs of the average person living in the city show much solid matter and appear more black in color. The proportion of colds and sinus difficulties is much greater in the city.

Already in the days of ancient Greece, Drosarides observed that kaolin clay particles could heal certain skin diseases. Today pulverized kaolin is used internally to relieve diarrhea, dysentery, and colitis, while peptic ulcers are frequently treated with aluminum hydroxide in a powdered form. Recent experiments have proved that talcum powder may be effective in stimulating weakened muscles of the heart, when the fine particles of powder are injected into the pericardial sac which surrounds the heart.

One doctor very cleverly decided a difficult court case. The physician was called upon to help identify the heir of a man who died while his son was in infancy. The deceased's seemingly valueless property later became valuable. Two young men claimed to be the rightful heirs. Now the consulting physician had treated the real son while an infant for a severe case of smallpox. He sent the two youths into the basement to move a pile of stoker coal. Later in the day they returned, both covered with coal dust. However, one had white spots on his skin and he was proclaimed the rightful heir. He knew that coal dust seldom adheres to the scars of smallpox.

Dust, yes, mere dust!

Was it not from this very substance that Adam himself was formed. Yet how marvelous was God's creative power—forming a human being from tiny particles of earth. Into this body with all its intricate and related functioning God breathed the breath of life!

What a comfort for us to know that God is also Ruler of these minute particles and that he directs the very dust on the balance.
I received this question: "Would you kindly explain Luke 15:9. Are we to make friends with the world or what?"

REPLY.

The Scripture passage referred to reads:

"And I say unto you make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

It is the Saviour speaking here, admonishing His disciples to prudent spiritual foresight, the image of which He depicts in the parable of the "Unjust Steward".

"And he said also unto his disciples",—to be understood of the followers and hearers of Christ in a wider sense of the word and thus not to be limited to the apostolic circle. Included are the twelve disciples and the publicans whom He had just comforted. "There was a certain rich man, which had a steward", —a ruler over all his goods such as was Joseph in the house of Potiphar (Gen. 39:4). 'And the same was accused unto him that he was wasting his goods'.—This steward derived unrighteous gain from squandering his master's property. He dealt with that which he held as a trust as though he were its lord. His misconduct reaches his lord's ears through a third party. 'And he called him and aid unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee?'—This is a question of indignant surprise reposing on the master's acceptance of the evil report as true—of thee whom I trusted and to whom I committed my goods. The man's unfaithfulness had found him out, and he not so much as attempted a defence. It depicts him as guilty and accordingly his lord without delay pronounced him destitute: 'Give account of thy stewardship; for thou mayest be no longer steward.'

The man now counseled with himself: "What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship; I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed.'—These are utterances of the man's determination to circumvent the consequences of his sudden deposition. Having lost his stewardship, he must either dig or beg, will he eat. But he is resolved to do neither. So he sets his mind at work. 'What shall I do?' He thinks hard and fast; for there is no time to lose. He has it. It comes to him like a flash. 'I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.' He has in mind his lord's debtors. There instantaneously has hatched in his mind a scheme for securing himself with these people against the necessity of digging or begging as a discharged steward. 'And he called every one of his lord's debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owest thou unto my lord? And he
said unto him, An hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down and write fifty. Then said he unto another, And how much owest thou? And he said, An hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto Him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore.' These debtors are as dishonest as the steward. They are quite ready to get their debts lowered by doing his bidding. Whether these debtors were farmers who paid their rents in wheat and oil, which rents the steward had set far too high, but which he now lowered to a justifiable level; or whether these people were poor neighbors whom the rich man had loaned the means of living in the shape of food, taking from them written acknowledgments of the debt, and promising payment when they were able; or whether these debtors were merchants, who had bought from the rich man, whose possessions were great and therefore whose incomings from the fruit of the earth were large, a portion of such upon credit, and who had not as yet made their payments—these are questions on which the parable does not shed light sufficient to enable us to make a choice. But it doesn't matter, for it isn't important.

