BEACON LIGHTS
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PEACE IN A WORLD OF STRIFE

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"And there were... shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night."

AND LO! like a shaft of light penetrating the darkness and halting among them, there stood an angel. The glory that radiated from him turned the night into the brightness of noonday. As their eyes became adjusted to the light, they realized that a heavenly visitor had left his place before the throne to call on them. Was he a bearer of tidings? Why should he call on them? What could the nature of his tidings be? And they were sore afraid, for they knew that they were mere men, even sinful men.

"And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all the people."

Good tidings! The gospel that brings joy to the soul. "For unto you is born... a Savior, Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host..." Joining the messenger who had just finished speaking, they stood as a mighty chorus, carrying the song they had been singing before the throne to the audience of simple shepherds in the field.

"Glory to God in the highest!"

"Peace on earth!" Peace "in the midst of good pleasure."

When it was all over, and when the shepherds had assured themselves that all these things had surely come to pass, they returned, "glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them."

Peace in a world of strife.

* * *

There were on that same morning, not far away in Jerusalem, certain priests ministering, as was their custom, in the temple.

As the day dawned, the trumpeter sent forth three sharp blasts on his
trumpet, calling Israel to the morning sacrifice. And simultaneously other priests, by appointment, drew back the old, massive iron gates, to open the temple to the morning worshippers.

Another day was begun, another routine of temple duties waited to be performed, another series of sacrifices must be brought, more blood to be shed, more flesh to smoulder upon the altar. To the majority of the fifty priests who went about their various duties from day to day all this had become a mere matter of routine.

Once the hopes of Israel had flared high when David had subdued their enemies and established his throne in Jerusalem. Years afterward the generations still spoke of the glories of his son, Solomon, his riches, his wisdom, his honor; yes, above all, the glorious temple he had built.

But now they groaned under the yoke of a foreign oppressor. That nation, once so mighty and full of expectation, had been subject to Caesar these many years. Even the temple was not restored to its former glory. Herod had spent much money and labor on this temple, but even so it bore the mark and stamp of Caesar.

No, nothing ever happened any more to disturb the endless monotonity of their daily rituals. David's throne lay buried in the dust. The voice of prophecy had long since been silenced. Nothing ever happened; no one seemed to expect anything to happen.

Yes, they could still faintly recall that slightly over a year ago there had been a disturbance in the temple. It had happened one morning that an aged priest, named Zacharias, had lingered long at the altar of incense in the Holy Place. The congregation worshipping on bended knee in the outer court had waited, and had wondered why he delayed in coming forth to lay the customary blessing upon them. And when he finally appeared, he had been unable to speak, but had managed to inform them by various signs that he had seen a heavenly apparition. That had been disturbing for the moment, but — evidently nothing had come of it.

Wearily the priests went about their duties, preferring not to think, not to ponder too long on all these things.

They were in a world of strife, and unrest filled their souls. They knew peace.

* * *

It is Christmas eve in the year of our Lord, 1951.

A bright moon has sent the stars into hiding. Tall trees cast long shadows upon the bright snow. Decorated wreathes on the doors and lighted Christmas trees in the windows reveal the season of the year.

In one particular home a mother sits at the fireplace watching the glowing embers. In the corner of the room stands a newly decorated tree, and under it lie a few presents. Plainly the presents are intended for the small kiddies who have already been tucked away in bed. The picture of a man in uniform on the mantel clearly accounts for the fact that this mother spends her evening alone.
The figure at the fireplace stirs. She refuses to go on thinking, thinking those same thoughts in maddening repetition, thinking and yet never finding a solution.

Peace? This world knows no peace.

* * *

It is the same night out there in war-ravaged Korea.

A raging wind sweeps down the mountains, carrying with it small, stinging pellets of snow. A lone sentry stands on guard duty, bracing his back against the storm, constantly shifting his weight from one foot to the other to maintain circulation and fight off the cold.

Tonight he is particularly reminded of all the bitter experiences that have been
tasted in this bleak and desolate country during the past few years. How many half-starved, half-naked refugees have trudged along these roads before the face of the enemy. How many families were disrupted, homes destroyed, lives wasted away. How many soldiers have cried in mortal anguish as blood ran from their wounds. How many have lost their lives in these hills, never to be seen by their families again.

His thoughts go back to other Christmas holidays spent at home with his family. He has a mental picture of the congregation assembled in public worship, commemorating the birth of the Prince of Peace. He repeats in his mind the well-known words, "And there were in that same country shepherds abiding in the fields, keeping watch . . ." And behold, an angel . . . And with him a multitude of angels, saying, "Glory to God in the highest!"

"Peace on earth!" Not the kind of peace is meant that foolish men dream about and foolishly strive after. Not a mere cessation of warfare, while their hearts remain at enmity with God. But the peace that the angels spoke of is the real peace; peace with God in our Lord Jesus Christ. It is the assurance that our sins are blotted out. It is the confidence that our life is hid with Christ in God.

That peace is not restricted by circumstances. It can be experienced in the deepest sorrows, in the bitterest moments of anguish, in the face of death. With that peace in our hearts we are more than conquerors.

It is the peace that God bestows in sovereign love upon the men of His good pleasure.

It is true, abiding peace, even in a world of strife.

MY BIBLE

Oh how precious is my Bible
It inspires day by day
It's my lamp in earthly darkness
Shining all along my way.

By its precepts I am guided
In the way that I should go
Strength 't gives my weary footstep
When my gait is languished, slow.

Drooping hearts can smile more sweetly
In the sunshine of God's Word
From the soul who lives his Bible
Only words of joy are heard.

In this vale of grief and trials
When the eye is dimmed with tears,
There is no book like the Bible
To dispell all rising fears.

When we pass through death's grim valley,
Troubles more than we can bear,
We can find hope, peace and comfort
In those lonely pages there.

Through these nights of life so tedious
My Bible will light my way.
Till I find the brighter beam
Of the great eternal day.

By J. Hulbert Robins
COMPANIONS

WM. TIPTAFT, an English minister, once made the statement: “Show me a man’s books and show me a man’s companions and I will tell you what sort of man he is.”

There is an old adage of unknown origin: “Birds of a feather flock together.”

David (??) in the hundred nineteenth psalm declares: “I am a companion of all them that fear Thee, and of them that keep Thy precepts.”

In the above quotations I find especially three things expressed which are of no small importance in regard to the matter of making friends and perpetuating friendship and whereas ones companions very vitally affect one’s living, I would sincerely weigh this matter with you so that we, together with our companions, may practice “true christian living.”

First, in the above I find that your and my friends reveal to others who and what we are! Next, I discover that we choose and associate with others who are like us! And then I note that God’s people seek and establish companionship only with those that fear God and obey His law.

Concerning our first observation, it may be said that this is true largely due to the fact that the choosing of companions is an optional matter. No one is to tell us who our friends are to be. That matter is left to our own choice. Consequently, the friendship bonds which we voluntarily establish are revelatory of our tastes, personality, character, etc. As our friends are, so are we. In the natural sense this is generally so but it is also equally true in a spiritual way. A young man who is seriously interested in the things of God’s Kingdom does not seek out for his friends those who are constantly remiss in their duties within the church. The gaudy young lady does not associate with the Priscillas and Dorcas’s of the Ecclesia. That is then the reason that those with whom we associate are a voice unto others declaring either our vice or our virtue. A good thing to remember in this connection is that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”. In Scripture this generally refers to the influence of evil upon the good. It is a very rare and unusual experience when what is good improves and savors the evil with goodness but often are the good led astray on an evil way through the influence of wrong companions. They not only reveal to others who and what we are but they influence us to be as they are.
Shun, then, evil companions!

