BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

THE MAY ISSUE FOR 1951
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READ OPEN FORUM! AND REPLY?

ON THE COVER — on this month’s cover we have a picture of the Grand Teton mountain in northern Wyoming, taken across Jenny Lake. This picture shows the highest of the 22 magnificent peaks in the Grand Teton Range. These mountains gain their distinction from the fact that they rise practically straight up from the rather flat Jackson Hole Country. This peak is located 34 miles south of Yellowstone National Park, a distance of about 190 miles south of our Manhattan Church.
"And when he had spoken all these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight."—Acts 1:9.

Lenten weeks and Easter are now past. But Christ’s resurrection was not the last of His life on this earth. One great event was yet to come.

This event was anticipated by Christ for many years and now was near at hand. He mentioned it many times in His teachings before His death, especially to His disciples. On one occasion Christ said to them, “Yet a little while I am with you, and then I go unto Him that sent me.”

Yes, this coming event was the ascension, His going up to sit at the right hand of our Father which is in Heaven. Christ must have eagerly anticipated this great day. When finally he could go from this sinful world and be in a place where there is no pain, no hatred, no sin at all. This perfect man, born into this world for our sake, as humbly as the poorest; suffered, died, and rose again.

He, who had done all this for His people’s sake, so that they might not suffer eternally, after thirty-three years on this earth was to go to His Father again! This surely was longed for by our Savior!

Only forty days to finish his work on this earth. What did He do during these days? We read that he appeared to the disciples and others often enough so that there was no doubt that this was the Jesus that had been crucified. The nail prints could be seen and felt in His hands and feet. He even ate in the presence of the disciples to convince them that He was no mere “ghost” or “spirit”.

Yet He was different; there was no question about it. He did not stay with His disciples as He did before His death. He would appear to them; talk with them and teach them of things pertaining to the kingdom of God; and then disappear again, as at the time the disciples were gathered together, with the doors of the room shut, when suddenly Christ stood in their midst.

Yes, of Jesus’ resurrection the disciples were sure. It was the same Jesus they
had known, but He was changed. His body had been exalted; His humiliation was over. The relation between Jesus and earthly things as well as His fellowship with them were radically different from His life before His death.

In that period between the resurrection and the ascension the disciples must have constantly expected to see their Lord again. However on the fortieth day He led them out to the Mount of Olives. His last appearance to them on this earth was at hand.

Was this then the last appearance of Christ on this earth? Bodily, yes; but Christ in this last appearance to the disciples told them that they would receive power when the Spirit was to come unto them. Then they must be witnesses of Christ “unto the uttermost part of the earth”.

“And when he had said these things, as they were looking, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven.” Acts 1:9, 10, 11.

Maybe Jesus just “disappeared” from them again? Oh, no! what they had seen and heard here on the mountain was enough for them to know that this time He had gone to heaven! But wouldn’t He ever be with them again to teach and preach to them? Not bodily as before, but He was going to send the “Spirit soon, and the Spirit would guide them. In fact this same Spirit of Christ is yet with us today, even closer than Jesus was before His death to the disciples. That is insomuch as it never leaves us.

We are not always conscious of this nearness which never fails us. Even if at times we wander as a lost sheep, He does not forget us; He does not fail to bring us back. If, then, we are one of His elect, we also will experience that Christ, the ascended Lord, is ever present with us.

* * *

So then, we see that Ascension Day is one of the links in the chain of our salvation; Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, and Pentecost. Who of us would forget Christmas? Even Good Friday gains recognition, and Easter vies with Christmas in popularity. But who bothers with Ascension Day or Pentecost? In the church also the interest waxes warm at the following of these events. But we need a special note on our memorandum pad to remind us of Ascension Day.

Why should that be? Is not the Ascension just as important as any of the other days? For without His ascent into heaven there could be no outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, no more than there could be an Ascension without the resurrection from the grave. Nor could there be a resurrection unless it was preceded by the atoning death of the cross, no more than there could be a cross unless the Son of God came into the like-
ess of our sinful flesh, born of the virgin.

Or is it because historical facts, which always have a special appeal to us, are somewhat lacking at the last two occasions? It is true that the story of Christ's ascent to heaven is very brief. Yet, if we stop to think of it, do we have so many facts connected with Christ's birth that Christmas should take such a predominant place in our churches? And, even so, what do we have left if we have nothing but historical facts? What spiritual value lies in a mere story, if we lose ourselves in that? A story cannot fill our hearts with praises any more than it can save us. Christ's life must mean something real to us. Then we will know that the ascension and its consequences are the completion of His redemptive work for His people.

What is Christ doing for us, His people, now in preparing a place for us? Was he not finished after the resurrection and ascension to glory? No; His work still goes on. Our resurrected Lord has gone into heaven, where He now dwells and rules all things; where He blesses us with all spiritual and eternal blessings in the spirit, and whence we expect Him in that day to change our bodies into the likeness of His glorious body. He is preparing a place for us and some day will take us unto Himself in a perfect and eternal reunion in glory.

Oh, blessed Ascension, that helped to make this possible!
Soldiers - of Christ

Once again the young men of our country are being called into the armed forces, and the youth of the church are faced with the prospect of participation in war. Accordingly the problem arises of the Christian’s attitude toward war and participation in it.

The Korean situation has fluctuated continually. At times it has seemed that the Communist forces would definitely gain the victory; at other times the United Nations troops have made great advances. Although the prospect has completely reversed itself several times, one point has emerged with great clarity: Korea is but a part of a larger picture. Even though the United Nations win the battle of Korea there are still the hordes of Chinese Communists to contend with, and eventually the mustached figure in the Kremlin with his fingers on most of Europe and Asia. Universal military training is being seriously considered, and the conclusion seems fairly certain that all of our boys of military age will see service.

And thus we ask, can we as Christians participate in a war which is waged by ungodly men for ungodly purposes? Although it is possible that a war may be carried on for legitimate reasons such as self-protection, we have no guarantee that the present “war” is a righteous one. In view of this fact some maintain that the Christian youth should not enlist, but should wait until he is drafted, in this manner avoiding all responsibility for the war and placing it directly on the head of the government.

However, this viewpoint appears to be based on the false assumption that, whereas the enlistee serves his country voluntarily and is therefore responsible for his action, the draftee serves involuntarily and therefore is not responsible for his action. This is clearly not true, for the response to the command to serve is as much an act of the will as the response to the invitation to serve. Neither may the draftee excuse his action on the plea that he must obey his government, for governments are to be obeyed only when they do not demand actions contrary to the expressed will of God. So we see that, when an enlistee chooses between serving in the armed forces and working in a camp for conscientious objectors, both must be assured in their consciences before God that their choice is the right one; and both must assume full responsibility for any actions they perform while serving in that capacity.

But the objection may be raised that, unless some form of Common Grace is operating in the hearts of the leaders of the war, it is thoroughly unrighteous, and the Christian soldier must become a
part of this unholy enterprise. The only solution, then, would be to adopt the attitude of the conscientious objectors.

This objection, however, is the result of a too hasty generalization. A war is not a thing existing in itself, imparting its characteristics to all who participate therein; but it is simply the sum total of the actions of all the men, Congressmen and soldiers alike, who have anything to do with it. Thus it is evident that the motives of a war may be as numerous and varied as the people who take part in it. We should not ask whether its participants are acting from righteous or unrighteous motives.