This much alone is certain.' The rich man possessed the bills of his debtors, promisory notes, which had remained in keeping of the steward through whom the rich man had transacted. In obedience to the instructions of the steward, these bills now were destroyed and others substituted in their room in which the debtors of which there were several, professed themselves to owe much smaller amounts of wheat or oil. Forsooth, a quick-witted fellow, this steward, worldly wise, exceedingly so. Though the trick would naturally vex the rich man, he could not help but admire and praise the crafty prudence of the steward. 'And the lord commended the unjust steward because he had done wisely,' had acted prudently but in a worldly, unprincipled way.

The 'lord' is not Christ but the master in the parable. To direct attention to the wisdom of the unjust steward Christ depicts the rich man as praising him "because he had done wisely". Christ, Himself, does not praise the man; He simply takes notice of him and his worldly wisdom, His purpose being to draw a comparison between the children of the world represented in the parable by the unjust steward and the children of the light in the point of view of the wisdom of each, doing so in these words: "For the children of the world are wiser with reference to their own generation than the children of the light."

The text here makes mention of a generation. It is the family of Satan, the total of reprobated men, one by a common love of the things on earth and of the world and its lusts. The "children of the world" are wise only with respect to their own generation. To this family of men they apply when in need of accomplices. And the reason is obvious. They find these men always willing to be of service to their carnal sagacity.

"The children of the light" are wise, too, with a wisdom that proceeds from the fear of God in them. But the "chil"
ren of the world”, says Christ, are in a carnal sense wiser than they are in the true sense. It shows that they are but imperfect saints. “I say unto you”, is therefore Christ’s word to them, “Provide yourselves with friends from the mammon of unrighteousness that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitation.” The context reveals that by mammon must be understood earthly goods—silver, gold, land, houses, the fruits of the earth. Christ calls these things “mammon of unrighteousness”. And with reason. The wealth of this world is mostly in the possession of the children of this world. It is therefore a thing acquired by the employment of violence and deceit and placed in the service of sin and iniquity. And from it, light, provide themselves in their own awareness with friends.

And who are these friends? First to be mentioned is God, the Father of Christ, their eternal friend, who redeemed them in Christ from all their sins, and made them first His friends by the love that He shed abroad in their hearts. And so these friends, with which the children of the light provide them, include also Christ whose sheep they are and by whose blood God bought them. They include, do these friends, the host of angels and all the saints, definitely the poor brethren with whom they shared their earthly goods in the name of Christ. And so, in the hour of death, when they fail, all these friends will be on hand to receive them into everlasting tabernacles.

Let then these children of the light be faithful as God’s stewards in the administration of the worldly goods that God in this life entrusts to them. And they are faithful by God’s grace, in that which is least — the earthly goods. And therefore they will be faithful also in much — the heavenly goods that God will entrust unto them. For they—the children of the light—are saved unto God also for heavenly stewardship on the new earth. But the others—the children of the world, being unjust in the least, would be unjust also in the much. Therefore God will not commit to their trust the true riches. They shall perish in their sins. This is according to Christ’s own words. Let us quote them: “He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also
in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches?"

Indeed the children of the light are faithful in that which is least. And yet the children of the world are wiser in a carnal sense than the children of the light are wise in the true sense. Let us take notice. It implies this: Apart from Christ's grace, the children of the light are utterly devoid of true wisdom. Even as redeemed saints they are truly wise only in principle. Often their true wisdom is under a bushel and then in their folly, in their carnal wisdom, they provide themselves from the sinful use of mammon with friends that are no friends as do the others. In view of this, how absurd it would be to say that the children of the light merit with God through the practice of true wisdom. By themselves they are unworthy and ill-deserving sinners saved by grace. But let them by all means strive to be just as diligent to provide themselves from the right use of mammon with friends that are friends, as the children of the world are diligent in providing themselves from the sinful use of mammon with friends that are no friends.

Herewith, I believe, the question of my correspondent has been answered. The mammon of unrighteousness is not the world but the goods of this world. And the idea of the text is that believers make them friends not of these goods but by or from the truly wise use of them.

TRUTH VS. ERROR
(continued from page 18)

This latter is the temperance of Scripture. It is the temperance, the self-control of faith, which is energized by the love of God.

Now to this the Rev. Fundamentalist cannot find any Scriptural objection. Fact is, that he admits never having heard the matter presented in this light. However, he had one more question: what is then the sinfulness of the use of wine?

