Teaching . . . a joy or a job?

Read the feature article by Eleanor Veldman
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On the Cover. — The cover picture is of the kindergarten class of the Adams Street Protestant Reformed School. The teacher of this class is Miss Eleanor Veldman whose article on teaching we are featuring this month.
TEACHING - A job or a joy?
Eleanor Veldman
Grand Rapids, Michigan

Thinking of becoming a teacher? Then let me give you a few words of encouragement. Maybe this article may seem a bit idealistic to you. Perhaps it is that this is my first year of teaching. Or it may be that I'm teaching kindergarten and nineteen of the most wonderful children on earth.

I thank God for the privilege of teaching in the Protestant Reformed school on Adams Street. The feeling of unity pervades the school and it brings teachers and pupils to a closer understanding. We're fighting for the same cause aren't we? Why, walking through these halls are our future ministers, teachers, consistory members, and homemakers. It's a never-ending thrill each day to see our two school busses, jammed to capacity, come puffing up Adams St. hill and spill out one hundred and forty bus-riders choking with vitality.

To those who have never seen our Adams St. school, just a few lines of description. It's really something of which to be proud! There are eight classrooms, all in use. The furniture and desks are all blond, our teachers' lounge is equipped with a sofa, lounging chairs, lamps, table, and drapes. The office too is fully equipped. Much credit goes to our plugging Mothers' Club. Although the kindergarten equipment came in installments, that room too is now complete with a sandbox, doll-house, drapes, blocks, a band, etc. The room itself is an inspiring place!

But I hasten to add that the building itself is just a shell—it's the core that matters. We must be distinctive! And that finally rests on the shoulders of the teachers. It's a responsibility, a challenge, a goal! There are of course, no hard and fast rules for being distinctive. We know that every subject should be permeated with that distinctiveness and so we teachers must be Protestant Reformed. If there is none of that distinctiveness, there's no place for a school of our own. That all Protestant Reformed children belong in the Protestant Reformed school is my conviction, but not
my aim in writing this article. That matter rests in the conscience of each Protestant Reformed parent.

The qualifications of a teacher are numerous. A Protestant Reformed school teacher must be Protestant Reformed. He or she must also have an education—an AB degree if at all possible. That we have our own school is a wonderful thing, but the education of our children must not suffer. A teacher must be willing to work—her work is not finished at 3:15 PM, but continues until she is adequately prepared for the following day. Thorough preparation is necessary to hold the interest of the pupils—a big factor in maintaining discipline. A teacher must love her pupils; the cute things they do must amuse her and the wicked things they do must grieve her. It's easier to remember the former.

The first day of school comes to my mind. Our first Bible story dealt with the attributes of God—how God sees all, hears all, knows all, etc. One youngster couldn't wait to say, "Yes, but God doesn't love everybody, does He?" Everyone shook his head "no" wisely. And we must remember not to love our fathers and mothers more than we love God". Such is the influence of the home!

I remember how Julie insisted it was the "birthmark" that Esau sold to Jacob and how Timmy said that Eli's two sons were Phineas and Hofman! These things happen in every classroom and how can any teacher help but mutter to herself, "The darlings".

Even in kindergarten there are love affairs—primitive, but real. One day Timmy (I don't want to become personal, but his daddy is a former Episcopalian minister and his last name starts with a "Mc") asked me very confidentially if sometime soon I would change his seat so he could sit by Judy. He added in a whisper that she was his "girlfriend". When I replied that he was too young to have a girlfriend he retorted indignantly, "Well, Miss Veldman, I'm FIVE!"

Children demand love and affection of a teacher. Before we have our Bible story, the children are grouped in front of me. A hand shot up not long ago and a child wondered if I couldn't stretch out my arms and try to hug them. "Impossible", I said, "my arms aren't long enough", to which David offered to bring two of his mother's clothespoles to accomplish this feat. Sharon's philosophical observation was that it was too bad I didn't have an elephant's trunk to gather them up. What the imagination can't do!

The teacher must have sympathy, for often what she deems unimportant looms large in the eyes of little children. A cut seems a deep gash to them and a skinned knee seems a broken knee-cap. A teacher must have patience, for what seems a simple task to her may be a complicated analytical problem to their minds. She must explain until their inexperienced minds grasp the problem. Many other qualifications could be mentioned and the more we mention the more we realize how often we fail miserably—until God through prayer strengthens us.
There's the rosy side of teaching: hearing clear voices singing "The Lord's My Shepherd", "The Tender Love a Father Has", "Father We Thank Thee", like a choir to your ears; the thrilling Bible story, the reciting of their memory texts, working together, playing together, the self-satisfaction one derives from their learning; working with God's covenant children, watching them develop mentally, physically and spiritually, forming life-long habits—all of these make teaching a joy. There are things that make teaching a job—disciplining whenever necessary for one. For smaller children, a good talk is more of a punishment than a spanking would be.

But the undesirable aspects are erased from one's mind by all the experiences that compensate for them. Every day is different, every child is a different personality. Heavy of heart will be this teacher one day in June when I see my children pass through my doors into the first grade. I sincerely hope my experiences may be yours and you too find that teaching is a joy.

Give, not from the top of your purse, but from the bottom of your heart.

—Gospel Herald.
And All His Praise Proclaim. . .

Music has the power to stir the heart and soul of man. For centuries poets, in extolling its sweet compulsion, have dwelt on the delight of comprehending the intricacies of this universal language of mankind.

Soft music soothes the tired mind. There is music which can strike fire from the heart of men and tears from the eyes of women. Music, it has been said, is the Prophet's art, the speech of angels. It is a gift of God.

Songs of praise and adoration have been rendered to the Lord throughout all the long centuries of the history of God's people. In the Scriptures we read of the morning stars singing together and all the sons of God shouting for joy. The Psalmist urged the people to sing a new song and to bless Jehovah's Name with singing. The people of God, in times of distress and in rapturous joy, are moved to express in the concord of song their communion with a faithful God.

While suffering the torture of the stock in a cold jail cell—their backs raw and bleeding—Paul and Silas passed the time in singing the Paschal hymn. Angels sang at the Incarnation. The new heaven and earth will be filled with the songs of the redeemed who will eternally praise and worship God.

Yes, Christianity is a singing religion! It is an easy thing for the child of God to sing. We have so much, so very much, in which to rejoice. In our churches we have an order of worship in which congregational singing forms an integral part.

Beacon Lights regularly sponsors Singspirations. In our Sunday Schools much time is given over to singing.

But, in spite of all this, we have a stilted singing culture. It takes very little serious introspection to see that this in true. Can the situation be remedied? The problem demands our concern.

At present in our Protestant Reformed worship services we use only the Psalms. We completely disregard all the other passages of Scripture which so readily lend themselves to song. Good, sound hymns based on gospel truth are never used officially by us. Let's ask ourselves the question—Why? What possible reason can there be for the restriction of all our praise and worship in song to the use of the Psalms alone? I know of none.

An odd, confusing, twist is also given this puzzling picture when we hear our ministers use the words of a hymn in their sermons to elucidate a thought. The hymn used, however, cannot be sung in our churches. Our organists freely
BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

use hymn melodies in our services but our song leaders are directed to keep from using them in our Singspirations.

This editorial is in no way intended to reflect on the good use our present Psalter serves. We do wish to draw attention, however, to the fact that the Psalms are nevertheless limited in their scope. Our Sunday worship services and all our other gatherings not in the least reflect the rich and beautiful New Testament teachings which are pre-eminent in the Christian faith. This condition is most readily apparent at particular seasons of the year, such as Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost and Christmas. The Psalmist, writing in the days of the shadows was indeed possessed of great vision and prophetic insight. However, having never experienced except by anticipatory faith the reality of a Risen Savior and the comforting presence of the Holy Spirit within him, he could not grasp, as we can, the fulness and beauty—the sense of fulfillment—our salvation gives to us today. The church of the New Dispensation, as it seeks to praise God for its redemption and to render Him thanks for all His goodness, has the further revelation of all the Apostolic writers and the fruit of the work of the Spirit in its midst. Today this further inspiration and historical material has no influence in our act of singing praise to God. It makes no contribution at all to our singing culture on the Lord’s Day in the church worship services nor in our societal life. It should not be this way nor does it have to be.