Thus we find a more particular solution to our problem. It is incorrect to say that, since the men in the government who are responsible for the declaration of war were prompted by sinful motives, the war itself is accordingly corrupt and every G. I. Joe who takes part in the war participates in its corruption. Rather the question must be asked, what are the particular motives of G.I. Joe himself? It is only on this basis that judgment may be passed on his conduct. Congress may declare war for the selfish purpose of gaining new lands for the United States, but unless Joe agrees with those motives, he does not partake of that corruption. The Brigadier General may order the battle because of the selfish desire for personal glory or hatred of the enemy; but if Joe fights from the motive of self-preservation or the protection of his loved ones at home, his conscience is clear. This remarkable diversity of personal motives is possible simply because war itself is such a varied and complex activity.

Moreover, this viewpoint poses important problems for the Christian soldiers and sailors. If every man who takes part in the war effort, from the gold-braided brass in Washington to the mud-spattered inhabitant of a foxhole, is responsible for his own actions, the Christian serviceman must take special care to keep his motives pure. When, for example, he fires a machine gun into a shouting group of attackers, the temptation to think murderous thoughts is almost overwhelming. This is especially true because the whole indoctrination program of the armed forces aims at this central goal: to instill in the hearts of every boy on the firing line such an all-consuming zeal for his country and a burning hatred of the enemy that he will be driven to contribute his utmost to the cause. The danger is at once apparent.

Consequently, the Christian must constantly look to God for guidance, prayerfully beseeching strength from above in order to serve his country in the fear of the Lord, even though all his companions by their example tempt him to sin. And, don't forget, this is more than a subject for the prayers of the soldier or sailor; this is something which must find a place in the petitions of all those who remain at home, so that they too will pray for strength for the Christian serviceman. In this manner, then, the Church at home and the Church on the battlefield will remain united . . . before the throne of grace.

—R. F.
Who are you . . Christian?

It is becoming more and more obvious in our times that there is a powerful spirit pervading every sphere of life seeking to obliterate all social, political and religious distinction and unify the world. The universal brotherhood of man is emphasized. The cry is unto a world-wide amalgamation of all races and churches for the common purpose of serving the good of mankind. It is hardly a matter of choice any more but is rapidly becoming mandatory that all shall conform to a certain pattern.

Let it be understood that our criticism is not of the idea of unification as such. The idea is Biblical for we, as Christians, are “one in Christ”. Nor do we object to conforming to a pattern provided that pattern be “the image of the Son of God unto which we have been predestinated”. And, it would be evil for us to condemn all forms of amalgamation for the Lord would have us seek one another on the basis of righteousness and in the way of truth. This latter is utterly impossible in a world of sinful men who wholly disregard the antithetical distinction which God Himself has sovereignly placed in the world through the working of His eternal decree of election and reprobation and, therefore, we warn against any external and superficial union of individuals or groups and herald forth this truth: “The identity of the true Christian is manifest not in isolationism but in spiritual distinctiveness”.

Hence, the question “Who are you?”

Your distinctiveness may be ascertained by a two-fold Scriptural standard which is really the negative and positive side of the believers’ one calling “to be a separate people unto God”. The first aspect of this calling we characterize under the caption:

“Be not conformed to this world!”

The world that is here meant is the contrast to the world of God’s love which is also spoken of in Scripture. It is the whole order of things that hates Christ (John 15:18); whose princes crucified Him (I Cor. 2:8); that lies in the wicked one (I John 5:10); whose members are described as “men of the world which have their portion in this life (Ps. 17:11); which is under the dominion of Satan, its prince (John 16:11) for he regulates its politics and policies as he is ‘its god’ (II Cor. 4:4), and, therefore also directs its religion. It is the world which saints are told “not to love” (I John 2:15) and for which Jesus “did not pray” (John 17:9). This world is the embodiment of Satan’s spirit.

Be not conformed to it!
This is the first phase of Christian distinctiveness. This means that are we truly Christian we are not to allow the evil example of those surrounding us in that world to mar or modify the completeness of our devotion to God and His service. We must not be like the unregenerate in heart and in life. Our lives may not be animated by the spirit that breathes in that world.

To be sure this does not mean that the Christian is to deny himself all contact with the subjects of this world nor that he must impose upon himself any restraints which are not required by Scripture in order to make himself as unlike this world as possible. It is true that our calling is to avoid any sinful compliance with the world, but in doing so we must carefully guard against a vain glory that arises from self-righteousness. We must be righteous but not 'self-righteous'. We may not follow the multitude to do evil nor fashion ourselves after the traditions, customs and whims of men. We must determine to be guided in all our living by the Word of God having our "senses exercised to know both good and evil" (Heb. 5:14). We must guard against the evil of Epicureanism (unrestrained indulgence in the world) but also against monasticism (isolated physically so our light cannot be seen). Rather we must live in this world a life of holiness being animated in all that we do by the Spirit of God.

This non-conformity does not require the Christian to refuse a moderate use of the comforts and conveniences of life as some would maintain. Good and evil are found in things. The Christian life becomes overly legalistic. All things are catalogued and branded "touch" and "touch not". There is certainly a great need in true Christian living that we watch against allowing lawful things to become harmful to us by their abuse. We must remember that "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thankfulness" (1 Tim. 4:4). Use all things unto edification!

Nor does this non-conformity imply that the Christian may become slothful and careless in respect to the things of his present environment and business in this world. Rather he is to discharge his duties and conduct himself according to the rule of faith and the principles of the Word of God in whatever station God providentially places him, whether it be a husband or wife, parent or child, youth or infant, master or servant, magistrate or civilian. He must yield obedience as unto God so that he may give a good account of his stewardship. Thus the Christian without patterning the world which is poor and wicked in its stewardship manages all his temporal affairs faithfully and diligently.

And so the Christians, living in the world but not of it, refuse to be allured by the smiles of unbelievers nor intimidated by their frowns. They are not moved by their opinions and criticisms to adopt or pattern their standards. Rather they consider the religion of the world a delusion; they regard its principles as corrupt; they deem its aspir-
Ethics

A senator made an important statement which I wish to quote: "Much of the evil of the world is beyond the reach of the law... As our study of the RFC progressed we were confronted more and more with problems of ethical conduct... How do we deal with those who, under the guise of friendship, accept the favors which offend the spirit of the law, but do not violate its letter?

"What of the men outside Government who suborn those inside it? They are careful to see that they do not do anything that can be construed as illegal. They operate through lawyers—men who are known as clever lawyers, a cleverness which is like the instinct of the rat that knows how to get the bait without getting caught. Many businessmen employ these knavish lawyers to circumvent the law and enrich themselves at Government expense."

"Who is more at fault, the bribed or the bribers? The bribed have been false to their oaths and betrayers of their trust. But they are often relatively simple men who weaken before the temptations held out to them by the unscrupulous. Who are the bribers? They are often men who walk the earth, lordly and secure, members of good families, respected figures... Is it too much to ask of them that they behave with simple honesty—with that honesty which looks, not to the letter of the law, but to its spirit?

The essence of what we have been studying in our committee is but a reflection of what may have been seen in many phases of our national life. The Government and its activities are, in a very real sense, a mirror of our national life... Our colleges, under extreme pressure from the alumni, have become so intent upon winning football and basketball games that they use any means to gain their ends. They hire players who are not bona fide students. They corrupt not only the hired players but also the entire student body, who learn from their elders the cynical, immoral doctrine that one must win at all costs. A by-product of this doctrine led naturally to betting and to the shocking episode of the widespread bribery of basketball players in New York.

"The vast majority of great civilizations have been destroyed, not as a result of external aggression, but as a consequence of domestic corruption... Democracy is more likely to be destroyed by the perversion of, or abandonment of, its true moral principles than by the armed attack from Russia. The evil and
The mischievous materialism of the Communists is a greater danger to us than their guns.

“One of the most disturbing aspects of this problem of moral conduct is the revelation that among so many influential people formality has become identical with legality. We are certainly in a tragic plight if the accepted standard by which we measure the integrity of a man in public life is that he keep within the letter of the law...”