To this Rev. Ref.-C. replies: "Sin is in the heart and not at all in the things. All unbelieving living is sinful—is sinful! All unbelieving use of the creature is sinful! All temperance activity that is not out of faith is sinful. And the teaching of such temperance is simply unbelieving philosophy, merely human inventions and not according to the Word of God. Such preaching places an obstruction in the road of the godly to really be some first-fruits of God's creation in every instance of life." And he includes by saying: "And, therefore, I shall not allow this temperance-preacher, this globe-trotting teetotaler to lecture to my flock!"
We invite all our readers to send in your questions and problems to: SCHUILER, c/o Doorn Printing Co., 705 Eastern Ave., Grand Rapids.

Schuiler Writes

Recently I received the following letter. I said: recently, and I think you ought to put some rubber in it, for it is dated November 20, 1950. Moreover, I do not know when this letter and its answer will be published, since I am writing for four Beacon Lights issues ahead.

But here is the letter:

Dear Schuiler:

Do you think it wrong to have a Christmas tree in a Protestant Reformed home? And also what do you think of church societies having a decorated tree in the church basement for their society parties?

A Reader.

Answering, I would say: Do not make too much of the censuring of Christmas trees! I think that it belongs to the indifferent things. Its origin lies way back in antiquity, and I doubt if the mere presence of a Christmas tree in our homes will tend to idolatry, as some seem to fear. You see, dear sister, if we as parents teach our children the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ from their very youth, our children will take that tree in their stride, that is, they will look upon it and the glittering lights as a toy, and nothing more. I do not think, in fact, I am rather sure that not one child among us will use that tree as the old Germanic peoples used it.

The question at Christmas time is not: is there a Christmas tree in the house? but rather this: is the Christ of the Holy Scriptures in the house? Are the children at home with Christ and His speech? Do we as parents live that Babe of Bethlehem? If you do, and I do not doubt it, then I do not think that the glittering lights of the tree will disturb our children in the listening to the beautiful story of Mary and the Babe at Bethlehem.

Whether I would like to see a Christmas tree in the church parlors, is a different question. To tell you the truth: I have never heard of this in our circles. And I am against it. The tree in the home is a custom that is prevalent on every side, but to bring it in the church is different. All the things we have at home and which we do at home cannot be done at church. I would say that the more exclusively we stick to one fundamental rule in this instance, the more we will answer God's will; and the rule is: have the Bible in the church, period. In church everything must remind us of the new Kingdom where God is all and in all. Note this: it is God's day; God's Word; God's Spirit; God's people; God's house; God's songs. The less we have there that reminds us of the earth and of the flesh, the better. There we are reminded of the heavenly heaven and of the heavenly earth.

At home the pater familias stretches himself in his easy chair; he reaches for his pipe and smokes with pleasure. Note
the different atmosphere and action you have in church.

So I would be lenient with those who have the lighted Christmas tree, but I would never like to see the thing in church.

The following communication came to me quite recently. It is signed by three daughters of the church where we have our name and place, but we do not publish the names as a rule.

Here is the letter:

Dear Schuler:

We find this notation in the program notes of the Calvin College Oratorio Society when they present Handel's "Messiah"... "The following year it was performed under the composer's direction in London. The audience was deeply affected, and at the "Hallelujah Chorus" the King rose to his feet, the court following his example, and this evidence of devotion and respect has remained the rule at all subsequent performances." And again, "The height of adoration and prayer is reached in the singing of the "Hallelujah Chorus". Therefore a reverent silence of a few minutes will conclude the program."

At a recent program we attended, the "Hallelujah Chorus" was presented at the close of the program. To our embarrassment, everyone remained seated. Is there any valid reason, Biblical or otherwise, that our audience should remain seated. Are they unforgivably uninformed or is it a lack of culture? Certainly there could be no better benediction than to sing the magnificent "Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth forever and ever! Amen!" This is the most glorious confession and the great comfort for all Christians. It would be more proper to stand reverently with heads bowed than to button up coats, wake up sleepy children, and generally prepare to leave. Certainly no one would think of doing this while the minister pronounces the benediction at the end of a church service.

Three Readers.