We need a Hymn Book—a good selection of sound, worshipful hymns to round out our singing culture. We need a body of spiritual songs with a New Dispensational emphasis to meet our present spiritual needs and desires which our present Psalter alone can never give us. The Open Forum will happily publish any constructive suggestions as to how a Protestant Reformed Hymn Book can be brought into existence and into proper use in our circles.

Can you help?

---A. H.

TRUSTING GOD

Why take ye thought for raiment
Or for tomorrow's food?
For God doth know your every need
And surely He is good.

To fed the lowly sparrow
Doth please our Father's heart,
And truly, in His mercies,
His child shall have a part.

He clothed the lovely lily
In dress of glorious hue,
And if He clothed the lily so,
Then shall He not clothe you?

So think not of the morrow
For what to eat or wear,
But cast your every burden,
Into your Father's care.

—The King's Business.
A Redeeming Truth

Rev. G. Vanden Berg
Oak Lawn, Illinois.

It is refreshing to the soul to peruse some of the works of John Calvin in which he both criticizes the modern perversion of the truth he loved and taught and also ably sets forth and defends that truth. When we consider the arguments which he brings forth and note his repeated appeals to Scripture to support his conviction, we are deeply convinced of his sincerity and persuaded that the system of truth which he pronounced is more than a set of dogmas. It is a way of life. It is a redeeming truth. To live it is to experience freedom.

Thus, for example, the Reformer of Geneva in refuting those who interpret grace to be God’s goodness inviting all men to salvation, calls this a puerile and absurd fiction and immediately appeals to the apostle Paul, showing how he “most clearly separates the foreknown from those on whom God deigned not to look in mercy”. And, as if this were not enough he directs us to the memorable words of Jesus, “No man can come unto Me except My Father draw him . . . and All that the Father giveth Me shall come unto Me”. We would that all who claim to be adherents to Calvinism would listen to Calvin instead of to his image which has been modified by theological sculpture. And we certainly emphasize to our present generation of Protestant Reformed youth the importance of being mute to the image and responsive to the true Calvin.

In another place the Reformer speaks a language we embrace when he says: “Now no one doubts that humility lies at the bottom of all true religion, and it is the mother of all virtues. But how shall he be humble who will not hear of the original sin and misery from which he has been delivered? And who, by extending the saving mercy of God to all, without difference, lessens, as much as in him lies, the glory of that mercy? Those most certainly are the farthest from glorifying the grace of God according to its greatness, who declares that it is indeed common to all men; but that it rests effectually in them, because they have embraced it by faith.”

Then he says again, “Let those roar at us who will. We will ever brighten forth, with all our power of language, the doctrine which we hold concerning the free election of God, seeing that it is only by it that the faithful can understand how great that goodness of Go
is which effectually called them to salvation”.

Wonderful, isn’t it! A beautiful doctrine! Your Protestant Reformed heritage extolling the Sovereignty of God. Let no one take it from you!

Objections??

There always are to the truth of God because men are carnal and profane. Wherever the pure truth is maintained the lie is held up overagainst it. The calumny that goes with it we have heard before.—“If God does it all and salvation is determined in the eternal counsel, there is no sense to preaching, exhorting, etc. . . . If the election is the deciding factor and we can do nothing about that, we may as well live carelessly, for if we elect, we will be saved and if not, we can do nothing about it anyway. . . . God becomes the author of sin; man is made irresponsible. . . .” And to this much more could be added.

All these arguments the Reformer meets in his work: “Calvin’s Calvinism”. He does not evade them but maintains the truth overagainst them. Firmly he holds “that the salvation of believers depends on the eternal election of God for which no cause or reason can be rendered but His own gratuitous pleasure.” He asserts “believers embrace the truth and walk in it because it is God who works faith in them” and “unbelievers remain blinded in darkness because God closed their eyes lest seeing they should perceive and be converted.” In the words of Calvin, “I constantly make God the JLE of the whole world, who by His incomprehensible and wonderful counsel governs and directs all things. . . .” We say “Soli Deo Gloria”.

Does this make us careless and indifferent? Of course not, for “as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are the children of God”. And it is impossible to be indifferent when we are under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is impossible that the children of grace should not bring forth fruits of thankfulness in all their life. These put off the works of the flesh and strive diligently to flee “every appearance of sin” that may walk after the Spirit and present themselves before God in true holiness. This is worked in and through us by the Spirit of grace and adoption. He regenerates us through which we receive a new life, new desires, new aspirations. He calls through the Word which we hear and obey. He gives faith which we use and by which we walk in truth. No more than a man can calmly and indifferently sit in his house while the entire structure is in flame can the Christian assume such an attitude toward the world of sin. The redeemed saint who has tasted God’s goodness and grace HATES SIN, FIGHTS SIN and seeks his Father’s will.

In the truth of God’s Sovereign and Free Elective Grace there is comfort. How assuring it is to know that the work of salvation seen and known in us is God’s work that “will not . . . that cannot” be destroyed. That gives us confidence. And having confidence we are bold to say, “I will not fear what man (cont. on page 9)
Crucial Wars:

In the history of the world there have been several crucial wars that have decidedly turned the direction of the world’s history in the path that it took.

We may point to three main wars. The Persian wars, the wars between Greece and Persia; the Punic wars, the wars between Rome and Carthage; and the Arabian and European wars.

In the study of the book of Daniel, the first of these crucial wars is predicted and applied to the instruction of the Church. These wars change the course of the history of the nations. But it is also and mainly so, of instruction for the history of the church. If we read this history we find many striking parallels and much material for thought about the present world crisis that we are facing. For example, if we take the 11th chapter of Daniel, where the Lord predicts to Daniel the defeat of the Persian ruler, the fourth one who is the richest of them all, and compare it with the actual history—say as we read it in Herodotus’ account—how that that king was Xerxes, who marched with an army of 300,000 or 900,000 men into Greece and was defeated there, we may continue with the other crucial wars and compare with our own time and see that there are the same mighty forces, probably east and west again, facing another and probably final contest, the issue of which is probably doubtful for man, but which is to result in the revelation of the glory of the Son of God.

It is interesting to read the commentary of Calvin on Daniel. From the point of view of his warm touch for the heart of the church reader, but also from the point of view that he refers to the actual historical material with which he is familiar.

One thing especially struck me about this commentary of Calvin, and that was that he closed each one of his lectures on the book of Daniel with a very beautiful prayer. It impressed me that Calvin was living in that time of the history of Europe when Europe was in the crisis of the dangers of Islam which historians speak of as the crucial Arabian-European wars. It is no wonder then to see how that Martin Luther called the Pope antichrist and looked upon the Turk as the very fulfillment of the prediction of the hordes from the four corners of the earth. I think it was so too, in a measure. We face one more such cycle, one more such crisis. Each one rises higher we know.

But I would like to quote some of these prayers of Calvin.
The Need Of Prayer:

It is our calling in these times as church to be instant in prayer. Often the question is, what shall we pray? I shall leave that question now as outside of the purpose of this column, but shall leave you with these examples of a Reformed leader through which we may receive some inspiration today.

“Grant, Almighty God, since it pleases thee to exercise our confidence by not allowing us any fixed or stable rest upon earth, that we may learn to rest in thee while the world rolls over and over even a hundred times. May we never doubt either our protection under thy hand, or perpetual issue of all things in our good. Although we are not beyond the reach of darts, yet may we know the impossibility of our suffering under any deadly wound, when thou puttest forth thy hand to shield us. May we have full confidence in thee, and never cease to march under thy standard with constant and invincible courage, until at length thou shalt gather us into that happy rest which is laid up for us in heaven, by Christ our Lord.—Amen (Vol. II, p. 300)

Prayer

Grant, Almighty God, that we may remain quiet under thy shelter and protection, in the midst of these numerous disturbances which thou ever submittest to our eyes in this world. May we never lose our courage when an occasion is given to Satan and our enemies to oppress us, but may we remain secure under thy protection, and every hour and every moment may we fly to thy guard-ship. Relying on thine unconquered power, may we never hesitate so to pass through all commotions, as to repose with quiet minds upon thy grace, till at length we are gathered into that happy and eternal rest which thou hast prepared for us in heaven, by Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Vol. II, p. 312).