“What seems to be new about these scandals is the moral blindness of callousness which allows those in responsible positions to accept the practices which the facts reveal. It is bad enough for us to have corruption in our midst, but it is worse if it is to be condoned.

“Too many people in our nation do not believe anything with conviction. They question the concepts of God or of man, indiscriminately. The values of life which were clear to the Pilgrims and the Founding Fathers have become dim and fuzzy in outline.” (Time, April 9)

This speech of Senator Fulbright of Arkansas may seem only for the gangsters and corrupt politicians. But it is not, and I feel it may well be a warning to us as well. To us as Christian businessmen and American citizens there is always the serious calling to do all things honestly as before the face of God.

It is not true that we always do. Frankness and confession of evil is our first step toward letting our light shine. We face Government controls and regulations in our day. We face situations in which we are apt to choose the course of actions which nets us the greatest advantage, in which we can make the most money—instead of taking the path of strict honesty in the service of God.

It is our calling in this evil world not to be contaminated in any way with the godless mammon, with Babylon's corrupt wealth, gained by immorality in its economic as well as in its social life. “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not her plagues.” Rev. 18:4.

Only such a life, which, by the grace of God, seeks His strength from day to day to withstand the evils of seeking selfish profit and advantage primarily, will be able to withstand the demands to unite with the world in its schemes for material advancement at the expense of individual godliness and honesty.

CHRISTIAN LIVING
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A daughter of the church sends me the following question:

"I have been asked by Sgt. N. N., of our N. church to forward you the following question: 'Is it right for a Prot. Ref. serviceman to partake of communion outside of the True church, such as Army Chapels? If not, why not?'

"Would it be too much to ask if this question be answered in our next Beacon Lights edition?"

"Thank you. Very truly yours,“

N. N.”

I would have been very pleased to answer this question for the April issue of our Beacon Lights, but, in the first place, the question came too late, and, secondly, I had taken already four times as much space as was originally allotted to me in the Schuiler column. You will remember that I answered four questions the last time.

And so I will answer now.

No, it is not right for a serviceman to partake of the Lord’s Supper outside of the True church, and that for the reason that such a serviceman would fail to sit at the table with the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord spreads His table only within the bounds of the True church.

You will remember that the commission to baptize and to set the table of communion was given to the true church only. See: Matth. 28:19; and I Cor. 11:23-29. There are many other texts I could enumerate but these two show sufficiently that the commission to administer the Holy Sacraments was given to the church.

And Army Chapels, Salvation Army gatherings, and numerous other groups and sects are certainly not the True Church.

However, if the serviceman finds himself in camp near to a church which, although not Protestant Reformed, still bears the marks of the True Church, such as the Christian Reformed, Reformed, Presbyterian, etc., I would advise him to go there and not only listen to their sermons and worship with them, but also partake of the Lord’s Supper if they would allow him to do so.

I firmly believe that our Protestant Reformed Churches are the purest manifestation of the True Church, that is, the Body of Christ, and it is our solemn duty to join and abide with the purest manifestation of that Body, but this does not mean that every other church is the false church. Although they do not manifest the true marks of the church as purely as we do, it is my conviction that Christ Jesus the Lord still dwells in their midst, speaks His Word to them, gathers with them at His table and has His little ones baptized in the Triune Name.

Our Covenant Jehovah sent His servant Jonah to Israel. Neither was that prophet the only one.

But if our servicemen find themselves
far from any manifestation of the true church of Christ, they need not worry about the question: How about my duty to proclaim the death of my Lord in the Holy Supper? And for the simple reason that Jesus Christ, the real King of this world has himself placed you in that position, and He will gather with you alone, He will come in unto you and sup with you, and you with him.

Sincerely,
SCHULIER.

* * * * * *

I received the following letter from a brother minister in our churches:

Dear brother Schuiler:

"Being interested in the C.L.A., and a regular reader of the Christian Labor Herald, I was much interested in your reply to the question whether we should belong to that organization. Now I admire the pluck of these Christian brethren who endure many sufferings and much reproach because they want to live according to their principles, also in the labor relationships. While many of their pastors wink at the C.I.O. & A.F.L., and their consistories tolerate (encourage?) membership in a worldly organization, these brethren have the courage to stand for their convictions, and that in the name of Christ. You do not care to call their organization unchristian, for for the most part their institution is sound.

"I wholly agree with you that the strike clause is a blotch upon their organization. The fact is, however, I'm quite sure, that the C.L.A. has never yet called a strike. (You may check on that if you please.) Their practice is better than their theory in this respect. But even so, the strike clause is rebellian, and certainly not a Christian method of bargaining.

"But a few questions:

"1. Could not a Prot. Ref. man be a member of the C.L.A. with a clear conscience by registering his protest against the 'strike clause' and resolving to work for its restriction? Or,

"2. Must he and his Prot. Ref. brethren form a Christian labor organization without a strike clause? Or,

"3. Should he simply be a member of no union? (implying there is no need for labor to organize.)

A Fellow Minister."

I would answer as follows:

ad. 1. No, a Prot. Ref. man could certainly not do as you suggest in your first question. And I will try and prove to you and others why not. When a man becomes a member of the C.L.A. he expresses with his membership ipso facto that he agrees with the whole constitution. It makes no difference whether he signs the constitution or not. His knock at the door of any organization, and his admittance and reception to membership, includes that he subscribes to the constitution as is. Neither does it make any difference when he makes a mental, silent reservation. That last consideration would amount to hypocrisy. Moreover, the principle expressed under question 1 smacks of Jesuitism. You know their maxim: "The end justifies the means". See: Schaff-Herzog's Rel. Enc., page 1167, col. 1, where this maxim is discussed. It
is easy to fall into this error and although our people gladly subscribe to a condemnation of this maxim in abstracto, it is not so easy to escape practical application of the same.

Suppose a Prot. Ref. man would say in his heart: I love the C.L.A. They are my brethren and they wage a righteous war of faith against the wicked employers. But that strike clause is an ugly blot on their otherwise pure battle-escutcheon. I know what I will do. I will join them and bear the spotted escutcheon, but will then work from the inside to erase such defilement, and God will bless me, for I have a righteous object in view.

And yet, it would be pure Jesuitism, and to be condemned.

ad 2. Principally, yes. And although I think that many would laugh at this idea, I still would think that such endeavour would have God’s approval. We are bidden to keep our apparel unspotted from the world. And you know and I know that the strike with all it implies is of the world worldly, and therefore contraband for the Christian.

ad 3. Until we have a Prot. Ref. Union or until the C.L.A. cancels the strike clause, we can do nothing but abide alone and wage our fight for righteousness in the industrial world alone. But I would not say that there is no need for labor to organize (I mean, of course, Christian labor). I think it a fine idea that the hosts of Jehovah go into battle together against the wicked, and tell them to repent of their evils. That is also Scriptural. Remember the hosts of God under David, and the martial language of many of Paul’s admonitions.

And, thank you for your interesting questions.

Sincerely,

SCHUILER.

* * * * * *

Dear “Curious”:

I received your letter and question, but I understand that it is contrary to the accepted rules of the powers that be to accept questions that are anonymous. Evidently, it is all that we can swallow when one end of the matter is in the dark (SCHUILER); and to allow a question mark at both ends would make the entire reading public of Beacon Lights dizzy.

If you are a smart man or woman, boy or girl, I know what you are thinking right now. It is this: Well, my dear SCHUILER, if you can hide your face, why can’t I?

If you did think that, I would kindly refer you to my boss. I assure you that it is not my doing. But that’s the way it is.