Our second observation is closely related to the first. We seek friends. That is, perhaps, an increated instinct. It is not good for anyone to be alone. The choice of our friends is not so much determined by them as by ourselves. Whereas a companion is one with whom I choose to walk and converse in a way of friendship, it is quite natural that I seek those who in various ways are most like myself. A man who loves his "drink" finds his friends in the saloon. Those who live for pleasure make their associations in any and every imaginable amusement-house that will satisfy their insatiable passions. To be especially noted is the fact that it is not so much a matter of "rich seeking rich" and "poor seeking poor" that is important but rather it is a case where "kind seeks kind" spiritually, psychologically, morally, etc. This is especially serious when a man seeks a woman to bring her into his very life and make her a perpetual companion by an indissoluble union. Sad and regretful are the experiences of many who like "birds with strange feathers flocked together." It happens and when it does the results are frequently disastrous because it is extremely difficult for either bird to change its feathers after such an indissoluble companionship is sealed.

Beware of it! Watch your companions and know them well!

For that is why we must also arrive at our third observation and say as children of God with David: "I am a companion of them that fear Thee." None others may be our friends. We must hate them that hate God. We must through our whole life and in every sphere of activity or labor seek out those who love the Lord God and walk with them in friendship. The earmark by which we may unquestionably find such is that "those who fear God also keep His commandments." Be careful that you are not deceived. The devil himself often poses as an angel of light. On Sunday he will go to church with you and be very religious and on other occasions he will seek to link you up with "worldly christians" (?) Make sure that what draws you to others is never their love and likeness to you (vain flattery) but always their love and likeness to Christ. The latter is important. Shun as you would a deadly poison all who are attracted to you because of this.

True, indeed, you will not find many of these. The faithful are few but seek them. Better it is to be alone having God alone as your friend than to be unequally yoked with those who ought to be enemies. Make friends with God's children. Make the liveliest of them your greatest intimates and see that their love and likeness to Christ is the great motive in your love to them.

Doing this, Christian Living will prosper!
CONCERNING THE TERM:
SACRAMENTS—(II)

THOSE OF our readers, who did not do like the Scotchman referred to in our former instalment on this subject, will remember, no doubt, that we now stand in our discussion of the term Sacraments (sacramentum) before two questions. They are:

1. How is it to be explained, that our fathers began to speak of Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper as Sacraments, since the term Sacraments nowhere appears in the Scriptures, and since this term already had received a very paganistic content and color?

2. Which are the steps along which the church-fathers proceeded in their coming to the usage of the term Sacraments.

Did I hear someone sigh when he read these two propositions? Well, let me assure him, that these are not only intensely interesting questions, but that they are questions of vital importance for every man, who is earnestly studious of obtaining everlasting life. It is well to know something also about the foundations of our faith, to take note of the fundamental lines of the substructure of the building of our faith. Wherefore let gird up the loins of our mind, and earnestly endeavor to see how the term Sacraments came to designate Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

The term sacramentum was used by those who translated the Greek New Testament into the Latin tongue. The term sacramentum is the translation of the Greek word musteerion (Mystery).

Let us try to follow this in considering two representative passages. The first is a passage taken from Eph. 1:9, where we read “having made known unto us the Mystery of His will and again in Eph. 3:3-4, where we read “That according to revelation the Mystery that was made known unto me, even as I have briefly written to you in the foregoing, by the reading of which, we are able to ascertain my understanding of the Mystery of Christ.” In these passages, the translator into the Latin, translated the term “Mystery” by the term Sacramentum.

Now this helps us to get started in understanding how the term Sacrament came to refer to the Mystery of faith, the great wonderful work of salvation in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Notice, that the meaning of the term Sacrament is taken from the content of Revelation here, and not from the Political, Military and Civil usage of the term as this is colored by Paganistic
principles of unbelief and folly. An entire new content is poured into the term. It is filled with the mind of Christ, with the thoughts of peace as they come to us in the Gospel. And this is a very fundamental difference, worthy of our prayer and thankful consideration! Here the folly of God is wiser than men; the wise of this world are taken in their own craftiness! Surely the term in both is "sacramentum" but what a glorious difference! In the one it is a solemn (very profane at that) rite of what man will do before men, and in the other it is what Almighty God, the One who is and was and is to come, came to do for us in the sending of His Son in the likeness of flesh.

Now try this out once. Take your English Bible and read the passages, which we quoted above, and in the place of every instance where you read Mystery read the term Sacrament giving it the meaning of the term Mystery, to wit, what God has revealed for our salvation in Christ! When this has been thoroughly grasped by you, the usage of the term Sacraments will not longer seem strange and out of place. You will see that the Word received a new meaning from that source which causes old things to pass away and makes all things new!

If this former is clear to us, and it ought to be, then we can proceed to the next step.

In the light of the foregoing, it is not difficult to understand how this term Sacramentum, when once coming before the consciousness of the Church as the term representing all the Mystery of godliness that is great, could very well become the term to designate the signs and seals of the revealed righteousness of faith, as this was realized for us in the death and resurrection of Christ. For to be sure, the Sign of Baptism and that of the Lord's Supper is a rather important part in the Mystery of salvation revealed to us. Both fall under this term Mystery translated by Sacramentum!

Then too the fact that the term in popular-paganistic usage referred to "solemn rites", made the term peculiarly adapted to designate these signs and seals of the righteousness of faith. It is true the rites are very different in nature and contents, but both are rites. Wherefore we believe it correct to assume that we have correctly seized upon the explanation of the reason the use of the term Sacraments in the church of God.

However, let it be clearly kept in mind that there is a vast difference between the meaning of the solemn rites in the Roman-pagan world and in that in the Christian Church. In the former the meaning is primarily what man performs, agrees to do, and what men mutually do. In the Christian Church the meaning is primarily what God promises to perform for us as God Almighty. Thus the Heidelberg Catechism asks concerning Baptism in Question 69 "How art thou admonished and assured by holy baptism, that the one sacrifice of the Cross is of real advantage to thee?" And again in Question 75 we are asked: "How art thou admonished and assured (continued on page 12)
GENETICS IN GENESIS

I trust the reader is familiar with the history recorded in Genesis 27, 28, 29, and 30 of Jacob’s flight to Padan-Aram, the home of his uncle Laban, in order to escape the burning wrath of his brother Esau. You will also recall the dealings Jacob had with his uncle Laban and how God prospered Jacob as he had promised. There is one particular transaction between Jacob and Laban to which I would like to call your attention at which is found in Genesis 30: 27-43. Jacob had made a bargain with Laban to accept all the ring streaked, speckled, and grizzled offspring as his wages. Laban then, accepting Jacob’s offer, separated the spotted animals and left Jacob with the solid colored animals. Jacob then employed his secret scheme to produce spotted animals from solid colored parents. He, as you will remember, put sticks, from which he had peeled part of the bark, in the watering trough so that the animals would be impressed by the white spots and produce spotted offspring. From the results of Jacob’s scheme one would conclude that it worked admirably; but upon further consideration of the incident one must conclude that the scheme was a fraud.