And here is the answer:

Well, it seems as though any answer at all comes a bit late, for my young friends have already answered their own question. And I might add: in no uncertain fashion. They sound a bit disgusted with the actions of the audience in question.

First, I agree with my friends that it is good form to stand at occasions such as the one mentioned. I think so, not so much because of my ample acquisition of proper culture, as because I think that such standing by the audience is beautiful symbolism. The hosts of the angels and of the saints are portrayed standing before the throne of God. Only One is sitting and that is God!

Second, this should be done not because of culture. You would find much culture in the world which is worth nothing, were you to attend the gala gatherings
of the worldlings. Even when the world hears the "Hallelujah Chorus", and when they stand with heads bowed, it means nothing, but it is even abomination in the sight of God. No, but the motive should be reverence and adoration of God. If such is the motive, by all means, stand!

Third, be not too impatient with those who do not stand. Much of this is due to national idiosyncracies. In the course of our Americanization we have had much trouble with this standing or sitting. In Holland, the so-called "cultured" and the "un-cultured" sit, period. And they have sat for centuries. And to try to raise them to a standing position when we sing our psalms in church for instance, is not easy. To stand, here in America, while the psalter is sung, is to many of them that are born and raised in Holland, a reflection on the sanctity of their Holland psalm-singing which was always done in a sitting position. Custom, my young friends, is a powerful thing. Do you know that at the time of our Lord's sojourn it was the custom to preach sitting down? And that our Lord did this very think in the synagogue at Nazareth?

And therefore, although I agree with your main contention, I would caution you to condemn those that sit. I believe that we will have more success with patient education than with hasty condemnation.

And: remember that custom and tradition are mighty strong powers among the children of men.

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**THE BIBLE**

I supposed I knew my Bible,
Reading piecemeal, hit and miss—
Now a bit of John and Matthew,
Now a snatch of Genesis,
Certain chapters of Isaiah,
Certain Psalms (take twenty-third),
Twelfth of Romans, first of Proverbs—
Yes, I thought I knew the Word.
But I found that through reading
Was a different thing to do,
And the way was unfamiliar,
When I read the Bible through.

You who like to play at Bible,
Dip and dabble, here and there,
Just before you kneel, aweary,
And yawn through a hurried prayer;
You who treat the Crown of Writings
As you treat no other book—
Just a paragraph disjointed,
Just a crude, impatient look—
Try a worthier procedure,
Try a broad and steady view;
You will kneel in very rapture
When you read the Bible through.

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Whoever makes this present existence—its ease and pleasure—his supreme object, shall lose the higher, the only enduring life; but whoever is determined, for Christ's dear sake, to ignore the lower life, will find the higher life—which includes all of the lower worth having, and infinitely more.

—Amos R. Wells.
LIFTING THE LID

IV.
THE GATEWAY TO DESTRUCTION

The Lord with the wicked is wroth every day,
And if they repent not is ready to slay;
By manifold ruin for others prepared,
They surely at last shall themselves be ensnared.

This is true today as well as it was in David's time. In a former instalment I pointed out how well America embraces the idolatry of Hollywood. In this instalment I hope to prove that God is punishing America for her sin.

Why has juvenile delinquency, crime, murder, robbery, adultery, divorce, fornication, suicide, etc., risen to such a high degree during the past two decades? Why are the jails, prisons, houses of correction, insane asylums, and hospitals filled beyond their capacity? What is causing the constant breaking up of the home? Why are there more nervous breakdowns and nervous people than ever before? Why is there so much trouble with sleeplessness, indigestion, and high blood pressure? Why are deaths due to cancer and heart failure so common nowadays? In spite of the fact that the best of medical care, vitamins, fruit, milk, exercise, etc., are provided for our children, why is there all kinds of health problems such as adenoids, eye-strain, malnutrition, restlessless, sleeplessness, lack of attention, inability to concentrate, and susceptibility to common colds, sore throats, and worse diseases? Dr. John R. Rice (What is Wrong with the Movies) summarizes the answer to these and many other similar questions in a few words. "Doubtless the moving pictures have a large part in this changing tempo of American life. Movies affect the physical welfare, nervous tension, mental attitude, and adaptability of the whole race."