So, my dear “Curious”, whoever you may be, let me know your name, and I will answer your question. It is such a nice question too. I will let you in on a secret: I almost answered it, and was going to hide under that much abused “exception”.

Hoping to hear from you, I am

Yours sincerely,

SCHUILER.
The editorial by brother Al Heemstra, in the April issue of Beacon Lights about the so-called need for a Hymn-book to round out our singing culture, I cannot let go unchallenged.

We as living members of the body of Christ must sing, not only because God demands such of us but also because it is the desire of our heart to do so, to His praise and His glory. Our singing has a tremendous influence, many a false doctrine has taken root and has been further sung into the church. We do well to always remember this, for hymns are being introduced in almost all churches.

Now the brother proposes that we should have a Hymn-book; the question arises, can we as churches sing hymns in public worship? Is it wrong in this respect to follow the crowd? In answer to this, I would say first of all that the singing of hymns as such is not to be condemned provided the hymns sung are truly a praise to God. We must be very careful not to introduce them in our worship, for there are many so-called hymns today which are nothing less than blasphemous to God, in fact, that is true of most hymns today. To sing such songs is of course always wrong, not only in public worship but also at home and in school. Against this growing evil we should ever be on our guard for it is God dishonoring and a detriment to the spiritual welfare of the church. But that hymns may be sung applies only to those which are thoroughly sound. They may not give expression to an untruth nor to half of the truth, or even to the whole truth and then in a vague and indefinite way so that they allow a two-fold interpretation, as do most of the hymns of our day. Instead, they must express the whole truth of God and that also very plainly and definitely, so that they leave the impression with no one that God is a "goodie, goodie god", if I may be allowed the expression, or that God is gracious but not righteous, merciful but not just.

Also the one-sided emphasis on what man may do and must do in order to be saved without mention of the truth that the sinner can do nothing unless God first performs the wonder of His grace upon him is characteristic of most collections of hymns in distinction from the beautiful and mighty Psalms.

I am strongly opposed to hymn singing in public worship. I would never recommend the singing of hymns in our Protestant Reformed Churches. For first, it would be very difficult to obtain suitable hymns; in spite of the many hymns today there are but few that are really praises to God. But even if it were possible to obtain suitable hymns, it would still be dangerous to sing them in public worship. For history simply proves that whenever the church commences to sing hymns, the Psalms go to the background. After they have a few hymns they want more, and after they have more, they want a still greater number till finally the hymns take the place of the Psalms entirely. This is seen in many so-called
Reformed Churches today. Hymn singing is the death-blow to the singing of the Psalms which were sung with joy and delight by the "Reformed" in the past and still are dear to the hearts of many today.

By introducing hymns, we leave the impression that our singing in public worship is a small thing, that new songs may be introduced and old ones replaced whenever we desire. The result will be that should a greater element in our churches also apostatize, which we may also expect as we go further into the latter days, it would be quite easy for that element to gain the upper hand and introduce the songs which we today condemn. Therefore, it would be better to introduce nothing new, but stay with the beautiful Psalms the people of God have sung all through the ages.

However, to introduce hymns is also unnecessary. For God has provided us with the Psalms and in these Psalms we have a book of adequate songs which are sufficient for any and all occasions. True, they often speak the language of the Old Dispensation but when they are understood, they provide us with songs of real praise to God for every occasion of joy or of sorrow, even though it be Christmas or Easter and on all occasions and circumstances allow us to give full expression to what dwells in our heart.

We are not in need of a Hymn book, for that reason I would say in general that the clamor for hymns is a sign of the times. If the Psalms are truly adequate, then either of two things must be true, those who clamor for hymns are not fully acquainted with and do not understand the Psalms or they do understand them but are enemies of their contents. I am convinced that there are a few that do not rightly understand the Psalms but that most of those who clamor for hymns really hate the beautiful Psalms, because of the truth of God's word they express.

During periods of decline and spiritual drowsiness, the Psalms are always pushed to the background while hymns come more to the foreground. The reason for this is plain. When the church loses its vitality, it becomes superficial. In such times of spiritual drowsiness and laziness the church goes after the sensational, the formally beautiful, that which is pleasing to the ear and eyes. In this connection, I would also mention the choir, which all tend to spiritual decline. In such times, it cannot sing the Psalms for the simple reason that they condemn the church. For Psalms also emphasize God's holiness and righteousness, His justice and majesty. But hymns on the other hand, always emphasize God's love, mercy and grace at the expense of justice.

Therefore, in conclusion, I would say, let us hold fast to the standard that our Reformed fathers have proved. For this one-sided presentation of the matter of salvation which the collection of most hymns presents, also predominates in modern, so-called evangelical preaching. You see they go hand in hand, and if we should give way to the modern clamor for hymns, we may also later expect to do away with our present form of wor-
BEACON LIGHTS FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

ship, and the beautiful confessions we now have and cherish. For they do not harmonize, one contradicts the other. With a view to our present Psalter I would say, let us hold fast that which we have in order that no one take our crown. Then in the measure that we understand the Psalms and walk in the light, we will have no need for a Hymn-book in our churches.

Mr. William Kamps
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

In the Beacon Lights of April you are clamoring for hymns in the church.

I agree that there are many nice hymns which could be sung in church, but who is going to say which hymns may and which hymns may not be sung? This is also a very dangerous procedure, because once you start with good hymns then gradually the church will sing others. There is no easier way for the powers of darkness to introduce a false doctrine into the church than thru the songs, people will sing a song because it has a beautiful tune, regardless how wicked the words.

I think if the church sings songs besides the Psalms, those songs must come out of her own bosom. That is where the Psalms came from. There are many passages both in the Old and New Testament that could be set to music, think of some cantatas which take their words directly from Scripture.

Why not organize a society and see what we can do? Maybe we can at least give some assistance to the committee appointed by Synod for revising the Psalter.

But let us never forget that the Psalms can never be replaced, they hold a very distinctive place in the church worship. Read the article in The Standard Bearer, Volume 20, page 16.

There are no hymns existing today which can equal the Psalms in voicing the depth of spiritual life, the depth of spiritual distress and misery, of penitence before God, of a struggling and triumphant faith, of praising and glorifying God.

Nanning Klaver.
Grand Rapids, Mich.

* * * * *

Dear Editor:

We are writing to the Open Forum not to give ideas on how to get a Psalter with Hymns, but to show that the Psalter alone is sufficient to fill our spiritual needs and desires.

We, of the Hope Prot. Ref. School, sing from the Psalter every day and do not feel that the Psalms are "stilted" or "limited in scope". And they certainly reflect the New Testament as well as the Old Testament. There are songs about the Ascension, Pentecost, Christmas and Easter. We would like to refer you to a few numbers: Ascension—58, 130, 183; Pentecost—141 and 287. There are also many other songs that speak about Christmas and Easter.

The Editor says that the Psalmist could not grasp as we can the fulness and the
beauty our salvation gives us today. Does he mean we can write better songs than could the holy men moved by the Holy Spirit? Besides, we read in article 69 of the Church Order: “In the churches only the 150 Psalms of David, The Lord's Prayer, The Songs of Mary, Zacharias, and Simeon, The Morning and Evening Hymns, and the Hymns of Prayer shall be sung.”

James Lanning & Isaac Kuiper
(9th grade)
Hope Prot. Ref. Chr. School.

* * * *

Dear Editor,

I am writing to the “Open Forum” not because I wish to help to give ideas about a “new hymn book” but because I believe the Psalter covers every possible phase of our religious teachings which the hymn books do not do.