The study of inheritance, called genetics, has long ago disproved the theory that external factors such as the spotted rods can affect the type of offspring to be produced. Geneticists tell us that every plant, animal, and man has two factors called genes for every characteristic in their organism. For example, in the case of Jacob’s goats, each goat had two genes or factors for the color of coat which he bore. Now one of these genes was for solid color and the other for spotted coat. Since the animals with which Jacob dealt were solid colored we can conclude that the gene or factor for solid color was stronger or dominant over the gene for spotted color. Therefore, although the animals looked to Jacob as if they were solid colored they were actually spotted “underneath.” Since they were spotted “underneath” they naturally would produce a good number of offspring which were speckled, spotted, or grizzled.

Now I can hear some of you say: “But why bring all this about genes and Genetics into the story? Couldn’t God have used the spotted rods to make the animals reproduce as they did?” The answer is: “Yes, He could have but he didn’t.” Genesis 31:10-13 shows us that God, through a dream, told Jacob that his scheme was useless and taught him some of the genetics explained above.

(continued on page 16)
MODERNISM

I ITS ORIGIN AND PURPOSE

IN BOTH of Paul's Epistles to Timothy we are warned that the time will come when men will not endure sound doctrine, but having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts, who will turn their ears away from the truth, giving heed to doctrines of devils, through the hypocrisy of men that speak lies, branded in their own conscience as with a hot iron.

Today, more than ever before, men are doing this very thing. Modernism was especially invented for this purpose. The lodges and secret societies of our day had to have a "form of godliness, but denying the power thereof", in order to camouflage their nefarious works of darkness which are legion; to appear before men as good, honest, and religious people; to soothe their convicting consciences; and to provide a world wide religion to which all men could subscribe without having any scruples against the lodge system whatsoever. To accomplish this end, "a few earnest men (Freemasons) interpreting religion in ethical and spiritual terms, and anxious to escape the disrupting controversies and prejudices incident to insistence upon a dogmatic or ceremonial test of fellowship, chose James Anderson, minister of the Scottish Presbyterian church in Piccadilly, London, and John Theophilus Desaguliers, son of a French Protestant clergyman, with other men of recognized ability, to construct, out of ancient Masonic principles and practices a constitution for the Grand Lodge of England. (Freemasonry was founded in 1717 A.D. at London, S.B.) They recommended "A universal creed, on the plan of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of Mankind," one that would include good men of all forms of religion, all nationalities, and all stations of life. The new constitution, which they formulated and recommended, was adopted in 1723, and on that basis an institution almost as extensive as humanity, and noted for its effective work in many spheres of life has been built up." Ever since that time the Lodge and Modernism have worked together. Today modernism is officially and most effectively spread and controlled by the Federal Council of Churches, which is mainly composed of and run by lodge people. Modernistic ministers often honor groups of lodge members either in their services at their churches or at lodge meetings at their lodge halls. Essentially the religion of Modernism, Freemasonry and Communism are the same and were made to serve the same twofold purpose; that is to banish Living God, His Anointed, and His people from the face of this earth and to exalt man as god in the place of the Living God.

Modernism denies God as Creator. It teaches that God has no existence apart from the universe and never had.
universe is eternal and there never was such a thing as creation. The earth came into existence by evolutionary processes. The world runs by itself without the providence of God. All the catastrophes that occur on the earth such as floods, earthquakes, famines, epidemics, thunder, lightning, wind, etc. are not explained as God's righteous judgments upon a wicked world, but are explained as natural phenomena.

What then is the modernistic conception of God? They teach that man is equal with God and that God is essentially man's higher self. "God is neither a being, nor an existence of any sort, but rather an order of nature which includes all men and all the processes as aspiring social life." (Edward Scriber Ames). Jesus Christ, they teach, is not the Son of God, but an idyllic figure, the flower of humanity, and the master product of evolution. His virgin birth, His miracles, His resurrection, ascension, and return to judgment are merely legendary exaggerations. Jesus is supposed to have died for the principles for which he stood, that is his meekness, kindness, longsuffering, mercy, goodness, etc. They teach the Jesus was kind-hearted to all people whether they were good or bad. I doubt very much whether Jesus was so nice to all the men of His day when I read portions of Scripture such as Matthew 23. He can and does emit volumes of wrath and scorn against the hypocrites of His day and no less in our day. The Holy Spirit, according to Modernism, is just a lot of impulses to righteousness that come to men. Thus Modernism seeks to dethrone the Triune God and seeks to exalt man as god instead. This is the reason why all men, no matter what their religion, are welcome in the liberal churches.

In spite of their beliefs these modernists will still pretend to act like Christians. Their religious (?) services, prayers, and benevolent deeds, and functions are broadcast in the daily papers and spread forth over the radio continuously. This they do to be seen of men. Especially on our Christian Holidays do they outwardly appear very pious, but inwardly they are a den of spiritual robbers of the true significance of these holidays. On Christmas the Babe of Bethlehem is crowded out by the purchasing, receiving, and giving of gifts and cards, Christmas trees, tinsel, wrappings, etc. Their praises to God's Son are sandwiched between their sinful songs of this world and their praises to Santa Claus. (And let us beware that we do not sacrifice our children upon the altar of Santa Claus), that is by allowing them to see the Santa Claus parade (even skipping Catechism on Saturday morning and to delude them with that wicked Santa Claus myth). Then too, they can talk and sing so much of "peace on earth and good will toward men", while the current events loudly proclaim that there is no peace to the wicked. On Good Friday there is much rending of the garment, but not of the hearts. (Luke 23:27-31). On Easter morning they change the glory of the Risen Lord for the likeness of an image of corruptible man, (showing off of new
Easter togs) of birds and of creeping things, (Easter eggs and chicks) and of four footed beasts. (Easter bunnies) Rom. 1:23. Mother's Day and Father's Day are blatantly observed in the place of Ascension Day and Pentecost. Also consider the deviltry that takes place on Reformation Day, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day. Modernistic churches are as silent as the grave as for the true significance of these days are concerned. On Thanksgiving Day they have (if they have any at all) their service on the evening before so that they will have the whole holiday to serve the god of their belly. Modernism's connivance with the commercialization and paganization of our Christian Holidays and with wicked men in general always reminds me of the following:

Wherefore do the nations rage
And the people vainly dream
That in triumph they can wage
War against the King Supreme?
Christ He's Son a scoff they make,
And the rulers plotting say:
Their dominion let us break,
Let us cast their yoke away.

Thus speaks the Lord to wicked men:
My statutes why do ye declare?
Why take my covenant in your mouth,
Since ye for wisdom do not care?
For ye my holy words proclaim
And cast them from you in disdain.

My next installment will treat Modernism's false plan of redemption and sanctification for the salvation of its adherents.

TRUTH VS. ERROR
(continued from page 8)
in the Lord's Supper, that thou art a partaker of that one Sacrifice of Christ, accomplished for thee on the Cross, and of all His benefits?"

Hence, not what man promises to do for God, but what God promises us, assures us of in His Word is the real implication of the Sacraments as a rite. It is, indeed, Mystery (Sacramentum) of salvation in Christ; that which is revealed for our salvation. It is not primarily our promise to God, but it is His promise to us!

Such is the truth of the Word of God against all the errors of Phariseeism, legalism, Roman Catholicism. It will be to our profit to discuss this matter in a later issue. D. V. till then.