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(cont. from page 7)

shall do unto me . . . The Lord is my helper and stay.” Then, the peace of God reigns in our hearts.

I have tried to encourage you to hold fast to the distinctive truths given to us through the great Reformer. Often we take the most precious truths for granted and then the most common rules of christian living fail to receive proper emphasis. Our heritage is of unspeakable value. Make your calling and election sure. On that foundation the rest of a pure christian life will follow. Then, the truth shall make you free!

Maintaining that doctrine our lives will prove to be worthy of that beautiful name . . . C h r i s t i a n !
A Debate: I.

The scene of this debate may be in any of our Young People's Societies, either here in Michigan or as far west as Belflower, California. However, I like to think of it as being conducted in a society of one of our mid-western churches on a Sunday evening. (Sunday evening is the set time for Young People's Society meetings in the mid-west. And around the calendar year, you must know.) The leader of this society is an industrious minister, who has already preached twice during the day, with not too long a noon hour to recuperate, and possibly has had a catechism to teach after the afternoon service for good measure, not to forget the few shovels of coal that he threw on the furnace fire "to meet" the janitor. But love for the sheep of Christ and an intense desire to feed and nurture them in the fear and admonition of the Lord makes this task of leading the Covenant Youth on Sunday evening a most pleasant work.

This industrious minister has an equally industrious Young People's Society.

All kinds of questions both of a practical and also of a more doctrinal nature are discussed. From time to time in the after-recess program recitations are given, poems are read (yes, by the one who composed it) and book-reports are rendered. And now they also intend to have a debate on a very doctrinal, practical and pivotal question. It is the question which is, and rightly so, the Shibboleth between those who are Reformed and those who are Pelagian-Arminian.

The minister suggests, that the subject to be debated be the following: "Resolved: That the Responsibility of Man Does Not Postulate His Ability to be Obedient to the Command of the Gospel."

The Minister realizes that those who are to take the negative side in this debate will be placed on dangerous ground. They will have to debate, not from the conviction of what they believe on this question, but will have to do their best even if driven into the Pelagian-Arminian corner, to defend the negative side of the debate. But their slogan too is: ἐπὶ πᾶσιν ἀλεθεία, that is, above everything the truth.

The minister selects the young people, who he thinks will best be able to conduct this debate. He himself will give them their source material and will have a conference with each team separately. For convenience sake the team taking the affirmative side we will call Norman and John and the team to argue the negative side we will call Christina and Lavern.
Both teams have prepared their arguments and defined the terms. The particular Sunday evening has come. Let us quietly slip into the rear of the church auditorium and listen in.

The first speaker of the affirmative side rises and addresses the society members, visitors, etc. His task is to define the terms for the affirmative side. At least he will attempt to direct the debate in the right direction. He calls attention to the fact that the terms of the subject to be debated are: "The Responsibility of Man". And he also calls attention to the fact that it is the burden of the affirmative to prove that from this responsibility of man it does not follow that he is "able to obey the command of the Gospel".

Norman, therefore, gives his definition of the term "responsibility". It is: Our being legally and morally answerable for the discharge of a duty, trust or debt, and having the intellectual and moral capacity to perceive the difference between right and wrong. Such is, in the main, the definition given by the English dictionary, Funk and Wagnalls. That this is the correct definition is born out by the derivation of the term. It is derived from the Latin verb respondeo—meaning: to reply, to give an answer back.

Norman also points out the meaning of the closely allied term: Accountability. The term "accountability" is closely associated in meaning with the term "responsibility". However, there is a difference in viewpoint. That the meaning of the term "accountability" differs from "responsibility" is evident from its derivation. The former term is derived from the Latin verb: ad-computo. Ad—means: to, and computo means: to recon together, to estimate numerically, calculate, recon. And thus to come to the final sum be it in addition or subtraction or other combinations. And, thus, Norman continued, to compute, to give account, refers to the final sum of anything. It is the end of the problem. It is the proof of the sum. And applied to man's responsibility it is period behind of all of a man's existence, the account that he must give of his deeds before God, whether it be good or evil. It is the period, God's period behind history when the "books are opened". In these books, which are the books of our consciences, all our "responses", our answers to the commands of the Gospel and to the law of God are recorded. The response of the deepest spiritual attitude of the heart and mind.

Norman, as the first speaker of the affirmative, points out that it is important to see this distinction. Responsibility is the ability to give a moral response to the Word of God whether it comes as Law or Gospel. Accountability is the having to give account before God for these responses in the day of judgment. In their respective order Responsibility is before accountability. Only the responsible creature is accountable in a corresponding manner.

Now this responsibleness of man before God does not presuppose, it does not postulate the ability to respond properly...
and believingly to the command of the Gospel. According to Norman, the first speaker in the affirmative, this is the only point of contention in the debate. He, therefore, insists that this be kept very clearly in mind in this debate.

Now the first speaker of the negative side takes the floor. It is the task of Christina to show that responsibility presupposes the ability to believe the gospel and to obey its command.

She too emphasizes that responsibility comes from the Latin verb respondeo. It refers to man's answerableness to a charge, trust or duty. However, she insists that the first speaker of the affirmative had not told the whole truth. The whole truth is that Funk and Wagnalls also states that responsibility includes: "the ability to meet obligations". She, the first speaker of the negative, would plead that this be not forgotten. This is a very current usage of the term "responsibility" in everyday speech. Responsibility suggests to the average man not only the "must" but also the "can" to meet our obligations. And, therefore, there can be no reasonable doubt, that it ought to have this meaning also in the terms of our debate.

Her conclusion is that responsibleness to the preaching of the gospel and to the command of Christ ought to include the ability to choose for the obedience to the gospel, for otherwise how can man be reasonably accountable before God. It surely is not reasonable to have responsibility without having the ability to respond, does it? Surely the fact that the gospel is addressed to us with the command to repent and believe implies that we have the ability to respond, does it not? Did not even the affirmative speaker tell us, that responsibility implies the "capacity to intellectually perceive the difference between right and wrong"? Then surely when this difference comes to us in the preaching responsible man can make this intellectual response to the command of the gospel, can he not?

She holds, as first speaker of the negative that responsibility implies the ability to respond intellectually-morally to the preaching of the gospel. Were this not the case, man would not be accountable and God would not be just when He judges!

And so we must have the whole truth!

By this time the debate really has become serious. But let us be cautioned. We must not be swayed by specious arguments nor by the power of rhetoric and rhetorical questions. Which of the two is guilty of this we leave to the reader.

But we must go on. The next time we shall hear the remainder of this debate.

Private devotions lead to new discoveries. They should make it vastly easier to take part in devotional meetings, for one can talk about that which enriches one's own life.

—Muriel Lester.
THE UNDERGROUND MOVEMENT

Marvels of Spring will never cease to awe and thrill mankind. The seeming “death” of plant and animal life is but a mere dormancy, for the potential being remains and that “breath of life” will never completely cease until time itself will end.

The warmth of the sunshine, the refreshment of the rain, the balm of the air all play a tremendous part in renewing the latent activity of the created world. How the underground seethes with action! Quietly, but persistently the 1. cework of roots and root system are responding to the call of Spring. Do they not feel the softening of the crusty earth and hardened soil? Do they not sense the urge to supply the plant with essentials for growth and adornment? Yes, indeed, and the “little miners” begin their ceaseless toil, unseen by man, or beast, or bird. Fresh minerals must be supplied to the sprouts and stems. Digging, ever digging, these roots continue their mining to absorb moisture and food.

Man waits eagerly for those first wee tips of green to appear through the surface of the soil. One can almost hear the crackling of the upper layer of earth as the plants begin forcing themselves upward. A tiny shoot peeps bravely thru. Daily nurture from roots below and sunshine from above give it the confidence and strength it needs to make its appearance. Ah, spring is here! The lovely early flowers carpet the woodlands.