The Editor stated that the “Psalms are limited in their scope” because they do not cover such subjects as Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, and Christmas. I would like to point out that the Psalmist speaks in very concrete language about these things even though it is prophetic. I would like to give some examples of these subjects which are found in the Psalter. Psalter No. 58: “Ye gates lift your heads, the glad summons obey”. The gates plainly are the gates of the grave. There are many more songs about Easter in the Psalter. About the Ascension of Christ Psalter No. 303: “The Lord unto His Christ hath said, Sit Thou at My right hand”. About Pentecost Psalter No. 287: “Thy Spirit O Lord makes life to abound;” and Psalter No. 109: “Then O my God I come, I come, Thy purpose to fulfill;” is about Christmas. This certainly proves that the Psalter covers all these subjects as well as all other subjects concerning redemption and salvation.

The editor also said that the “Holy men of old could not grasp as we can the fulness and the beauty—the sense of fulfillment—that salvation gives us.” In other words that we can write hymns just as good or better than the holy men of old because we understand things better than they. But can we, carnally-minded men, write hymns that would better express these things than the Psalms which the holy men of old, inspired by the Holy Spirit, could write?

David Engelsma (7th grade)
Hope Prot. Ref. Chr. School.

* * * *

Dear Editor:

I read your editorial in the Beacon Lights about the singing of hymns with the Psalms in our Church worship. The boys and girls at our school could not recommend the singing of hymns in our churches for there are so few hymns that are doctrinally sound. To find suitable hymns is an extremely difficult task. Even if we could find certain suitable hymns there would be the danger that the Psalms would hardly ever be sung.

The Psalms are not limited in scope but on the contrary deal with every truth taught in the Old and New Testament. The Psalms review the whole Old Testa-
Not a fake, but a fact

When the word "hypnotism" is mentioned, most people picture in their minds a dark-colored person with a Turkish towel wrapped around his head, pointing his electrified fingers at a horrified subject. Hypnotism is usually regarded as a form of weird entertainment or as a method of producing fear where it is wanted. The American people are guilty of this idea of hypnotism. In Europe and by many psychologists today hypnotism is considered to be a science; that is, classified and verified knowledge. Hypnotism is classified because it can be defined and explained. It is verified by its many uses in the fields of medicine and psychology.

As you probably know the human mind operates on two levels—the conscious and the subconscious. Usually both of these parts function together somewhat like a driver and his work horse. The driver, or conscious part, wills where and when to go, while the actual heavy work is done by the horse, the subconscious mind. Now, if a person could distract the driver's attention, he could take the reins and will where and when to go. This is what happens during hypnotism—the conscious mind is rendered inactive and the subconscious is given full control.

The methods by which the conscious part of the mind is subjugated, or the methods by which hypnotism is induced, are as numerous as the hypnotists themselves. Every hypnotist has his own way of producing the hypnotic state. However, they all follow a general pattern which is called by psychologists "The Conditions of Hypnotism". First the subject must be placed in a comfortable position and must have complete tranquility of mind. Next the attention must be fixed on one object, and then the conscious mind is made tired by monotony in one way or another. When conscious activity is limited in this way, the subject will feel sleepy and his mind will become completely blank. The hypnotist then gives the subject commands which must always be accompanied by the command to execute immediately the thing he is told to do at a certain signal. Hypnotism should not be practiced in the home. It must be left in the hands of trained psychologists. The amateur may not be able to cope with the aftereffects of hypnotism. For example, the subject may become dependent on hypnotism in the same way as a drug addict is dependent on his drugs. If hypnotism is not used properly, it may change the whole emotional pattern of the subject.

Due to the reputation that hypnotism has in America, it is not used very extensively in the field of medicine. It is
not entirely the fault of the people themselves. Certainly no one would want to be subjected to hypnotism after having read some of the literature of our day which portrays hypnotism as an evil power. Such titles as “Man Terrorizes Country by Hypnotizing Women and burying them Alive” would scare anyone. If people knew the truth about hypnotism they would disregard such nonsense, and hypnotism could advance as an aid in the field of medicine in America. In Russia hypnotism is used extensively and successfully in childbirth. In many European countries it is used in the cure of that large number of patients who suffer from bodily disorders as a result of disturbance of the mind. Such things as asthma, high blood pressure, skin trouble, warts, ulcers, migraine headaches, and even obesity (which means that people can reduce their weight by hypnotism) have been cured. Even diabetes has been reported to be cured by hypnotism.

In psychology hypnotism has been called “the laboratory of abnormal psychology”. It is used more in psychology than in medicine. A person can be made to remember his childhood days by means of hypnotism and in this way the psychologists can determine the basis of many mental disorders. Hypnotism has been used in the cure of the disease of America—the nervous breakdown.

The situation of hypnotism today is somewhat like that of a large factory called the “factory of science”, in which all the workers are doing quite satisfactorily except two. Pathology, the study of diseases, and abnormal psychology, the study of mental illnesses, are lagging behind and have many unsolved problems. Hypnotism has his foot in the doorway ready to help the puzzled workers, but he is being held back by the boss of the factory, the American people, who thinks hypnotism is a terrorist and considers him to be unqualified as an aid.
The Military Mail Bag

Once again we find that the deadline nears for copy to be in, and what a job it is to find some news to print. We have contacted the parents of Howard Van Eenenaam from Fuller Ave. They tell us that before entering the Armed Forces on Nov. 14th, Pfc. Howard Van Eenenaam was employed by the Consumers Power Company. Since his induction he has been stationed at Camp Atterbury, located 30 miles directly South of Indianapolis, Indiana. He is connected with the 151st Medical Ambulance Co. (Sept.), which is a unit of the Ohio National Guard and at the present time is not attached to a combat unit.

About Feb. 1st he was appointed Company Clerk, and recently was made Company Mail Clerk. While being stationed at Camp Atterbury, he has been permitted the use of his automobile, making it possible to come home most week-ends, and attend at least one Sunday service at his own church.

It is very possible that by the time this is in print, Howard will have moved to Camp Carson, Colorado for maneuvers with the 196th Infantry of which several of our boys are a part.

For those of you who don't have Howie's address, here it is:

Pfc. Howard Van Eenenaam
U.S. 55054129
151st Med. Amb. Co. (S.E.P.)
Camp Atterbury, Indiana.

* * * *

We have received Bill Kooistra's new address. As you know, Bill is also from Fuller Ave, here in Grand Rapids.

Pfc. William Kooistra 16354517
6923rd P.P Sqdn.
U.S.A.F. S.S.
Brooks A.F.B., Texas

* * * *

We find that Ralph Vander Lee also

Pfc. Ralph C. Vander Lee
A.F. 16355193
U.S.A.F. S.S
Brooks Air Force Base, Texas.
Looks as though Ralph is stationed
near Bill Kooistra. How about letting us in on some of this, fellows?

* * * *

We would like to thank Fred Schaafsma, from our Fourth Church in Grand Rapids for the very interesting letter he wrote. We are just taking for granted that he won't mind seeing it in print.

"Having just received and just finished reading the Beacon Lights, I thought I had better write and thank you for it. It took a little longer to reach me because I have a temporary change of address. I didn't think it necessary to notify you because I hope to be back in my own outfit next month.

"I am attending a school now for defense against Chemical, Biological and Radiological attacks. We are half way through the course and I wonder to myself how God can possibly allow man to make such weapons of destruction. It makes you stop and wonder at the power God has allowed man to have.

"I enjoy the Beacon Lights very much. It brings our Church life to us. I go to Chapel but it still isn't Prot. Ref. I don't think I'll ever get used to a ten minute sermon. They consist mostly of stories and poems. The problem is, if you will be so kind as to convey this to him. 'Is it right for a Prot. Ref. serviceman to partake of communion outside of the True Church, such as Army Chapels? If not, why not?' I was in Chapel last Sunday, and all were invited to come forward and partake. I didn't because don't think it is right. If he can't, or is too busy, I should say, please see if you can find the answer for me.