THE RADIANT LIFE
Opals often become dull; but, when held in the warm palm of the hand, they regain their lustre. Christians often let their light grow dim, dulled by the subtle influence of the worldly atmosphere; but, when we are held close in the warm, loving hand of God, in close, loving fellowship with His Spirit, the glow comes again and gleams in our every word and act.—The American Holiness Journal.
I have this question bearing of Ca’n.
Said Cain to the Lord:
“My punishment is greater than I can
bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out
this day from the face of the earth;
and from thy face I shall be hid; and
I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond
in the earth; and it shall come to pass
that every one that findeth me shall
slay me.”
Must these words of Cain be construed
as a confession of sin and a quest for
grace and pardon?
Was the Lord’s answer a kind of indirect
reply to the effect that what Cain sought
—grace and pardon—he also found?

TO DISCOVER the true meaning of
Cain’s words and the Lord’s reply we
must get Cain’s case before us in its
entirety and this in connection with his
brother Abel.
The two may have been twins. For
the notice, “And Adam knew his wife;
and she conceived”, is not repeated. The
text here reads, “And Adam knew Eve
his wife; . . . And she again bare his
brother Abel.” The respective occupa-
tion of the brothers may denote that of
the two, Cain was the stronger physi-
cally. It may also indicate how each was
disposed toward God. Abel chose the less
strenuous life of a keeper of sheep, while
Cain as tiller of the soil preferred to
wrestle with the curse of the ground.
In process of time it came to pass that
the two appeared before the Lord each
with his gift. Cain brought of the fruit
of the ground, Abel of the firstlings of
his flock and of the fat thereof. The
Lord had respect unto Abel’s offering,
but unto Cain’s offering He had not re-
spect. There was reason. Abel offered by
faith but not so Ca’n. The latter offered
in unbelief. We learn this from the
Scriptures at Hebrews 11:4. “By faith
Abel offered unto God a more excellent
sacrifice than Cain . . .”
Abel’s faith must be taken to explain
the kind of sacrifice he brought. He
brought the sacrifice by blood. This of-
fering signified prophetically Christ; it
thus proclaimed that with God there is
pardon of all iniquities for every sinner
who by the mercy of God wills to be
cleansed from all his sins by the blood
of Christ. This good will—this faith—
was ABEL’s. He craved God’s pardon,
thirsted after the righteousness of God
that is manifest without the law. He
believed that righteousness could be had
only if with this blood he was covered.
So as standing firmly in this faith and
to give expression to it, he selected from
his flock a firstling, shed its blood and
covered himself with it by presenting it
to the Lord.
And the Lord also replied by witness-
ing with his spirit in connection with his
typical sacrifice that he was righteous.
The Lord thus applied to his heart the
truth—the word of God—imposed upon
and proclaimed by his sacrifice.
On the other hand, to Cain's sacrifice the Lord had no respect, the reason being that it was not the sacrifice by blood. Cain had no need of this sacrifice. For he was an unbelieving, profane and wicked man. The Scriptures at 1 John 3:12 state that Cain was of that wicked one and that his works were evil. Being that kind of a man he hated God and the righteous Abel, and despised the blood of the covenant—the blood of Christ. Of his unbelief and profanity the kind of offering he brought was indicative. He brought to the Lord the fruit of the ground. He said not in his heart that by himself he was a vile sinner before God. And therefore he had no need of God's pardoning mercy and redeeming grace, of the sacrifice by blood to give expression to his faith in God through Christ; for that faith was not in him.

Yet Cain took notice of God. Being a godless man he was afraid of God. He knew about God. He knew about the original rectitude and innocence of his parents, and about their disobedience, fall, and expulsion from the garden. For his parents had instructed him, certainly. And yonder, east of the garden, was the flaming sword that turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life. That token of the severity of God was constantly before his eye. And he concluded that it might be expedient for him to ward off God's wrath and ingratiate himself with God by honoring Him with some of the fruit of the ground, not of God's but of Cain's ground. So he brought his gift thinking to enrich God thereby and as insisting that God should also feel honored and smile upon him and agree to walk with him in his unrighteousness.

And therefore God had no respect unto his gift. God despised Cain and his sacrifice. And by his gift Cain, too, obtained witness in his heart but a witness to the effect that his sacrifice was an abomination in God's sight and that he himself was wicked and damned if he repented not.

Cain's anger burned against God. "He was wroth and his countenance fell." The Lord rebuked him not in His love but in His wrath; for as the sequel reveals, Cain was reprobated. But he had to be without excuse. So the Lord commanded him to forsake his wickedness and repent. Said the Lord to him, "Why art thou wroth, And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee is his desire. But thou shalt rule over him," that is, 'Thy wrath, Cain, is wicked. For thou art angry with Me. But thou shouldest be angry with thyself and praise My wrath. For thou dost not well. Thou spurnest the blood of My sacrifice and thus despisest the riches of my goodness and hatest thy righteous brother. Lay aside thy wrath and repent.'

But Cain repented not. For the Lord hardened his heart. But God was beyond Cain's reach. So he vented his spite upon Abel. For Abel was righteous and being righteous, had taken God's side openly, of course. It means that he, too, was calling Cain to repentance. But this
was more than Cain could endure. The text states that “Cain talked with Abel, and further that on a day when they were in the field together, Cain rose up against Abel his brother and slew him.

So did Cain’s wrath seemingly triumph over the righteous Abel. And Cain was satisfied. But the Lord had seen all and now took Abel’s side. The manner of God’s approach leaves Cain still more without excuse. Instead of setting out with accusing him, the Lord put to Cain a question, “Where is Abel thy brother?” But instead of confessing his murder of a righteous man, Cain breathed defiance. This was his reply, “I know not. Am I my brother’s keeper?” But Cain could not trifle with God. “What has thou done?” said the Lord to him. “The voice by brother’s blood crieth to me from the ground.” We recognize this speech as figurative. It was the righteous Abel himself crying with the saints of all ages, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth,” here the wicked, prosecuting and reproved Cain.

Abel’s prayer was heard. Said the Lord to Cain, “And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; when thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond thou shalt be in the earth.”

The working out of the curse as it was to operate in Cain’s life would be that the ground which he tilled would with- from him its strength. Only through great toil would Cain henceforth be able to wrest from the soil the means for his support. And a fugitive and a vagabond he was to be in the earth. He would roam the earth without being able to come to rest. And the impulse by which he was to be activated would be fear—fear awakened and sustained by the voice of accusing conscience. He would flee from place to place in the imagining that every one was bent on slaying him.

And so he said to the Lord, “My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that everyone that findeth me shall slay me.”

These words of Cain must not be construed as a confession of sin and a plea for pardon and grace. Cain’s soul continued to breathe hatred and rebellion, and in uttering this speech in the Lord’s ears he verily was adding insult to injury. What he meant to be telling God is that he would soon be killed and that therefore God’s sentence could not possibly go into execution. But the Lord would take care of that. “Whosoever shall kill Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.” Thus the sentence would go into execution by all means. Cain would die a natural death. If men would desire to kill Cain, the Lord restrained them by putting a mark upon Cain and by laying the speech of that mark “kill thou not Cain, Beware” on men’s hearts, so that everyone would fear to do him injury.
Just what that mark was is not revealed.