Hollywood is a manufacturer of criminals. Dr. Blumer, professor in the University of Chicago, assisted by Mr. Hau-ser, interviewed hundreds of young people, 189 delinquent boys of fifteen and younger, already guilty of crime, and all the inmates of several reformatories, and prisons, having them write down what they had learned from the movies. This survey took four years and was done very carefully and scientifically. The above investigation shows that movies were responsible for the downfall of many youth. Space does not permit me to quote actual confessions of prisoners, but I would urge our people to read the interesting book ("Movies, Delinquency, and Crime,") written by the above mentioned men. This book contains the complete results of the above mentioned survey. Remember that these men are not preachers, but professors, psychologists, and scientists. The same is true of the book, "Our Movie Made
BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

Children", by Henry J. Foreman, to which I will refer later on. Many a Hollywood trained youth are now behind the prison bars, having plenty of time to meditate on the fact that "crime does not pay", while their educators (Hollywood stars and executives) are never apprehended. The real offender is never punished by mankind, so to speak; but God punishes them both in this life and in the life to come. Many movie stars meet an early grave due an adulterous, gluttonous and fast life.

The devil invented Hollywood to feed the dance halls, night clubs, houses of ill-fame, and the divorce courts. This phase of the movie menace is so wicked, vile and dirty that "repeated warnings against American films are being heard every day from all quarters of the globe; from China, Japan, India, Italy, Germany, France, and South America. Even Turkey, the infidel nation, is aroused to protect its children against the Christian nation and now Sir Hesketh Bell, former governor of Uganda and Northern Nigeria in Africa, warns his British countrymen against the "devastation being wrought in the Dark Continent by American moving pictures." (Quoted by Dr. John R. Rice from the Baltimore Catholic Review of Jan. 19, 1920). For the same reason I would rather not discuss this phase of the movie evil in Beacon Lights, however I refer the interested reader to the two books I have just recommended.

Hollywood also feeds the gambling dens. To my mind she also promotes the causes of the struggle between capital and labor, with all its boycotts, walkouts, and strikes. She is partly responsible for the present high cost of living. Remember that 85 million people each week are tantalized by the extravagant high standard of living which Hollywood shows on all of her pictures. Of course, most of these riches of Hollywood are shown as acquired by unlawful means. As all men are covetous by nature, the movies certainly accentuate the desire for more money for less work.

Does Hollywood affect its patrons mentally and physically? It certainly does. For this reason many theaters maintain first aid rooms and hire trained nurses. Henry J. Foreman (Our Movie Made Children) relates some of the experiences of a trained nurse whose function it was to put in operation children's play rooms and first aid rooms in a chain of theaters in a large mid-western city. I will quote a couple passages:

"Among the many pictures which frightened children and horrified adults, she remembers, 'The Phantom of the Opera' as conspicuous. It caused eleven faintings and one miscarriage in a single day. Four of the eleven who fainted were men. The average was three or four faintings during the run of the picture. Ushers were especially drilled and prepared to deal with cases of fainting and hysterical collapse. While adults would faint, children would become hysterical. I have had as many as three in my arms at once and it required an hour or more to quiet them. During the picture the children would scream all over the theater, many of them would dash out and mothers would leave the theater with
frightened and hysterical children clinging to them. And at times the children would vomit as a result of their emotional condition."

"While Lon Chaney pictures were often the most horrifying to children, many others, including wild west and war films frequently had similar effects. She remembers the "Dawn Patrol" as causing children to leap from their seats, jump up and down and scream with excitement. Serial pictures, she observed, kept children wrought up from week to week while waiting for the next instalment, the excitement growing intensely as the serial proceeded. After seeing wild west films that contained holdups and robberies; boys of from five to twelve would come out into the playroom and excitedly re-enact the scenes."


"To women who are afraid! If you scream easily—or faint when the going gets creepy—you had better stay home with your knitting when the husband or boy friend comes to see the Big Halloween Double Dose Horror Show. . . . The Devil's own blood—never before—so much horror under one roof—. When the —theater fills up we will open the—so that nobody will be disappointed (???? S.B.)—At the heavy stroke of 12 midnight Oct.—1950."