"Well, I'll close for this time, but hope to write you soon again. Please pray for us, because on all sides we are surrounded by temptations.

Yours in Christ,
Fred Schaafsma."

Fred, we sent your question to "Schuilier", and trust that the answer will appear in this issue. If not in this issue, we know it will appear in the next one. Thanks for taking the time to write us, and we hope that you will write any time you would like to. Perhaps some of the others will take up the idea, too. We also called Fred's wife, Wilma, to get his correct address before giving it to the rest of you. Fred called Wilma on Sunday, and told her he would be back at Camp Picket this week. His address is:

Sgt. Fred Schaafsma, 36-452-413
354th Military Police Co. (ZI)
Camp Pickett, Virginia.

* * * *

We'd also like to thank John De Koekkoek, from our First Church in Kalamazzo, Michigan, for sending us his change of address. His new address is:

Pfc. John E. De Koekkoek
A.F. 16173594
8th Radio Sqdn., Mobile
Brooks A.F.B., Texas.

Thanks for sending your new address in John, and if you have some extra
me, why not drop us a line telling us more about your work?

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We also received the address of Dick Van Uffelen, from our Redlands Church. Maybe some of the other fellows would like to write to him.


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Also James Intveld from our Hull, Iowa Church has left for service, and his address is:


* * * *

Fred Peterson, another young man from our Grand Haven Church, has sent in his change of address:


* * * *

We are finding it difficult to get any information about the boys from our Western Churches. As much as I'd like to travel and meet the families personally, I guess it's impossible. (In the first place, I don't think my boss would appreciate the fact too much.) But that's beside the point. So to make it easier, why not drop the Beacon Lights a line? As we said before, a postal card will serve the purpose. Up to now, we haven't received any pictures. What's the matter, are you bashful about having a picture of yourself, where you and the rest of us can see it?

Guess I'd better end this now, before they tell me it's too long. But we'll be looking forward to receiving more mail from you fellows than we have so far. The address is still the same.

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

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MANHATTANITES IN THE SERVICE

The first one of our boys to leave for the Armed Services was Albert Visser, who left for Ft. Lewis, Washington on Nov. 26, 1950. He is in the Anti-Aircraft Division of the Army. He has taken some schooling on Radar and hopes to have a furlough soon. He writes that he receives Beacon Lights and enjoys it very much.

The next one that left for the Army was Harold Moss, who left on Jan. 4, 1951 and is stationed at Ft. Bliss, Texas. He, too, is in the Anti-Aircraft Division. He is in a mechanics post at the time of this writing.

The third one to leave was H. Eugene Ungersma who left for the Navy on Jan. 9, 1951. At this time Gene is home on furlough. He says that things in the service are very uncertain but that he has been very fortunate in that he has been able to attend church services on Sundays. He also says that the Chaplains are a little slack in their work, but
it helps if a person is in the right environment. After his furlough, Gene will be stationed in San Francisco for further training.

From the Federation Board

It is with a feeling of regret that we announce the resignation of two of our staff members.

Miss Thelma Jonker and Miss Mae Bylsma, after serving for many years as Business Manager and Associate Business Manager respectively, asked that they be relieved of their duties. We wish to take this opportunity to thank them for many hours which they have spent keeping our records straight. We realize, looking back, that we probably have not always appreciated the amount and quality of the work which they have done for us. It seems that often when things are "running smoothly" we tend to feel that they are thus independent of any real labor, forgetting that there are people who are working diligently to make them "run smoothly". Now that the time has come for us to appoint new members for this task, which before seemed quite void of hard work, we realize the tremendous amount of work it really entails. Remembering these things we feel we can say even more heartily—

Thank you

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It is our hope that, having replaced these members of our staff we may continue to publish a paper for our young people which will be not only interesting but also spiritually edificatory.

The Executive Board of the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young Peoples' Soc.

John Hofman Jr., Pres.

Eugene Ungersma

Fourth to leave was Henry Vander Vos who left for the Marine base in San Diego, Calif., on Feb. 19, 1951. He has almost finished boot training and will then go into the Gunnery Battalion. He writes that he is privileged to attend church quite regularly too.

The last one to leave for the Army was Garret Flikkema who left on Feb. 21, 1951 for Camp Stewart, Georgia. Garret is also in the Anti-Aircraft Division and seems to like it quite well. He has just begun his basic training.

For our boys and us the Lord's ways are sometimes hard to understand but if we always remember that all is working to one purpose, things become much easier to bear.

Dorothy Van Dyken—Reporter
Another New Acquaintance

Our Oskaloosa society consists of nine active members and three associates. Florence Terpstra, who is teaching school in Redlands, and Ernest Van Weelden, who is serving in the Army, are on leave of absence. Reverend J. Howerzyl is our very capable president.

We hold our meetings every Sunday evening from 7:30 to 8:30. They are usually opened by a short song service and prayer by the president. Following this we have a half hour of Bible study. Our discussions this year, centered about the book of Esther; then we had a few weeks of Church History and discussion of some miscellaneous questions from the Bible which some of our members wanted explained.

Following our Bible study we have the usual business meeting. Next, one of our members renders a short program which may be anything he chooses. This plan has proved quite satisfactory, although once in a while someone takes advantage of the privilege.

After the program we sing a Psalter number and the doxology, and one of the boys in the Society closes the hour of fellowship with a word of prayer.

Herman Kelderman, Sec'y.

OSKALOOSA YOUNG PEOPLE SOCIETY

Historical Section Of
THE BOOK OF DANIEL

LESSON V.
The King’s Debasement and Restoration
(Chapter 4)

We have in this chapter the account of an amazing event in the life of Nebuchadnezzar. The Almighty had driven him away from men to go and dwell as a beast in the field. However, this event in his life was preceded by another unusual thing. He was given another dream of special importance. This is now the second dream that God gave to him and which must be interpreted by Daniel. Few men in the entire Old Dispensation were given such special dreams and almost without exception they were given to those in Israel. King Pharaoh, his butler and his baker had experienced such dreams. But here is a king outside of Israel who has had two such dreams in a short period of time.

The dream was that of a tree that grew to an enormous height and size. The tree was cut down and only the stump of it was left. And till seven times had passed over the stump the dew of heaven made it wet. Included in the dream was also somewhat the interpretation which we can see when the proper clues were added but which meant nothing to the king. For a voice spoke over that tree and that stump and gave indication of what it meant. You have, for example, such words as “Let his heart be changed from a man’s heart, and let a beast’s heart be given unto him”.

The king called in Daniel after the other wise men of the king’s court were unable to explain the dream. You would expect the king to call Daniel first after his former experience with a dream that troubled him. Daniel explained to the king that he was this tree, that God had given him a glorious and large kingdom, that he had forgotten God and that God was now going to drive him away from men to live with and to behave as the beasts of the field. He was to become what is called today a schizophreniac which Webster calls one who suffers from a “psychosis characterized by loss of contact with environment and by disintegration of personality.” The king suffered a mental disorder somewhat similar to that of a schizophreniac. Others call it “insania zoanthropica” a mental malady according to which men consider themselves to be animals and seek to imitate them. At any rate it was an awful punishment and a pitiable sight to behold.
Daniel urged the king to repent of his ways and to turn from his evil. The king continued on his way for another year. Suddenly while he was making a proud boast God smote him and he was driven away as a mad fellow. At the end of the set time—here seven times, which indicates that it was no short period of time—his sanity returned and he saw himself as others had seen him all these days. He gives utterance now to the truth he had to learn, that God ruleth in the heavens and He giveth authority to rule to whom He wills.