The intricate network of the underground movement continues. Trees and shrubs show evidence of life. Tiny sealed buds break thru their shackles of wintry water-proofed scales and miniature green leaflets gently unfold, responding to the coaxing spring air which envelops them. The wee blossoms bloom into fragrant mature flowers. Man exclaimed about their beauty, but rarely considers the invisible subterranean motion which makes it possible. The nutrients as lime, phosphorous, nitrogen, potassium, and other minerals in minute quantities are constantly being taken in by energetic roots which must dig deeper, ever deeper to obtain this nourishment. By a very delicate process called “osmosis” the minerals enter the rootlets in a water suspension and are carried upward until they reach every branch and bud. The circulation gradually looses its sluggishness and it becomes a vital, life-giving stream having its origin in the roots. The lethargy of winter is over! Yes, Spring is here! Each plant is renewed by Him who made it, and each herb receives its food from the root by God “who gave it”.

Frequently we admire the stalwart posture of the oak, the graceful sway of the tender flower, the dainty poise of (cont. on page 16)
The Military Mail Bag

MEET YOUR SERVICEMEN

The following letter may give you fellows an incentive to pass on some ideas of what you would like to see in Beacon Lights. It comes from Albert Visser, from our Manhattan Church.

"I received your letter a while back, and I am sorry I couldn't answer before. Yes, I have been receiving the Beacon Lights every month. I never knew until I got in the army that this paper is as good as it is. It sure goes to show that when we have to live in a world surrounded by sin, such as you find in the service, that the Beacon Lights brings our thoughts back. There is one thing we must always remember, although the world is against us, God is with us.

It is very hard to say what to put in that section. I would strongly favor having a crossword puzzle. We would have something to figure out, and at the same time we would read the Bible. Besides, it would be educational. I think essays and letters from servicemen, change of address, and also reports from the home societies."

For those of you who would like to write to Al, his address is:

Pvt. Albert P. Visser
U.S. 560-92-529
Btry, B., 96th AAA Gun Bn.
Fort Lewis, Washington.

* * * * *

Another letter comes from Holland, Michigan, and for those of you who know the young man, I'm sure you will agree it is "typically Jerry".

During his grade school years Gerald attended four different Christian schools in various parts of the country, and thus acquired a wide field of acquaintance. He started school at Manhattan, Montana and attended there the first two years. The following year he attended Zeeland Christian school, and then went to Hull, Iowa, Christian school for one half year. He graduated from the 9th grade of the Hudsonville Christian School, where he enjoyed Miss Della Vander Vennen as a teacher for three years, where he was a member of the Chorus and Band for three years, manager of the Basket-Ball team for one year, and Vice-President of his class in his Junior year.

He enlisted in the U. S. Air Force last December and left for Lackland Field at San Antonio, Texas the 2nd of January. He arrived there just at the time when there was a tremendous influx of Air Force volunteers, so that 70,000 men were crowded into a camp ordinarily meant for approximately 35,000. While most of the men stay at Lackland Field
Gerald is stationed there permanently and would be very happy to hear from many of his acquaintances.

Here follows one of his last letters:

"Dear Folks:

Here comes a Jet again, zooming thru the air with breathless speed. I gaze up, and behold, I also am with that pilot. Over hill, over dale, over large cities, small towns, thru the clouds and over the sea I wing back toward my home, and in the city of the Dutch rush up the steps of 105 West 19th St., and cry Hi Folks. I see the family, mother in her rose dress, father in his pin striped suit, and sis in her blue jeans, bottom up and reading the paper. What a sight to behold! My thoughts turn back to when I was at Lackland Field. Nothing—out men, more men, and still more. Same clothes, same purpose in mind, all working toward the same goal, (that is for God and Country). Oh, how wonderful to be home! The peace and quiet fellowship with my own people. No more harsh words, no more drudging hours, no more dreary moments. This is to name but a few. Once more nights to myself with my girl. Sleep nice and long on a bed which is sleepable. Yes, this is home sweet home, where never will be heard a discouraging word, but only joy and happiness with my loved ones. The years will be long and dreary. Some times your eyes may be teary, But never forget this is my home, my native land, And through all its timber, clay, and burning sand, We always fight for what is right, The United States Air Force. (Written by myself, ahem, Gerald W. Kok, U.S.A.F.)

Your loving son,

‘Jerry’.

I'm just inserting this letter because it is typically 'Jerry'. Fraternally,

Bernard Kok."

We also have Jerry's address for those of you who are interested:
Pvt. Gerald W. Kok
A.F. 163-46-116
Sqdrn. 3701
Lackland Field,
San Antonio, Texas.

* * * * *

We also talked to Mrs. Miedema from our Hope Church. Maybe some of you saw and talked to Harold, when he was home a few weeks ago. Harold left for service the 31st of October, and by the time you read this, he will have spent almost five months in the service. Before entering the Armed Forces, he was
employed by Lumber Specialties. He was formerly stationed at Camp Picket, Virginia, and was in California only a week, before he was granted a furlough of 14 days, which includes his travelling time. Upon returning from his furlough, he was issued warm clothing, so he expects to be sent overseas in the near future. Why not drop him a line? His address is:

Camp Stoneman, California.

* * * * *

For those of you who are interested, the weather certainly has changed. One day the sun is shining, the next we might have rain. But you should see it now! Looks as if we are liable to have a couple of inches of snow before morning. But then that is to be expected, it's only March.

* * * * *

Watch the next issue for news of other Servicemen. This department is for our Servicemen, so how about letting us hear from you? No matter how brief you want it to be, why not let us in on where you are and how you are getting on. It doesn’t take long to drop us a line, a postal card will do.

We’ll be looking forward to receiving pictures and letters so the other will be able to share some of your experiences. If your address has been changed recently, let us know, because that is news for fellow far from home. Why not write us now? Our address is:

Beacon Light

C/O Miss Jane Schipper, 913 Adams St., S. E.
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Also any ideas for items for “your column”, such as those Al Visser sent us, will be appreciated.

Hoping to hear from you,
Jane Schipper

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**NATURE STUDY**

(cont. from page 13)

the delicate herb; and again, we must admit that so often we forget the anchorage below. Is it not the “underground life” which not only sustains but upholds the plant? Thus, God has providentially planned the plant kingdom. How significant to the beauty and welfare of the plant is its underground movement!

**Rose and Root:**

The Rose aloft in sunny air,
Beloved alike by bird and bee,
Takes for the dark Root little care
That toils below it ceaselessly.

I put my question to the flower:
“Pride of the Summer, garden queen,
Why livest thou thy little hour?”
And the Rose answered. “I am seen.”

I put my question to the Root,
“A hidden miner underfoot:
“I mine the earth content,” it said,
I know a Rose is overhead.”

—John James Pinth.
Schuiler Writes

From Iowa I received the following question:

Dear Schuiler,

My question is a problem that I think is facing many young men these days. May a Christian enlist in the armed forces of our country? I asked this question mainly in view of the fact, that the young man assumes he will be called soon and would rather be in a branch other than the Army.

Yours in Christ,
H. K.

This is not an easy question to answer. I know that the consensus of opinion among our people seems to be that under no possible circumstances should a young man enlist in the armed services of his country. But I am not satisfied with that answer. I can easily imagine circumstances where it would be the duty of all of us to join the armed services of our country. I think it one of the duties of citizenship to fight for your country when attacked.

And here we approach a great difficulty. Who shall in our days determine whether or not we are engaged in a righteous war? World politics are so involved that it is almost impossible to make up one's mind about this important matter.

And for that reason we have come to the conclusion, and rightfully so, that we wait until the government speaks and drafts us into the armed services. We have to obey the government when she comes and tells us: I have need of you! Put on the uniform and fight for your country. Then the government which is instituted by God to wage war also, becomes responsible for its wars. And we simply obey orders.

And so the consensus of opinion among us seems to be that a young man should not enlist but wait until the government calls him.

Now this calling by the government is bound by more or less constant rules and regulation. As a rule there is an age limit. And as a rule you are drafted into the army. And as a rule army life is not the most advantageous of the armed services. And so some of our young men, knowing the above rules, and seeing their 19th birthday, and, consequently, the government's letter, approaching them, choose to enlist in some other branch of the service.