Thus certainly the Lord's answer was not a kind of indirect reply to the effect that what Ca\(\text{n}\) sought he also found, namely pardon and grace. And this for the simple reason that Cain sought no pardon and grace but continued all the days of his life impenitent and defiant; for the Lord sovereignly hardened his heart.

Cain had understood G\(\text{d}\) well. He was to be driven from the face of the earth as God had said. He was to roam the earth "like the chaff that the wind driveth away" (Ps 1:4). But this punishment did not overtake him as a fatalistic necessity. For Cain himself voluntarily went out from the presence of the Lord and dwelt in the land of Nod east of the garden, thus in the land of flight and unrest and ceaseless wanderings. Such is the meaning of the word "nod." Hence, the notice that he dwelt in this land must not be taken to mean that in this region he found rest for his soul. He did not.

So did Cain choose to leave the presence of the Lord, namely that particular region near the gate of paradise where the Lord continued to dwell with His people now for Christ's sake and to reveal Himself to them in the face of Christ as symbolized by the typical sacrifice by blood as the God of their salvation. This place and the people that dwelt there—God's believing people—did Cain in his depravity of heart and mind now forsake to take up his abode in the land of Nod. So far was he from repenting of his sins and seeking God's pardon. He continued all his life and in his wicked, reprobated generations to breathe defiance against God. This was but so much more proof for the correctness of my answers.

**NATURE STUDY**
(continued from page 9)

"And it came to pass at the time that the flock conceived, that I lifted up mine eyes, and saw in a dream, and, behold the he-goats which did leap upon the flock were ring streaked, speckled, and grizzled." (Genesis 31:10).

The dream shows that the animals that Jacob thought were solid colored were actually spotted. Besides teaching Jacob in this dream that his scheme was false, God also clearly taught Jacob a lesson in faith. He clearly showed him that it was not his cunning schemes that had caused him, first of all, to receive the birth-right blessing instead of his brother or that had caused his material increase later in life. "It was only because of the sovereign favor of his covenant God that he received the birth-right" * and the material wealth.

*J. P. Van Haitsma The Supplanter Undeceived; p. 92.
**The Military Mail Bag**

**JANE SCHIPPER**
Grand Rapids, Michigan

HEY, FELLOWS! You're slipping! Only two letters for this month! Must be no one has anything to say. We thought you were all letter writers, so we don't have anyone to take your place. I'll grant you, I don't like to write letters, but I do like to receive them, so that means I write them whether I like to or not. Otherwise, you know what happens. So how about helping me out? You see, I'm supposed to have at least four pages for each issue of Beacon Lights, and this time it looks like there will only be, at the most, two pages.

Seriously, though, if you have any complaints, let us know. Perhaps you have some ideas as to what you'd like to see in "your" column. Another thing, I've heard rumors that some of you don't want to write because, oh, perhaps your spelling isn't up to par, you don't have enough to say, etc. We don't care about these things! ! ! After all, some of you are in Germany or Japan, but wherever you are things are a lot different than back home. So why not tell us about it?

I'll end my part by saying: Just LET US HEAR FROM YOU! ! !

And now for our first letter, which is from Harry Pieksma, from our Bellflower Church:

"This letter is serving a two-fold purpose. First of all I want to give you my thanks for sending the Beacon Lights each month. Toward the end of the month I always find myself looking for Beacon Lights. I never thought as much of our magazine as I have since enlisting in the Air Force. Now it is an important link between myself and the Church.

"My second purpose for this letter is a change in address.

"My home is in Bellflower, Calif. I am 1400 miles from home, but it is only 4 hours and 10 minutes by air. Last month I made the trip. Was it ever wonderful to get home again!

"Here at Sheppard I am taking the B-36 course. The maintenance of the craft will some day be my duty here. That is a lot of work, for the B-36 is the "World's Largest Bomber."

"Once again, thanks for Beacon Lights,

Yours in Christ,

Pfc. Harry W. Pieksma
A F 19-387-803
3758 Student Tng. Sqd.
Sheppard A.F.B., Texas"

We're glad to hear that you fellows are enjoying Beacon Lights, and thank you for taking the time to let us hear from you, Harry.

* * *

Another is from Ernie Van Weelden, who many of you will remember:

"Dear Christian Friends:

"I received my first Beacon Lights a few weeks ago. I enjoyed it very much. Also our other church papers, and Radio Sermons. These and our Bible are our spiritual food here. The army chaplains
haven't much spiritual food for us, as Prot. Ref. servicemen. For we find ourselves mixed in with the youth of the wicked world in which we live. We must ever be on our guard, lest we fall into the temptations which they have to offer. Drinking, gambling and profanity is part of their everyday life from early morning unt'il night. They have their movies over here, too. It's nothing to be left alone in the tent when they have a movie. Many times life looks gloomy; but we must not be disheartened. For behind the scene is the hand of God. Let us fear Him, and know that He brings H.s judgments upon men for their wickedness, and that our salvation is in His son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

I remain,

Your friend in Christ,
Pfc. Ernest A. Van Weelden,
US 55-068-052
25th M.P. Co., A.P.O. 25
c/o P.M., San Francisco, Calif.

Thanks for writing, Ernie, and also for the picture.

OUT OF THIS LIFE

Out of this life I'm unable to take
Things of silver and gold I make.
All that I cherish and hoard away,
And I leave, on this earth must stay.
All that I gather, and all that I keep,
I must leave behind when I fall asleep.
And I wonder often what I shall own
In that other life, when I pass alone.
What shall they find, and what shall they see
In the soul that answers the call for me?
Shall the Great Judge learn, when my task is through,
That my spirit has gathered some riches too?
Or shall at the last it be mine to find
That all that I'd worked for I'd left behind?

—Author Unknown.
a. How the apostle comes to this theme.

WE MUST understand that this section is closely connected to the preceding verse and forms a sort of parallel to it. But it is a parallel which elaborates in fuller detail. This is plain first of all from the terms used. In verse 21, the apostle uses the term “world”; but in 22ff, he uses the terms “Jews” and “Greeks”. Secondly, this is plain also from the original Greek text. Verse 22 is introduced with the same word as used to introduce verse 21; and we should translate thus: “Since also the Jews, etc.”

The apostle declares in verse 22 that “Greeks seek after wisdom.” That the Jews ask for or require a sign is understandable. As a nation they had been instructed to look for the Messiah whose coming would be with signs and wonders. The sign they required however was that of worldly power. Hence when Jesus was in their midst, claiming that He was the Christ, we find these Jews again and again asking for a sign. (See Matt. 12:38; Matt. 16:1 and John 6:30) But a weak and humiliated Jesus could not be Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One, for according to the Jews this Christ had no power. It is striking as well as instructive to note what Jesus answers the Jews in the passages referred to. In short He says, a wicked and adulterous nation seek after a sign, but no sign shall be given other than that of Jonah. It is apparent that Jesus meant to say: The only sign of power you will find in Me is the fact that I will rise again from the dead on the third day.

The Greeks, on the other hand, had no Bible, and were therefore left to their own reasonings. Accordingly, they sought with the purpose of attaining wisdom. They were speculators, as is evident from Acts 17:23. The object of their search they would obtain in the way of logical reasoning, looking for tangible proofs. The wisdom they sought was none other than human philosophy.