Points For Discussion:

1. The vision before the fact. Can you suggest a reason why the king should have been given this vision before his madness? Did God give him a chance to repent by this; and does Daniel also urge him to take this opportunity? Or is the vision necessary that the king may understand the thing that comes over him? Whichever your view is, be able to explain and defend it.

2. The king a believer? Read carefully verses 2, 25, 34. Do they conclusively show him to be a believer? Verse 8 speaks of the holy gods. Does it take faith to say that? Verse 25 declares that he will know that God rules. Is that the spiritual knowledge of saving faith? Does the lack of any reference to God's mercy and salvation in verses 34-37 as well as all direct reference to confession of sin necessarily brand him as an unbeliever? Does the whole vision together with the awful punishment serve that purpose to bring to saving faith? How does God bring His people to saving faith? Can He and does He do that through insanity, or is sanity always necessary? Is there any hope of salvation for the insane? For those born insane?

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LESSON VI.

The Handwriting On The Wall
(Daniel 5)

A new king, the son of Nebuchadnezzar, is now on the throne. In great pride and fleshly lust he makes a great feast. In connection with our study of the book of Esther does the thought not strike you that when we read of the world that persecutes God's Church that they truly are presented to us as those who "eat, drink, and are merry", realizing that soon they die? Verse 22 of this chapter is important for us to note. This son of Nebuchadnezzar was fully aware of the awful thing that came upon his father for his pride and sinfulness. But he makes no attempt to turn from that evil way. Instead he does far more evil than his father dared to do. He not only made a feast, but he called for all the holy vessels of God's temple that they might drink their wine out of them.

At this feast, and at a moment when the hilarity and carnal merrymaking is at its climax God spoke His awful word to this evil king. And He did so in a very unique way. No prophet is sent to
cry out judgment upon him. No servant is sent to rebuke him by word for his use of these holy vessels. But God speaks in a terrifying way. He causes the fingers of a man's hand to appear in bold relief moving and writing an awful sentence upon the wall. The king trembles uncontrollably at the sight. In an awful terror he cries aloud for the help of his wise men and offers a fantastic reward for the one who can interpret the writing.

Of course, there is none found who can declare its meaning. In fact there was no one that could even read it. It was not written in the language of any nation living at that time. The very letter, characters, were different from those in current usage. The Queen, that is the king's mother and not his wife, suggests to him Daniel whom she remembered as having explained the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel is called in, and not for fame, not for wealth, but for the sake of God's glory and the comfort of the Church in captivity Daniel explained to the king what these words meant.

The king was told that he had been placed in the balances by God and had been found wanting, the end of his kingdom was numbered by God and it would be given to the Medes and the Persians. Swiftly these words were also executed by God, for that very night his brother slew him. What we read in verse 31 does not refer to that same night, but it is recorded to show us that the entire prophecy was fulfilled. One part was realized the very night of the handwriting on the wall, the other part when Darius was sixty-two years old. Vers

Points For Discussion:

1. The vessels of the Temple. Why was it sinful for the king to use these vessels? What did it signify that he wanted to use them? Was it at all comparable to the sin of the Philistines when they called to have Samson in their midst at their feast? Was it similar to the sin of Uzzah who touched the Ark and was killed? Might the common Israelite touch these vessels? Do we have anything today that is holy in that same respect as these vessels? Would you feel free or guilty to use pages from an old, worn Bible to start your furnace or stove? Would you cast a worn out Bible in the fire?

2. The king's attitude to Daniel's interpretation. Did the king show any trace of penitence after he had been told of the judgment of God upon him? Did he show any faith in the certainty of this judgment? He promised Daniel a great place in his kingdom for the future. Does that mean that he felt relieved that this was all that the writing meant? Or do you take the stand that his rewarding Daniel indicated that he was penitent and wanted to keep his promise? Does it indicate to you that he did not want to be found wanting anymore? What would you have expected of a penitent child of God after such a word of judgment?
LESSON VII

Daniel Among The Lions
(Daniel 6)

A period of time is passed between chapter 5:30 and the incident recorded in this chapter. Darius the Median is now king. But the same God is still judge of His people, and He arranges a place for Daniel in the king's court. The king appoints princes over all the provinces and three presidents to be over all these one hundred and twenty princes, each over forty princes with their provinces. Of these three the king preferred Daniel. This was the occasion for a fiery jealousy among the other princes and presidents. His soul was among lions then already, even as the Psalmist declares in Psalm 57:4. And these human lions, these fierce enemies of Daniel plotted to take his life.

What a marvelous commentary on Daniel's integrity; they can find a way to get rid of Daniel only by finding fault with his worship of God. His walk was flawless before the eyes of men. They knew that they could never convince the king that he had stolen, killed or done any deed of social injustice. They knew that they would never find him breaking the second table of the Law. And to find a reason for his death they must induce the king to change the first table of the Law also. They must move him to rewrite the first commandment to read, "Thou shalt have no other god before thee save Darius." Then they can be sure that Daniel will be found transgressing their law. He who transgressed this law, they specified, ought to be cast to the lions. The king agreed, not realizing that it was directed against Daniel.

Daniel paid absolutely no attention to this decree and prayed three times a day with his face toward Jerusalem. He faced Jerusalem because that is where the Temple had stood and there is where God had revealed Himself to His people. The enemies are looking for this to happen and immediately inform the king. Daniel is taken and is thrown into the den with the lions.

The king was sorely displeased to hear this accusation of Daniel, but he had no choice in the matter. And the enemies of Daniel remind him of the fact that the laws of the Medes and the Persians cannot be altered. Daniel is therefore cast into the den with the lions, and the king goes home to spend a miserable night. But God prevented the lions from harming Daniel. He closed their mouths and made them harmless. The king hurries to the den early the next morning and finds Daniel alive. He commands that he be brought out and that his enemies be cast into the den. These men and their families are then immediately devoured by the hungry lions.

Points For Discussion:

1. Daniel's behavior. Was Daniel not careless, to say the least? Did he have to leave his window open? Does Jesus not teach us to pray in secret? And was not Daniel's behavior here touched somewhat with a haughty and proud attitude of disregard? Was he
not trying to show these enemies that they could not frighten him? Or was all this necessary, and would secret prayer here have been sinful? Explain your stand.

2. Darius a believer? Here we have the question again. From his speech and actions would you call Darius a believer? Verses 8 and 9 would certainly indicate that he was an unbeliever. But how do you explain his interest in Daniel and his speech to Daniel in the den? Would you put his words in the same class with the thousands who today speak of Christianity and call themselves Christians?

3. Daniel’s speech to the king. Daniel says, “O king, live for ever”. May we say that of any human being? Especially if you have taken the stand that Darius is an unbeliever, you stand before the question as to whether we may ever wish such a thing of an unbeliever. Would it not be equal to wishing them an escape from the torments of hell? Or does the expression simply mean to indicate that Daniel has no malice in his heart toward the king and that he will never put forth his hand to take his life from him? Is it similar to the prayer of Stephen, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge”?

* * * *
natter how dark things may look about us.

Then too God revealed in this section that He judged His people as righteous in Christ. When Daniel’s friends and Daniel refused the polluted meat and drink God approved (judged) and rewarded them. In the fiery furnace He spoke His judgment again, and we saw these friends in the company of Christ and therefore untouched by the fire. They were safe in and with Him. It became plain in Daniel’s marvelous deliverance from the fierce and hungry lions. God spoke His word of approval there too. He judged Daniel in Christ and therefore not worthy of death as an irreligious man or as an idolator. That twofold judgment upon the wicked and upon those in Christ is the one chief element.