And I cannot see why this practice would be wrong. Even in such a case, the young man does not choose the life of the soldier or the sailor: he is going to serve anyway, barring rejection because of physical or mental unfitness, so I do not see any difficulty here.

Closing, I would say that I cannot understand how a serious Christian would voluntarily seek army or navy life, being cut off from practically all Christian surroundings, worship, exercise of Christian fellowship, Christian home life, etc., while under our present set-up, and pre-
sent state of affairs, the government, which is in possession of all the facts, and consequently, knows all the dangers and needs for the protection of our country. determines the strength and size of the armed services. Moreover, such a young man throws himself into the into such midst of fearful temptations. If God by His providence, and through the draft of the government, throws you into such temptations, it is His doing and not yours. But if you have to serve anyway, and you rather serve in the navy than in the army, there is to my mind no objection here. It is a matter of choice, that's all.

* * * * *

I received a letter from a young man who lives rather far away. I have his permission to quote the letter, but he requests me to omit his name. But I will not quote the letter, for the simple reason that it would surely reveal the writer in the territory from which this letter is sent, and since it is my opinion that what he has done cannot be defended, although I also should say that he seems to have acted in good faith, I think that this action of mine will save him some embarrassment.

Here are his two questions:
1. Is it, in some cases, correct to vote for yourself?
2. If so, does this not militate against the rule laid down by Paul that you should esteem the brother who is with you on nomination, better than yourself?

Relative the first question, I would say that in all and every case where you are on nomination with one or more of the brethren you should not vote for yourself. I know that there are cases on record where a man did this anyhow, was afterwards found out because he had all the votes, explained himself with more or less conviction and was accepted, but such cases have never reconciled me with the practice to vote for yourself. I think it is definitely wrong in all cases. And I will give you the grounds.

Ability, capacity for an office in the church, regardless whether it is for elder, deacon or some other office in the Church of Christ, including even a function in a Christian society or club, is bound up in the gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul instructs the Church regarding the appointment of officers, that is, presbyters, elders and deacons, and you will find the list of necessary requirements in I Tim. 3 and Titus 1. And although this list appertains to the officers in God’s church, we may learn from it that also in places of leadership in other endeavors and gestures of the Church of Christ it is expected that we choose men and women that are outstanding. And all positive virtue is certainly the fruit of the grace of God which is given us by the Holy Spirit of Christ and the Word of God.

Now you are placed on a nomination with other brethren for a certain office, and this nomination is submitted to the rest of the members of the Church, or of a Christian society or Christian club. And the idea of this choice in candidates is certainly that everyone is expected to
choose the man that is best fitted for the position. In other words, you are going to vote for the man who has most of the Holy Spirit. Do you not see how impossible it is for a man to vote for himself, saying with his vote: I am the man that is outstanding above my fellows! I have the most virtue of the two! Ah me! It is a wonder anyhow if we are chosen, and we would rather crawl somewhere and cry: Not me! Not me! It is a wonder that God will use sinful man, very sinful men, for His work, without voting for yourself and thus increasing the agony a thousandfold!

And so, my dear young friend, my answer is: No, you may never vote for yourself. Let God vote for you, using your fellows, and then you will perhaps be able to do the work assigned to you. It best it is agonizing to be elevated above your fellows! The responsibility! the responsibility!

And now, so that my readers may not quest and begin to search who this young man may be, let me say that he does not live in this country.

Relative your second question, I would say that I need not answer same since I answered the first one in the negative.

* * * * *

The following question comes from a reader whose identity I do not know, but I am told that the editor knows, so that I can proceed to answer same.

Here is the question:

"How can Christian people justify themselves in the manner in which they celebrate Easter namely by dressing themselves in their new Easter togs, thus converting the house of God into a style show? Many Christians, upon leaving the service on Easter morning, gossip about one another's new garments instead of meditating on the Risen Lord."

I cannot see that this outburst requires an answer. Certainly, it needs no answer from me to condemn the converting of God's House into a style show, gossiping about one another's new garments instead of meditating on the Risen Lord. The mere statement of these things includes their condemnation.

However, I think that it is not only possible, but that it often happens that God's people come to the Easter service with a new dress and a new bonnet, and that they listen attentively to the Easter sermon, and that they go home and meditate on the Risen Lord. Why not? Do you think, my dear unknown friend, that a new dress or a new bonnet is a hindrance to the meditation of the heart?

What hinders the meditation of the heart and the worship of God is not a new dress, but the devil and our evil lusts that war in our members.

Moreover, the province of meditation is far removed from my judgment and of yours too. It takes place in the heart, and we cannot follow it there. God knows our hearts and the secrets within.

Long ago, I heard of a man who did not believe in colored shirts or neck ties. He went to church in a very severe style: his shirt was black and he wore no tie: abominable idolatries!

But this same man confessed that he
was stricken in his conscience during the sermon: he was proud of his black shirt!

Beware! Pride cometh in strange guises!

* * * * *

And here is a question from the same young friend, I surmise. It is in the same handwriting, it is on the same sheet of paper, and it deals with the same subject.

Here is the question:

"Should Christian parents give Easter candy and toys to their children at Easter-time? There are many other kinds of candy we could give to them, than just Easter eggs and chocolate Easter bunnies."

At first flush I would say: it makes little difference what kind of candy you hold before the eyes of a healthy youngster. He will gobble up the Easter rabbit of pure chocolate as gladly as your more conservative candy.

But I will add a very important amendment. You, as Christian parents, should take the Easter bunny of pure chocolate and preach a very necessary sermon to your child, and instruct it about the great abominations of Babylon which gave us Santa Claus, the Easter bunnies, Easter bonnets, etc.

But after the grave warnings, and instructions of a positive nature too, you should say: However, my darling, this candy as such is good, and you may now proceed to eat it! Every creature of God is good, taken with thanksgiving. Read and study Romans 14.

Sincerely,

SCHULIER.

Pleased to meet you ..

HOPE’S YOUNG PEOPLE’S SOCIETY

The Hope Young People’s Society meets every Sunday afternoon at 2:00 in the church auditorium.

Our meetings are opened with prayer by our President and in his absence, our vice-president, followed by fifteen minutes of singing. We then have a Bible discussion for one-half hour. At present we are studying the Book of Ruth found in the Beacon Lights. We have an advantage over the other societies by having the author of the Outlines.

We then have a ten-minute recess, during which roll is called and dues are collected. After recess we take care of our business matters and a program of two numbers is given.

We close the meeting by singing a Psalter number and one of the boys offers prayer.

A recent activity of our society is the sponsoring of an organ fund drive, in the hope of some day purchasing a much needed electronic organ to replace our old one.

In this drive the Lord has again blessed us, our people having responded liberally for this cause.

We are thankful to God that we may have this hour of Christian fellowship together, and that we will use it to His honor and glory.

Roger Kooienga, Sec’y.
A brief report on the Feb. session of Classis East

Classis East treated the Declaration of Principles in a special session held February 28 and March 1. Although, perhaps, as one of the delegates remarked early in the meeting, it would have been possible to vote very soon after the meeting convened, ample opportunity was given to the delegates and visitors to express themselves fully. And of this opportunity good use was made. But to all appearances, which is not strange either in view of the fact that the material had been at the consistories twice, it was a "packed" classis as Rev. Hoeksema defines the word in "The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches."

Of general interest and very enlightening was the speech Rev. H. Hoeksema made to the classis on Wednesday afternoon in which he explained his idea of "conditions". Rev. Hoeksema pointed out that faith is not, and cannot be a condition to salvation as such, as faith is also included in the promise which is the gift of God to us. He pointed out, however, that in the development or personal application of salvation in the consciousness of man it was possible to speak of conditions so that regeneration is a condition to calling, calling is a condition to faith, faith is a condition to justification, etc., although he also stated that it was, in his opinion, better to avoid the use of the terms in time of controversy. Rev. Hoeksema said we could also speak of conditions in God, but never could speak of conditions in the relationship of God and man, to which we all agree.

Of importance also was the preamble which was adopted as a suggestion to synod stating that the declaration was to be used as a form or basis in the organization of new congregations.