“But”, says the apostle in verse 23, “we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block, but to the Gentiles foolishness.” There is emphatic contrast and sharp antitheses here as indicated in the word “but”. And we have advisedly used the word “Gentiles” instead of the word “Greeks” as the translation has it. The Greek text has two readings here, and the King James Version has adopted the second reading.
The first reading which has “Gentiles” is the more difficult, and should therefore be chosen. The term “Gentiles” is of course a broader term, inclusive of more than those of Greek nationality. It would appear that the apostle would have us understand that the impact of the preaching of Christ crucified is universal in scope. And in the terms “Jews” and “Gentiles” you have the two classifications of humanity upon whom this impact is made.

The preaching of Christ crucified is a stumbling block for the Jews. A stumbling block is something thrown in the way over which the Jews will fall and break their neck. Our word “scandal” comes from the same word here translated: “stumbling-block”. And a scandal is a rumor the evident purpose of which is the ruination of the one concerning whom the scandal is spread. The question may be asked: is the preaching of Christ crucified a stumbling-block placed before the Jews by God in order that they might fall? Or is the whole matter subjective? Do the Jews consider it a stumbling-block? It is evidently the apostle’s intention to emphasize the former, namely, that the preaching of Christ crucified is in God’s intention and decree a stumbling-block to the Jews. Christ is become a rock of offense which they will stumble over to their destruction.

And to the philosophical Greeks and all who would seek salvation by their own wisdom, the preaching of Christ crucified is foolishness. In verse 18 we saw already that same truth when the apostle declared that the “Word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness”. Thus the apostle comes to speak of Christ as the power and the wisdom of God.

b. What this means.

In the last part of verse 24 the apostle speaks of “Christ of God the power and of God the wisdom”. The original text does not have “the power of God and the wisdom of God”, but the word “God” is placed in an emphatic position. It is therefore not a power of God, but God’s power; not a wisdom of God, but God’s wisdom.

We must understand, of course, that the apostle is still speaking of his preaching as in verse 23. In the latter verse he said: But we preach (i.e., we herald, i.e., to deliver the word or ambassador) Christ crucified. And in verse 24 he continues with “we preach” understood: “We preach Christ of God the power and of God the wisdom.” We must understand therefore that the preaching of Christ crucified is the revelation of God’s power and wisdom. What the Jews were asking for and didn’t find in Christ was there nevertheless; and what the Gentiles were seeking for and didn’t find in Christ was nevertheless there. And not only so, but this still greater truth that in the preaching of the crucified Christ, the Man of Golgotha, God demonstrated His power and wisdom. Concerning the terms “power and wisdom” we refer you to previous outlines.

c. To whom it is true.

The question is: To whom is
preaching of Christ crucified God's power and wisdom? And the answer is given in verse 24: "to them who are the called ones, who are both of the Jews and the Greeks." And it is emphasized here: TO THEM ONLY. Most assuredly the doctrine of a well-meant offer of grace in the preaching of the Gospel falls to pieces in the light of this text. Notice: while the Gospel of Christ crucified is preached to all (Jews and Greeks) it is really a call only to the called. In them God's power and wisdom, demonstrated in the cross and revealed in the Gospel, works.

And if you ask: “Why is this so?” the answer must be found in verse 25. “Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

Here it must be emphasized that “foolishness” and “weakness” are not actually attributes of God as the text might suggest. The apostle does not mean to say that God is actually foolish and weak. How could he ever say such a thing? No, these terms “foolishness” and “weakness” would better be translated by the terms “the foolish thing” and “the weak thing”. Though it might not be beyond those who are not called and who have not experienced God's power and wisdom to ascribe foolishness and weakness to God, this is not what the apostle says. Rather he speaks of “the foolish thing” i.e., the cross. In the estimation of men apart from Christ the cross is the foolish thing; but because the cross is God's, it is wiser than men.

Questions for Discussion:

1. May we say that all men who come under the hearing of the Gospel are called?
2. What is the calling in Canons III, IV, 8?
3. Is the preaching of the Gospel itself a power of God unto salvation, or does God add something to it to make it a power?
4. Will those described in Heb. 6:4-6 also speak of the preached Gospel of Christ crucified as a foolish and weak thing?
5. If God is the Incomparable One, how can the apostle speak of Him in the comparative sense? (Verse 25)

OUTLINE 10

THE CHURCH IS PRODUCT OF DIVINE WISDOM

I Cor. 1:26-31

a. Factual proof.

IT IS evident that the apostle in this section begins a new paragraph. This is apparent in the special address to the
“brethren.” However, it is not a loosely connected thought which he here introduces. Rather, as the word “for” indicates, he continues the thought begun already in verse 18 and concluded in verse 25.

Would the Corinthian Church see the truth of the last statement of the apostle that “the foolish thing of God is wiser than men, and the weak thing of God is stronger than men”, they must look at themselves. We can translate thus: “For look at your calling, brethren”. Though both translations make good sense, we choose the latter for the simple reason that it is evidently the purpose of the apostle from here to the end of the chapter to prove the truth of the preceding context by the actual experience of the Corinthians.

When the Lord efficaciously called them and they became conscious of the truth that Christ was the power of God and the wisdom of God (vs. 24), they also must have noticed that not many wise, mighty and noble, according to the standard of the flesh (world), were among them. The effect of their calling was not that many of them become wise, powerful and noble men by worldly standards. Though there may have been a few who were learned, influential in public affairs, and of noble birth, the general run of Christians were unlearned, of a servile background, and in many cases ignoble. And as the members of the Church were, so were her leaders. With few exceptions, they were of low caste, most of them like the members of the Church themselves.

b. Eternal cause.

God has chosen. And in His elective counsel, which always precedes the things and ordains them, God has chosen; He has made a choice of the things which are foolish, and the things which are weak. We shall see in a moment what these things are, but first notice how the apostle continues the list of things God has eternally chosen and ordained. They include also the base things, and the things which are despised, yes, even the things which are not.

When the apostle speaks of the foolish things of the world, etc., he is referring to things which are foolish in the eyes of the world. Of this he had spoken in the preceding context, but he here is here to emphasize the truth that things which the world counts foolish, weak, base and despised are the very things God has chosen. These things include the cross, the crushed and bleeding Saviour, the atonement by the blood of the cross, the preaching of the cross, etc.

When we come in this series to “the things that are not”, a question arises: To what do these refer? Surely these cannot refer to things that belong to the same category of things mentioned before, for how could the world judge or express a verdict in respect to things that are not? We understand, therefore, by “the things that are not” those things which, as far as men are concerned, have no existence, but which nevertheless were chosen by God and ordained by Him to be brought to


such as the life of regeneration, faith, righteousness, holiness, eternal glory, etc. According to the standard of the flesh, these things can have no existence, but God has chosen them none the less along with all the other things, and that with expressed purpose.

c. Divine purpose.

God's purpose in choosing all these things is really two-fold. In the first place, to confound, to put to shame, to bring to nought the wisdom, might and power of the world. When He chooses the foolish things, He puts the wisdom of the wise to shame. When He chooses the weak in the estimation of the world, He puts to shame the strength of the things, and things despised, He confounds the noble. When He chooses the things that are not, He brings to nought the things that are.

You see, the world (and the standard of the flesh, which is the standard by which the world reckons) judges what is wise, powerful and noble to be that which is substantial, that with which men ought to reckon. But God has purposed everlastingly to make the wisdom of the wise foolishness.