The other chief element is the procession of unusual events which God caused to occur whereby He encouraged His people in these dark days. There was the appointment of Daniel and his friends to high places in the kingdom because of the greater wisdom God had given them. There was the amazing escape from the fiery furnace. Strange dreams were given to kings and interpreted by Daniel. A mighty king was debased to behave as a beast. The handwriting on the wall was extremely unusual. And Daniel was miraculously spared from the mouths of the lions. Rest assured that God’s people not only heard of all these things but that they also understood the Word of God in it that He is their judge and that He judges all these ungodly and will visit them in His own time. By all these things He encouraged them in a dark and terrible period of their history. And it is written to encourage us too that there is a judge who will punish the ungodly and vindicate His people.

**Points For Discussion:**

1. The name of this book. Would it have different meaning to say, “God is my judge”? What shade of meaning is indicated in the translation, “My God is judge”?

3. Daniel and Christ. Would you say that Daniel was a type of Christ? What are the elements which determine whether one is a type of Christ or not? Apply them to Daniel, and would you then say that Daniel was in any way a type of Christ? Do you see the cross of Christ anywhere in this section of the book?

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**IN SYMPATHY**

We wish to express our sincere sympathy with our printers, Henry Doorn and Arthur Bult in the loss of their Mother

May the God of all grace comfort the bereaved families in their loss.

The Publication Committee of Beacon Lights,

J. Hofman, Pres.
TRUTH VS. ERROR

A DEBATE

II.

In last month’s issue of Beacon Lights we hear the first part of the debate held in the imaginary Young People’s Society in one of our mid-western churches.

The issue in the debate was “Resolved: That the Responsibility of Man Does Not Postulate His Ability to Be Obedient to the Command of the Gospel”. It was our privilege to pass on to you the first part of the Debate. We reported on the trend of the debate as this was waged by the first speaker of the Affirmative side, and also of the first speaker of the Negative side. You will remember, that we heard Norman and Christina respectively.

We must still hear John and Luvern. John will be the second speaker for the Affirmative, and Luvern will be the second speaker for the Negative.

Let us proceed with our report.

John now takes the floor as the second speaker of the Affirmative. He had, meanwhile, taken stock of the scope of the debate, and arguments thus far presented both by his team-mate, Norman, and by the opposition, Christina. Consequently he is in a position to push the arguments of the Affirmative side to the fullest consequence. He brings the following considerations to the foreground.

First of all, John pleads for keeping the issue in this debate squarely before the attention, and not to be allowed to have our attention diverted to side issues and to false constructions. And then it is John’s conviction, that the point is not whether man, sinful, fallen and natural man can psychologically respond to the Gospel-preaching as this preaching comes to us together with the command of faith and repentance, but the question is whether natural man can respond in faith and obedience to the Gospel. John insists that this is the question. Fair, intellectual play demands that the issue be honestly set forth.

Then, too, John points out, it ought to be understood, that it is at this point, that those who will to maintain the free-will of natural man to properly respond to the Gospel, always misstate the issue. They begin to speak dubious language. When they mean that man can of his own native strength properly respond to the Gospel, they do not say this unequivocally, but they begin to wax clamorous and plead the responsibility of man. It is then said: Man is no stock and block. God deals with him as with a rational creature. And all the arguments on the books are brought forward. And under the deluge of subterfuge and ambiguity of pretending only to maintain that man is responsible they really mean to say that man is his own savior.
ie can at least respond to the Gospel. Now this is plainly dishonest, and brings in an ethical crisis!

Another point that is very strongly emphasized by John is, that this is also the plain teaching of the Reformed fathers. John means, that the Reformed fathers also taught the responsibility of man without implying or ever stating that man could properly respond. They state that man cannot respond by nature. The proper response is due to the operation of the Holy Ghost, by which He quickens us to faith and to a believing response. And, John adds, that this response of faith is made more actual through the preaching of the Gospel as this preaching is always accomplished by the command of faith and repentance. The response of faith is constantly called orth in those, whom the Father hath foreordained, called, justified, sanctified and glorified. But there is also a response in those, who hear the Word preached, but who do not respond in faith, but who respond in unbelief. This unbelief is a horrible response, it is true, but it is a moral-rational response rooted in spiritual rebellion. It is the response of an Esau who says: Tomorrow I die, and what good shall my birthright be to me?!

And so John concludes, pleading that this point be seen, that it be not only conceded but that it be confessed. John is convinced, that this point is very important also in the life of the mystery of faith and godliness. Who can bow before God and say that what he possesses he has not received? Why should he then directly or indirectly boast before God as though we had not received it. If the natural man can by virtue of his responsibility obey the Gospel, pray, who is first in the salvation of those who obey the Gospel? Who is the Savior, God or man?!

Having said these things with no little spirit and animation, John takes his seat.

It is now the time for the second speaker of the Negative to take the floor. Luvern has a difficult task on his hand. You will, however, remember that we said, that he was assigned this part of the debate, and that he took it merely to serve the truth of the Word of God as interpreted by the Confessions sealed by the blood of the faithful. He too has as his slogan in the good sense of the term: epi paasin alleetheia! Above all things he holds the truth.

And so, in this difficult position, he does his utmost.

Luvern, therefore, as became evident from the conversation held by this writer with him afterwards, resorted to a series of questions. He did what so many do when the truth compels them to capitulate, but when not yet ready to thus respond. Then flight is taken to rhetorical questions. And, evidently, the attempt is, to shake lose the powerful grip of the cogency of the Scriptural-Confessional arguments! And then recourse is taken to questions!

Understandably enough, this is what Luvern does.

First of all he states that he feels that the definition of the responsibility of man is not elastic enough. It is too
dogmatic. Surely Fung and Wagnalls also knew something when they state that responsibility includes "the ability to perform", do they not? The former speakers contend that natural man can reject the Gospel, but, pray, does this not imply that he has the ability to choose for the Gospel as well as against it?! Let us be, at least, a little bit consistent! And then, too, does not God seriously have the Gospel preached to all to whom He sends it in His good-pleasure? And does God not reveal what is well-pleasing to Him, namely, that the called come to Him? Now, what sense does this have to call men to come, while they cannot come anyway. Is that responsibility? That, says Luvern (he did not mean it) he cannot possibly see.

I'm sorry, dear youthful reader, that I have no more space at my disposal in this issue of Beacon Lights. Remember that there is still a rebuttal to report in this debate. Meanwhile, remember, that fairness to each debatee demands that we do not form our final verdict until we have heard them all!

D. V. we shall report the remainder of this debate in the next issue.

ATTENTION!

SOLDIERS & SAILORS

Our Missionary, Rev. A. Cammenga, would like to obtain the names and addresses of our military men in the camps and ports of the State of Washington. Since he is located in the vicinity of several of these camps and ports it is possible that he can contact our servicemen in this area and help provide for their spiritual needs. Kindly send all such names and addresses to:

Rev. A. Cammenga
Box 481
Sumas, Washington,

If any of our servicemen are at any time able to attend our services on Sunday in Lynden, Washington, we shall be happy to provide transportation information and lodging. Write to the above address or phone 992, Sumas; Washington.
ARE YOUR PROPOSALS IN?

All societies wishing to submit proposals for this year's convention should have them in by May 10 so that the Executive Board can consider them in time for them to be published in the June issue of Beacon Lights.

Send them to:

John Hofman  
747 Fuller Ave, S. E.  
Grand Rapids 7, Michigan

DON'T WAIT! GET THEM IN NOW!

WHY DON'T YOU SEND IN YOUR QUESTIONS?

Send your question concerning "problem" texts to Question Box, c/o the Editor, Mr. Albert Heemstra, 1450 Louise St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Send in your question concerning social matters to Schuiler, c/o Doorn Printing Co., 705 Eastern Ave, S.E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.
Convention Dates
August 21, 22, and 23