Eight votes were recorded as being opposed to the adoption of the Declarations. That does not mean that there were eight individuals present who do not care what happens to our Protestant Reformed Churches, as was suggested almost by some of those attending classis. It does not mean that they are convinced that the solution of the problem facing our churches, which is not as pressing as many would seem to feel, is not in the adoption of the Declarations. The situation in Hamilton, regrettable as it is, does not mean that there is a similar danger or threat, as the editor of Beacon Lights states in his February editorial, to all our churches. Hamilton is a local situation. And do not forget that there are efforts to have some correspondence with the Liberated Churches, either wisely or unwisely. The distinctiveness and truth which has been ours and which we have held for twenty-five years, and which we still hold in the same manner, does not simply disappear if we do not adopt the Declaration, and is not automatically retained if we do. If we did not need a declaration twenty-five years ago, and our leaders maintained that we did not, and have maintained that position consistently all through our history, we do not need one now. Rev. Ophoff

(cont. on page 24)
LIFTING THE LID

GAMBLING

(1)

The English dictionary defines gambling as "to risk something of value on an event or a possible happening; to pursue a course accompanied by a high degree of uncertainty or risk of loss". Because America is money mad, she is also the gamblingest nation that ever existed in spite of the fact that gambling is outlawed in all of the states except Nevada. Fifty million adult Americans (over half of the U. S. population) and quite a number of minors bet 30 billion dollars a year in some form of gambling. Because the average American disobeys the Word of God by wanting money without working for it; he will spend hour after hour wasting the money he has to obtain more if possible until finally he is divested of all that he has. Very seldom he will win.

The person that can afford to lose the most money, or the person with the largest banking account always wins. This fact can easily be proven by mathematics. Supposing two men lose two hundred dollars apiece in a gambling bet, who will be hit the hardest; the man with a banking account over $800,000 or the man with $100.00 in the bank? Of course the man with only $100. will be in debt, while the man with $800,000 can afford to lose two hundred dollars 4,000 times before he goes entirely broke. In other words he has 3,999 more chances to win than the man with the smallest banking account.

The masses of the common people, who indulge in gambling, are the hardest hit. Should an ordinary person happen to hit the jackpot, he generally uses this money for the next bet he will make. Gambling, drinking and smoking, is a habit which is hard to break when once formed. Elderly widows have lost their inheritance at the bingo table and men with previously good reputations have caught the horse racing fever, embezzled the boss's money, and gone off to prison. Gambling is the biggest single cause of such crimes as embezzlement; it is also the cause of broken marriages, neglected children, poverty, and sometimes suicide.

According to estimates, the gambling industry takes about 20 billion dollars a year from the American public; which is more than the total amount spent on shoes and clothing. This sum is also considerably larger than the yearly total retail expenditures for automobiles and parts plus gas and oil, or the total prices of houses bought in a year—and indeed nearly one third as much as the annual total retail spending on food and drink.

Twenty billion dollars almost equals the total sum which Uncle Sam gets out of individual income taxes at the present rate. This estimate, made by the U. S. Senate crime committee, necessarily had to be a "best guess", dealing as it did with cash transactions of a nature more to concealed than revealed by accurate
record keeping. Some of the larger gambling establishments actually haul their profits away in armored trucks. The gambling racketeers call their patrons "suckers". The state of Nevada (where gambling is legal) taxes the gamblers 2 percent of their gross profits, plus license fees, and received $1.4 million or 15.5 percent of the entire state tax revenue in 1949. This fact will give the reader an idea of the vast amounts of money which the gambling racketeers make.

Remember that the gambling industry reeks with dishonesty. There are hundreds of factories in the U. S. that do nothing but manufacture gambling devices for the gambling syndicate. Among other things they make and sell loaded dice, marked cards, electromagnets for use under dice boards, and crooked deals for faro.

Why are our Federal, State and City governments powerless to combat the gambling menace? All forms of gambling are outlawed in all of the states except Nevada. Why then do the slot machines milk about 55 million dollars a year from the citizens of the state of Illinois and the horse parlors in that state have profits over a million dollars each year? According to the Life Magazine of June 19, 1950, the effects of anti-gambling laws can be divided into five stages: first) under open gambling, so many people eventually start playing and losing that the whole social structure is threatened; second) all gambling is outlawed; third) the law proves to be unenforceable and a source of corruption; fourth) a few types are legalized, but this proves to be an unworkable compromise; fifth) all types are finally permitted and the cycle starts once more. History proves that this cycle was repeated over and over again. The reason why anti-gambling laws are ineffective are due to two things: graft and the secret organizations and lodges. Many government officials such as policemen, sheriffs, prosecuting attorneys, lawyers, judges, etc, have grown very rich due to graft paid by the gambling establishments in order to perpetuate their nefarious illegal business.

Most government officials and owners of gambling establishments are members of some lodge or secret order. Remember that all lodge members are sworn by the most dreadful and bloodcurdling oaths in order to deliver one another from all kinds of trouble whether he be right or wrong. (I refer the reader to the articles written on this subject in the Beacon Lights of April and June, 1950.) Part of one of the oaths of a well known secret order reads like this:

"Furthermore I promise and swear that I will not cheat, wrong, nor defraud a Master Mason's lodge, nor a brother of this degree, nor supplant him in any of his laudable undertakings, (including murder, gambling, cheating, adultery, crooked business deals, lawlessness, etc., S.B.) but will give him due and timely notice that he may be warned of approaching danger if in my power."

The powerful influence of these secret orders not only allows the gambling racket to operate in spite of antigambling
laws, but also discriminates which person shall be the winner of a gambling bet. This is especially true with respect to horse-racing, lotteries, bookmaking, and the stock market.

In another installment I hope to discuss some of the more common forms of gambling and how they are rigged against the general public. I have particularly in mind the forms of gambling which we as Reformed people are tempted to participate in.

We Gratefully Acknowledge . . . .

— G I F T S —

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CLASSIS EAST
(cont. from page 21)

mentioned at classis with respect to the remarks of someone that they were fighting windmills. I think that we as churches must be careful that we do not fight windmills.

On the whole, there was a good spirit at classis, good attention, and much interest displayed in the proceedings. On Wednesday evening, in spite of inclement weather, classis met in the large room in Fuller Ave.’s basement and it was crowded.

Rev. E. Knott

Strength For The Weary

Weary pilgrim, in the dawning
Seek the pages of thy Guide-book
As the sun’s sweet rays expand,
Ere you wander through the land.

Weary pilgrim, when the shadows
Lengthen out upon the way,
If thou readest from the Scripture,
Thou shalt not be led astray.

Weary pilgrim, in the evening
Ere thou liest down to rest,
Seek the word of God to cheer thee
For its comforting is best.

—Hazel H. Simon.
The Historical Section of the BOOK OF DANIEL

LESSON I.
"Fairer Of Countenance"
(Daniel 1)

The fourth of the major prophets is Daniel. It is the historical section of his book of prophecy which we purpose to present for discussion the remainder of this society year. It is well for us to ask at the outset what this name, Daniel, means. For it surely is with divine wisdom that the Almighty raises up a prophet for His people in the midst of the Captivity who bears this name. The name, Daniel, means "My God is Judge", and that is not only the name of this book, but it is also the message of the book. That Jehovah is the judge of His people comes beautifully to manifestation in His dealings with His faithful ones in all that which we read of Him in the historical section of this book of prophecy. The first of these events we consider in this lesson.

The kingdom of Judah as well as the kingdom of the ten tribes felt the sting of God's wrath and was taken into captivity. Of this the first two verses of this book remind us. And then we are told that King Nebuchadnezzar who took Judah captive also took of the sons of the nobility to train them for work in his kingdom. Four of these young men stand out because of their great faith wherewith they were blessed. The chiefest of these is Daniel through whom God had this book of prophecy written. The others were, according to their Jewish names, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah. The king gave them Assyrian names and instructed Melzar, the prince of the eunuchs, to feed them well and to give them a thorough training in the knowledge of that day.