In the second place, His purpose is also stated in verse 29: "That no flesh should glory in His presence." God is jealous of His own honor. Nothing of man shall ever come into His glorious presence. No works of men. All of man's invention, culture and genius, shall be burned with fire. All the wisdom and power and nobility of men is of no account with Him. Only His Own work shall be saved. And He will glorify Himself only in His Own work.

God will be glorified in His Church, and in His grace as it shines in that Church, which is "in Christ Jesus". That is why the apostle adds here in verses 30, 31, "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption; that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." Everything that the Church, the called of God, is, or ever shall be, is of God. And this is so because He has placed us 'in Christ Jesus' in Whom we have obtained redemption with all its attending blessings of true wisdom, righteousness and sanctification.

Paul quotes here, giving his own sense to the words of Jeremiah 9:23, 24 (which see). In verse 29 he said "that no flesh should glory in His presence"; i.e., nothing of man shall be praised before God. This negative assertion is changed in verse 31 into a positive form: "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." God has created a people that shall praise Him and extol His glory. Is. 43:21 "This people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth my praise."

d. Devastating argument against partisanship.

Really that evil partisanship which the apostle had condemned in the preceding context was nothing more than a judgment according to the standard of the flesh, while at the same time it was a glorifying in the flesh. Those guilty of this sin had valued their leaders on the
same basis as the world, according to the triple standard of human wisdom, power and nobility.

And when the apostle had shown what really constituted the contents of the preaching and who were really the preachers, he gave evil partisanship a terrific jolt. If there was to be any glorying at all, let him that glorieth, glory only in the Lord.

Questions for Discussion:
1. When a minister is called by a congregation, are no standards after the flesh to be reckoned with?
2. If God chooses the foolish things, are we also to do the same in our choices?
3. Is it wrong for a minister or elder to take pride in his work accomplished in and for the Church?
4. Why is redemption mentioned last in verse 30?

OUTLINE 11

THE PREACHING OF THE WISDOM OF GOD

B. I Cor. 2:1-16

1. I Cor. 2:1-5 The Apostle's Preaching by The Power of God.

a. The connection with the foregoing.

THE WORD 'and' which introduces this section clearly indicates that there is a close connection with what the apostle wrote in the preceding chapter. In order to draw the Church at Corinth away from their wranglings about party leaders and their apparent glorification of men and human wisdom and power, and to substantiate further the truth that the Church is really only the product of Divine wisdom, Paul reminds them of the manner of his preaching among them when he had organized this Church.

b. Paul denies that he ever attempted to approach the Church with words of man's wisdom. He asserts that he "came not according to (or with) superfluity of speech or of wisdom." (vs. 1). He had decided "not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and this One crucified." (vs. 2). In fact, he made his approach "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling." (vs. 3). And again, "My speech and my preaching was not in persuasive words of wisdom." (vs. 4).

All the vain-glorious attempts of men to influence or to persuade others to their line of thinking, the apostle had purposely avoided when he came with the Gospel to Corinth. Verse 3 seems to suggest that the apostle when he first came to Corinth was not well physically and mentally. Lenski in his commentary suggests this. But this can hardly be so. First of all we read nothing nor even have a hint of this in the narrative recorded in the Book of Acts, Chapter 18. And secondly, there is good reason to believe that the condition referred to by the apostle was not due to some sickness or physical infirmity. We rather believe that the weakness, fear and trembling, are indicative of the personal spirit of the apostle at the time of his arrival at Corinth. He denies, accordingly, that he came to Corinth in a complacent attitude. He had traveled hard, and had ex-
experienced much hardship because of the Gospel. And undoubtedly he expected to meet much opposition also in Corinth. The narrative in Acts 18 emphasizes how the Lord had come to cheer him. A good preacher never enters his pulpit in a self-complacent attitude. Rather he trembles when he makes his approach with the Gospel.

c. The apostle positively sets forth his manner and purpose in preaching.

1/ He was determined not to know anything but Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That was the theme of the message he had to bring. All that he had to say was built around this central truth, a truth which worldly wisdom called foolishness. This theme the apostle always developed in his preaching. (see Gal. 1:1). Notice, that it is “Jesus Christ and this One crucified”. In verse 1 this theme is called “the testimony of God.” There is a second reading here which has “the mystery of God”. We believe it is immaterial which reading is chosen, since both have to do with the same thing. However, since the term “mystery” occurs again in vs. 7, it is not impossible that we should read it thus here. The mystery of God which was hidden in ages past (Col. 1:26) is now made plain in Christ. (I Cor. 2:7; Rom. 16:25) It is the mystery of which God is the subject, the author and revealer. Paul means to say that he did not think it fit, or his business, to know anything for his message beyond this mystery of God. Jesus Christ (His Person and Office) and in particular, Him crucified, that was the heart of his message.

2/ This message he brought “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”. (vs. 4). That was the mode of his preaching. Paul remained in an entirely different sphere than that suggested in the first part of this verse, and he operated in an entirely different way: “in demonstration of the Spirit and of power”. There are some who make this “Spirit” the inward spirit of the apostle, as opposed to the superficial expression mentioned in the first part of the verse “in persuasive words of wisdom”. And the power is said to be “moral power” rather than “intellectual acuteness”. We see no reason why the Spirit could not be the Holy Spirit, and the power that of the Holy Spirit. Not only does this make good sense, but it is harmony with the context. In the context, the apostle had been speaking of the power of God. (Chap. 1:18; 2:5). And in verse 10 of this Chapter, we have the continuation of the thought expressed here. We must understand, of course, that there is no true preaching of the Gospel without the power of the Holy Spirit. The two are inseparably connected, and together experienced by the true preacher as Paul was. His preaching, therefore, was by inspiration, instigation and control of the Holy Spirit of Christ.

3/ And the purpose is expressed in verse 5: “in order that your faith might not be in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”. The theories of men are fickle and unstable. The philosophies of men change from time to time, even their philosophies of religion. But the only secure place for our faith to stand
and to rest is in God’s power and the infallible Word of the Holy Spirit. And the apostle is concerned only with this faith of the Church as it is connected to Christ Jesus.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Is it permissible for the minister to alter his method of preaching from time to time to win his audience?
2. How can one know whether the preaching is a demonstration of the Spirit and of power?
3. Does the word ‘faith’ in verse 5 refer to the doctrine of the Church, or to the living bond with Christ?

OUTLINE 12

THE WISDOM OF GOD IN A MYSTERY

I Cor. 2:6-8

a. Its meaning.

THE APOSTLE thus far has been negating the wisdom of the world. Now he will set forth the only, true, wisdom of God. It receives all the emphasis here. The original text suggests the apostle’s thought as something like this: “If it’s wisdom you are concerned about, then I’ll tell you what true wisdom is”.

It is first of all a wisdom “not of this world”. The word “world” (vss. 6, 7) is not the usual “cosmos”, but “aeons”. The former looks at the world from the point of view of its organic unity. The latter refers to the world from the point of view of its development in time. We could better translate the word by “ages”. The wisdom of which the apostle speaks does not have its source or origin in that world. Neither does it have its source in the “rulers of this age which are coming to nought”. It does not have its origin in the great ones who appear to control the development in the world. By that is meant not only governmental heads, such as Stalin, Churchill and Truman, but also men of science and invention, etc. These rulers with their wisdom always and even now are coming to nothing. If we understand this last remark, all worship of heroes would cease.