Remember that this warning comes direct from Hollywood itself. Dr. Christian A. Rucknick, professor of psychology in the University of Iowa, once tested the emotional effect of movies by means of an electrical device. He found that adolescents were twice as much excited as adults and that children between the ages of six and eleven registered three times as much as adults. He also recorded the heartbeats of these children and young people while they watched the pictures. From a normal beat, 70 to 80 per minute, ordinary pictures ran the pulse up to 125 to 140 beats per minute. Many horror and murder pictures ran the pulse up to 180 or nearly two and one half times the normal rate! One noted neurologist said that some movies have an effect similar to shell shock, such as soldiers receive in war, since the effects of some pictures lasts from three days to a week. Approximately one third of the school children in one class examined by Dr. Blumer, mention having bad dreams, following their experiences, including shock nightmares, keeping one's head under the blankets, asking to sleep with father or mother, crying out in sleep, and falling out of bed.

Movies that cause fainting, vomiting, and hysterics lasting sometimes an hour or more certainly affect the physical condition of the body and the mind. They are a cause for future disorders of the nervous system, digestive organs, and of the heart.

I sincerely hope that I have given enough evidence that God is punishing America for her sin of worshipping Hollywood. To our own church members, that also worship Hollywood I have this to say, "Depart I pray you from the tents of these wicked men and touch nothing of theirs, lest ye be consumed in all their sins." (Num. 16:26).
BOOK REVIEWS

Louis Regnerus
Oak Lawn, Illinois

THE BISHOP'S MANTLE
by Agnes Sligh Turnbull
published by the MacMillan Co., N. Y.

This is the story of a young minister and his first years as rector in a large, fashionable city church. This young man is Hilary Laurens.

The story begins with the death of Hilary's grandfather, who has been an inspiration to the young minister and who also is a member of the clergy. At about the same time as the death of his grandfather, Hilary receives a call from St. Matthews Protestant Episcopal Church. This is a pleasant surprise for Hilary as it is his first charge and St. Matthews is supposed to be the cornerstone of that particular denomination. Also St. Matthews happens to be in the same city as the home of the girl he loves and ultimately hopes to marry. Needless to say, Hilary decides to accept the call and soon finds himself deep in the affairs of a large congregation.

With Hilary you will experience all the dramas of human life—the humor, the tragedies, the weddings, the funerals, the hurried midnight calls to minister to the dying or comfort the bereaved. Hilary Laurens, idealistic and supremely genuinely religious, cannot help but be appealing and intensely human. He is a young man in love—in love with a beautiful girl who ultimately marries him, but who finds it hard to exchange her gay times with the smart young social set for the conservative demands of a rectory. The way Hilary and his wife Alexa work out their personal problems, however, is only one thread in this varied story.

We might certainly expect a very modern interpretation of Scriptures and a very modern doctrine present in this novel. Hence it is no surprise when much emphasis is placed on formalism and dead orthodoxy. The preaching of the Word is effectual only if the minister has the proper presentation and uses correct English. The dance, drinking parties, and all the so-called fun of the thoroughly modern masses are freely indulged in. Christian living is defined as being a good citizen. When we read of these things we realize of course that the author has a thoroughly erroneous conception of the calling of a minister. Certainly there can be no higher calling. It is a calling to preach the Word of God and that only and to cast aside the tragedies, the weddings, the funerals, the philosophy of men. Yet the Author has dragged the qualifications for this holy work down to a level where an attractive personality and an eloquent manner of speech are the principal requisites.

However the author is not attempting
to cover up the modern philosophy of man under a seemingly Scriptural interpretation of the Gospel. Agnes Turnbull presents modernism as religion and since the book is very frank and plain there is not much danger of one who is acquainted with Reformed doctrine to be confused or misled by so obvious an impure doctrine. Only in one respect is the author not very clear in her presentation and that is in the matter of life after death. The viewpoint expressed in the novel is harmonious to that subscribed to by many so-called Reformed people today but which nevertheless is thoroughly unscriptural.

This is a revealing novel about a prominent profession; it is a tolerant book and I think to a great extent an honest one. For these reasons it may provoke considerable discussion. In the light of what the modern masses expect of religion it is also possible that the character created in this novel may take his place in that group of people in fiction who have seemed significant to readers throughout the years.

It is often surprising to find that heights may be attained merely by remaining on the level.

—Sunshine Magazine

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