Daniel and his three friends refused to eat the meat and to drink the wine that the king had appointed for them. That they did not consider it proper to be feasting here in Babylon while Jerusalem and the Temple were in ruins is undoubtedly true. Yet the reason Daniel gives for their refusal is that to eat would defile them. This does not mean that it was meat from unclean animals. Then they could have received the wine. But it was customary for these heathen kings to dedicate their food to their gods (see I Cor. 10:20). God plainly approves (He is their judge) of their action, for at the end of ten days they are fairer of countenance than the others.
pulse was a wholesome food made of vegetables and was not a starvation meal. Yet it is God who in the short period of ten days made such a marked distinction between them and the others who enjoyed the meat and wine. He showed His approval again at the end of three years when these were the wisest by ten times of all the wise men he had in all his wide realm.

Points for Discussion:

1. The captivity of Judah. (a) What purpose did it serve, that is, what reasons can you suggest for which God sent the Captivity? (b) Why did the good suffer with the bad? Does the fact that “God is our Judge” bring any comfort to the good who suffer with the wicked? Will we need to remember that in the day of the Anti-christ, or has this book no value for us with a view to that day? Explain why you take this stand.

2. The changes of the names. (a) Can you prove from this book whether God approved of these names being changed? (b) Consult your Bible Dictionary or commentary for the meaning of the names of these young men before they were changed. Would you say that the devil was at work here trying to hide the identity of the covenant people by taking away their beautiful covenant names? How do their original names express covenant fidelity? Should we today copy the names of the world movie stars, for example, or should we too strive to express our covenant faith by the names we choose? (c) Can you prove whether or not these four young men meekly submitted to these Babylonish names?

3. The faith of these young men. Do a little research of your own. How old do you think they were? Is there any significance that they have such strong faith at this age? Do you find such things today? Why not? The fact that there are only four who are faithful, what is the significance of that fact?

* * * * *

LESSON II.

“Nebuchadnezzar Has A Dream”
(Daniel 2:1-18)

In His good pleasure God had given to Nebuchadnezzar a strange dream which had prophetic significance. But it did not please God to have him understand the dream apart from the interpretation to be given by believing Daniel. The way in which Daniel is called in to perform the task of interpreting the dream is a story in itself. This we will treat in this lesson, leaving the interpretation to the next lesson.

Perhaps the greater share of our discussion of this passage will be determined by our interpretation of the world, “the thing is gone from me”, in verse 5. The whole question is whether Nebuchadnezzar means that the dream has gone from him so that he has forgotten it or whether he means that his decree that they tell him the dream as well as the interpretation has gone forth and that he will not retract. Personally we are convinced that the latter is the proper interpretation of this expression.
The king had a terrible dream. He felt that it had a very important meaning, and therefore he wanted above all to have this dream explained correctly. To determine whether his wise men were capable of giving the proper interpretation he demands also of them that they tell him what it was that he dreamed. Read verse 9 in this light, and you will notice that the king does not trust these wise men of his. He may have had occasion before this to question their advice and interpretation. With the great reward promised and the severe penalty threatened it would seem that at least one of the wise men would attempt to tell the king that he had such and such a dream using vague and veiled language both to escape the punishment and to earn the reward, but none do. But the strongest proof that this is the king's meaning is from the words themselves. The original, according to the commentator Keil in the light of research in the Old Persian language, can be translated, "the word (command) has been made known by me", or even, "The command is gone out from me." The word we have translated as "thing" does not then refer to his dream but to the command that they tell him the dream as its interpretation. And had the king entirely forgotten his dream, then how can we explain what we read in verse three that the dream troubled him. This must mean that, as verse 1 says, the terrible dream brought him to consciousness, and then being awake, and remembering the awful dream, he is troubled to know its meaning. Note too that in verse 16 Daniel speaks only of telling the king the interpretation, the king knows the dream, but the proof of the genuineness of the interpretation lies in the ability of one to tell also what it was.

The wise men in their desperation spoke unadvisedly to the king. His fury mounted upon these whom he already distrusted, and the execution of the wise men began. This would mean that Daniel and his three friends would also die and also all the other seed of Judah, the royal seed, perhaps, since the goodly young men of noble birth were all in this service of the king. The devil is at work here!

But Daniel in the courage of faith dares to assure the king that God will give him the dream and the interpretation. Having done so he goes home to pray. Indeed, God never puts to shame those who put their trust in Him!

**Points For Discussion:**

1. The giving of a vision to Nebuchadnezzar. Why do you suppose God gave such an important vision to an unbeliever? (Note how different this dream is from usual dreams. Nebuchadnezzar himself is nowhere in the vision. In our dreams we are always the important character). Was this grace of God to speak thus to Nebuchadnezzar? Is the Word of God always grace to those to whom it is spoken? Explain.

2. Daniel's courage. God does not give such courage without means, does He? How did He work such great confidence in Daniel? How does He do so today? Why do we not have visions
today? Do we have an infallible interpretation to guide us unto the end? Will there be men of courage in the days of the Antichrist? What then of Luke 18:8?

LESSON II.
Daniel Explains The King's Dream
(Daniel 2:19-49)

The dream that Nebuchadnezzar had consisted of two parts. In the first part he saw a strange, yea a wierd statue. The head of this image was made of gold, the breast and arms were of silver, the belly and thighs were of brass, the legs were of iron and the feet a mixture of iron and clay. In the second part of the vision he saw a stone that had been cut out of the mountain without hands which strikes this huge image at its feet of iron and clay, crushes the whole image and grinds it to powder. Well may Nebuchadnezzar be troubled in spirit at having seen such a vision in his dream. For the interpretation is as awful as the dream itself.

Daniel told the king that this image represented the world powers as they are apart from Christ. For notice that this image which the king saw was entirely distinct from the stone cut out without hands. And the stone did not at all come from any part of that image. He told the king that he was this head of gold, he in all the glory and majesty of his kingdom. After him there would come another glorious kingdom but one of less glory even as silver does not compare with gold. Then would follow other kingdoms, each time the glory becoming less while the strength (of cruelty as well as force) would increase till there would arise the last kingdom which was very weak by virtue of its two parts which never mix, namely, iron and clay. And since the whole structure rests upon these feet, the whole kingdom of the Antichrist—for this it represents—is doomed to destruction regardless of how much temporary glory it may have had. And note too that the image is in the form of a man. Man with all that he may make of this world and as he lives apart from Christ is due to complete destruction and eternal punishment. And note also that the farther one goes in tracing this image the more divided it becomes. It commences as a head, but then immediately you have breast and arms, belly and thighs to be followed by two legs and two feet with ten toes.

That stone cut out without hands is very plainly, in the first place, Christ Himself, Who was not born of the will of man (not cut cut with hands). Then it is also His Church which comes into being purely by the grace and work of God's Spirit so that no hand of man is responsible for its presence. We do not produce or bring forth the Church. God does it by His hand which the believers feel, though to the natural eye it is not seen. In the vision no human hand brings forth this rock, but it is God's hand that brings it forth. Yea, rather, Christ as to His Divine nature is not created or formed. He exists eternally. But here the idea plainly is the kingdom of heaven. For in verse 44 Daniel speaks of it as a kingdom.

The king hearing the dream retold an
Daniel and spoke of God as the God of gods. Daniel is highly exalted and requests that this three friends also be exalted.

Points for Discussion:
1. The kingdoms represented by the image. Taking the kingdom of Assyria as your starting point, since Daniel says that Nebuchadnezzar is that head of gold, what does Scripture and history teach us as to the identity of the other kingdoms? Is the kingdom of Belshazzar, see chap. 5, the same as this head of gold? Is the kingdom of the Antichrist represented by feet of iron and clay?
2. The king’s reaction to the interpretation. Does the behaviour of Nebuchadnezzar reveal him to be a believer? What fault would you find with his confession in verse 47?
3. The victory of the stone. What encouragement can we derive from the things recorded about this stone? Verse 35 presents it as a great mountain that fills the earth. Does this mean that we may expect a great numerical growth in the Church in the future? Is there any connection between the victory of the Kingdom of Heaven and the fact that it is cut out without hands? Explain.

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LESSON IX.
Daniel’s Three Friends
In The Fiery Furnace
(Daniel 3)

The dream that Nebuchadnezzar had evidently went to his head. He had been told that he was that head of gold, and now he certainly intends to live as such a head of gold. He had a huge image built in the plain of dura, and since he had been told that he was the head of gold, he made this image of gold. It was ninety feet high and nine feet wide. It was not meant to be an image of his god. It is not impossible that the image was a representation of Nebuchadnezzar himself. But note in verse 12 a clear distinction is made between this image and his gods. We believe that the image meant to represent his world-power, in fact it meant to be a symbol of his new order of things. To worship the image was to give thanks to the gods for making him so mighty and great, and was therefore a very sinful thing to do.

The king surely set himself up here as the antichrist of that day. He was ruler of a world power. And even as we read of the Antichrist in Rev. 13 that the Antichrist commands that an image be made and that all those who do not worship it must be put to death, so this king demands of men that they worship him. Daniel had told him that God had given him dominion over all men. This meant that he had the right to rule all these whom God put under him, but it does not mean that he may demand them to worship him.

Daniel’s three friends refuse, and it surely appears as though they are the only ones who dare to refuse. To refuse meant, in the king’s eyes, disloyalty to him and his kingdom. That is why all these princes from the various provinces, governors, judges, sheriffs, in fact all
who held office were required to come here at this time and show by their worship their loyalty to this evil king. Was he already thinking of the kingdom of silver that came after him, or even possibly of that stone that would crush the whole image? But though a terrible death is threatened them, the three friends refuse and even tell the king that they will not do otherwise even though he would give them another opportunity to bow down to the idol. They were sure that if it pleased God He could save them, and they would not disobey Him even if He was not pleased to deliver them from this death. Therefore they need not speak with caution and leave the impression with the king that they might do otherwise. They are not filled with worries and cares as they speak.

The king has them cast into the fire which had been made seven times hotter. But to the astonishment of all they are not burned. The only things that burn are the ropes which bind them, and now they are free to walk in the midst of the fire. The Angel of the Lord appears there with them to save them. And when the king has them called out of the fire, the smell of the smoke is not even upon them, their hair is not singed, their clothes were not scorched. Truly, anywhere with Jesus we can safely go. Into the furnace they went with Jesus, the Angel of the Lord. Even the king saw Him. And what a beautiful commentary on the days which lie before us. We will be persecuted without measure, but when God calls us to come out of this furnace into His heavenly house, no smell of the battle will be upon us, our robes of righteousness will be spotless and our bodies shall be glorious.

**Points for Discussion:**

1. Daniel’s absence. How do you explain that Daniel was not here? Does his absence accentuate at all the courage and faith of these three friends? Or would it not have made it easier for them had he been there to encourage them? Do you suppose that it was for Daniel’s sake that the king intended to give them another opportunity? And was Daniel perhaps by the king when these men were called in for their refusal?

2. The courage of these young men. Did the vision of the preceding chapter and its meaning have anything to do with their courage? In other words, could we have expected such great faith without this word of encouragement by God?

3. Christ in the furnace. What conclusions can we draw from the appearance of Christ in the furnace with the young men? Besides showing concern for them, does it also show that when the Church is persecuted it is also persecuting Christ? To all spiritual implications did Nebuchadnezzar the antichrist of that day say “Away with The Christ” when he put His faithful saints in the furnace? What do these things teach us for the future? Will we see Christ in any way with His Church in the tribulation that is in the future for His Church? Explain.
THE CARDINAL
By Henry Morton Robinson
Published by Simon & Schuster, N. Y.

The Cardinal, is the story of an American priest who becomes, in our times, a Prince of the Roman Catholic Church. From a lowly beginning this priest, Stephen Termogle, climbs the ecclesiastical ladder until he has reached the status of 'Cardinal'. The book covers a period of approximately 25 years. Beginning in the immediate pre-World War I era the author covers a period of history terminating in the European upheaval that was the signaling of World War II.

The story begins with the home-coming of Stephen Termogle from the American College in Rome. His first assignment is as an assistant priest at the Parish of St. Margarets, in Malden, close to his home town of Boston. While here he translates a work sent to him by one of his former teachers in Rome. When seeking to have this published he incurs the wrath of Laurance Cardinal Glennon, Archbishop of Boston. As a result he is sent to the Parish of St. Peter in Stonebury, New Hampshire.

At Stonebury Stephen inherits a parish loaded with debt and no income. At the time of his arrival, St. Peters in charge of Rev. Ned Halley whom the Archbishop has described as 'the meekest spirit and poorest administrator in the whole Archdiocese of Boston'. Soon after his arrival the Rev. Ned Halley dies and Stephen becomes pastor of St. Peters. Through the formation of a lumbering project he soon has the Parish free of debt and money in the bank. Because of his thoroughly successful administration at Stonebury, Stephen Termogle is selected as Secretary to Laurance Cardinal Glennon Archbishop whose wrath he had earlier aroused.

Not too long after his promotion he is assigned to the task of performing liaison service to the Vatican Secretariat of State. It is while working at the Vatican that Stephen falls in love. Realizing his vows of celibacy do not permit him to marry he retreats to a monastery and there somewhat overcomes his feelings and love for a woman whom he never really forgets.

After serving brilliantly in the Vatican Stephen is again sent to the States as assistant to the Apostolic Delegate to the United States. Soon after this he is made Bishop and the Archbishop of Hartfield. When he is Archbishop he takes a trip to Rome for a final meeting with the Pope who is ill and is not expected to live.

Upon arrival in Rome Stephen finds out that he has been made a Cardinal. Soon after his appointment Stephen is
able to vote for a new Pope for Pius XI has passed away and the vacancy must be filled. Soon after this the story ends with Cardinal Stephen Termogle on the boat crossing the Atlantic bound for America.

Many are the characters in this novel that we have not mentioned. Neither time nor space permits us to delve too deeply into the events of the book. Nor can we analyze each personality. However as far as the contents of the book are concerned much more can be said than we would possibly be able to write in this Book Review.

The author is and always has been a Roman Catholic. Therefore it is not surprising when the Roman Catholic church is painted a brighter hue than it ever actually has been or can possibly hope to be. It is not our desire to enter into a lengthy epistle concerning the error of Roman Catholicism nor do we attempt to present ourselves as judges of the Roman Catholic church. It will suffice to say that we stand opposed to Roman Catholicism on grounds that are familiar to all of us. The basic, fundamental error that man can be a mediator for fellow man and relieve him of the guilt of his sin is openly proclaimed in all the pages of the book. However erroneous this may be it is still one of the cardinal doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Many more are the fallacies of the Roman church as we know it that are never mentioned. Gambling, desecration of the Sabbath, evil entertainment and many more things that are abominable in the eyes of God are never touched upon. While I would hesitate to say that 'The Cardinal' is propaganda for the Catholic church it certainly is not propaganda against the church. It is a purely fictional tale, a story to be read as a narrative woven by a thoroughly modern watcher of our world, who evidently believes—in spite of evils fearfully apparent—that faith, hope, love and compassion animate men everywhere. In this respect the author reveals himself as an individual who will not subscribe to the fact of man's total depravity.

In spite of its incorrect presentation of the Roman Catholic Church I think the novel may be read to good advantage. Personally I enjoyed it immensely more than so many of the weak-kneed religious publications that are so prevalent today. I speak especially of such book as 'The Big Fisherman' written by the late Lloyd Douglas. If you have the time I would certainly not hesitate to read the book. Despite its being rather lengthy, 656 pages, you will find the book interesting and well written. Henry Morton Robinson is no mean author. In conclusion we may say that the author certainly has brought to light the paramount fact that the Roman Catholic Church is the largest tax free corporation in the world. This he has probably done unwittingly.
Tuesday — April 24

Theme—“Alive unto Christ”. Rom. 6:11

A musical number by—Gise Van Baren

Refreshments.

Watch future announcements for time and place.
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Church Auditorium
Thursday Evening, April 5
8 o'clock

— 0 —

Last year many of our people enjoyed the Societies' rendition of "The Holy City"; and it is by popular request that it is being repeated this year. Last year we had a fine crowd but we would like to see an even bigger one this year.

— 0 —

Don't Miss This Evening Of Inspiring Sacred Music!