Secondly, it is God’s wisdom. That means that it has its source and origin only in God. It means, too, that God is the Subject of it. It is super-human. It is out of this world. It is Divine.

Thirdly, the apostle speaks of the Divine “Wisdom in a mystery”. We must not make the mistake here of associating the “mystery” with Paul’s speaking, as some would have it; as though the apostle said: “We speak in a mystery”. No, rather the mystery goes with wisdom, “We speak God’s wisdom in a mystery”. It is a wisdom which belongs to a mystery. And mystery does not refer to something concealed from us, as some like to think. Neither, as many say, does the mystery refer to something contrary to human reason or logic. The peculiar thing about the Scriptural idea of the mystery is that it is always revealed. If you compare all the passages where the term is found, you will find that the Bible always speaks of the mystery revealed. We will see in a moment that our passage, too, refers to the declaration of the mystery. True
also says "even the hidden mystery", but this refers to the fact that before the apostle spoke of it, it was hidden. But now it is revealed. It was hidden before in the counsel of God. That's why the apostle adds: "which God ordained before the ages unto our glory". This mystery is not something contrary to reason. God never speaks to us in contradictory language. He never says, e.g., white is black. He never says two times two is four in your world, but in mine it is five. But the mystery is the perfect demonstration of supreme, Divine wisdom.

This wisdom in a mystery, of course, refers to God's plan to bring His Church to glory through the deep way of sin and the cross and resurrection. Centrally this, through the way of the fall and wisdom in a mystery is Christ crucified whom Paul preached.

b. Its declaration.

Concerning this wisdom Paul says "we speak". Notice he no longer says "I" and "my" as he did in verses 1-4. He now speaks in the plural. And we must not understand here that the apostle is speaking in the so-called, polite, or majestic, plural. Rather he now includes all who properly preach the Gospel. The real preachers of the Gospel are only a voice through which God conveys His Gospel; His wisdom in a mystery, to men.

This wisdom is spoken "among them that are perfect". (vs. 6) By the "perfect" are not to be understood those who are sinless, as the Christian shall be when he is delivered from the body of this death. For this would make no sense here. Paul is speaking not to those of another world, but those living here in the Church of Corinth. But Paul refers to those who have reached a certain end (telos) or goal in being able to understand the wisdom of God. There are those in the Church who may be classified as "babes in Christ" (see 3:1); but there are also those who have arrived at spiritual maturity. Who, therefore, when they hear what Paul has to say concerning the wisdom of God, will be well able to understand, and to distinguish between this wisdom and that of this age and of the rulers of this age. Paul does not mean to say here that all the believers in Corinth were thus "perfect", for what he has to say in 3:1 would contradict this. But he is merely stating that he speaks this wisdom among those who will be well able to recognize it as the wisdom of God because they have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit which also accompanied the Word preached.

Questions for Discussion:

1. In what sense is the wisdom of God hidden?

2. Does verse 8 imply that the crucifixion of Christ was entirely the work of the rulers of this age?

3. Are we to understand that if the rulers had known about the wisdom of God in a mystery they would not have crucified Christ?

4. Why is the wisdom of the rulers of this age brought to nought?
REPORTS ON MASS MEETINGS . . .

REFORMATION DAY — HELD AT GRAND RAPIDS, MICH

REFORMATION DAY is a day in which we take time out from the humdrum of our existence to consider why we are Reformed, Calvinistic, Protestant Reformed or whatever you would like to call it, and why we are no more Roman Catholic. We investigate again the lives and deeds of the men who have been used by God in a peculiar way that the Church of all ages might remain pure. And we lay special emphasis on the man Martin Luther who had the courage to take the first step off the devilish pathway of Roman Catholicism. The Mass Meeting again erected a tribute to this great man.

There was appropriate music in the form of vocal solos and trumpet duets. There was praise and thanksgiving lifted to God in communal singing and scripture reading. And there were parts of the meeting when the attention was focused on the speakers chosen for the evening.

In a time when we enjoy the privileges of the Reformation we often forget the personality of the man who had the strength and conviction to give it to us. Rev. R. Veldman probably felt this when he presented to us a speech on "Luther the Man". (see following condensation).

But it was also the beginning of a new society year, and therefore there could be inspiration drawn from the Reformation that would lead us through another year of society life. Carl Reitsma pointed this out to us in his speech, "The Practical Implications of the Reformation". After showing that doctrinal knowledge is paramount to the practicing and the understanding of the principles of the Reformation, he listed for us three principles which the Reformation set in bold type for future generations. The first was "Justification by faith". Luther learned this the hard way; and we also, following his example, must look deeply at the awfulness of sin; and when we have seen it in all its horrors, must bow the penitent knee before the only one who can forgive all these sins.

The second principle was "The supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures". Enraged at the sale of indulgences by a man called Tetzel, Luther nailed his now famous 95 theses on the door of the Church at Wittenberg. This resulted in a synod where the famous Van Eck engaged Luther in debate. It was here that Luther would not flinch from the face of the pope but declared contrary to him that the common man could read the Bible for himself and uncover its hidden truths. This leads to the third principle that people have the right of private judgment. Luther is the living incarnation of these principles, and therefore to be really inspired and to sense the practical application of the Reformation we, too, must live up to these principles in our daily life.
THE MAN LUTHER

THE SHOT that was heard round the world, the lights went on again, the true church was liberated, freed from the yoke of the Roman Catholic church: that was the Reformation of 1517 and is our cause for celebration on October 30, 1951.

There were, of course, many reforms in many lands under many leaders who had many principles. The outstanding reformer, however, to whom we attach great meaning of the word Reformation is Martin Luther.

Martin Luther is well known to us. He was intensely human, possessing our virtues and faults, sharing joy, love and sorrow as we know them. Born in 1483, attending various schools, he finally entered the Augustinian monastery. His most striking appearance was at Wittenberg, October 31, 1517—on the eve of All Saints' Day, nailing his Ninety-five Theses, his protest against indulgences, to the door of the church. Then followed trials, his life in the castle at Wartburg and his death in 1546 at the age of 53.

Much has been written about Luther in many languages concerning many phases of his life. Because of the intense prejudice that prevailed, there arose two definite opinions concerning him. Always there were some who upheld him, others who cast him aside, some who loved him, others who hated him with intense hatred. What are some of these accusations against him still? In painting a picture of Luther, are some of his faults or "warts" unbecoming and undeserved? Shall they remain or should they be erased?

The first "wart" or accusation was that Luther was extremely ignorant. (But, is this a character fault?) No, one could not say Luther was ignorant—for he had a wide knowledge of the classics, was a brilliant linguist and knew many fields of learning.

Secondly, Luther being accused of lying or prevarication, we acknowledge that his own account of happenings seem rather obscure, giving three different dates for one happening. This may be due to forgetfulness and carelessness in small details as he grew older.

Thirdly, he is said to have had a terrible temper. This we cannot deny. This temper, however, he did, and we, as Christians, must always, try to overcome. We may have this "ball of fire" within us but must guide it aright: into the channel of zeal not temper. The "wart" remains—with reservation.

Fourthly, Luther is said to have been very coarse in his speaking, eating and manners. He was, for he was no gentleman. A peasant through and through, he remained so until he died. The age in which he lived was generally rough and his contemporaries would probably have the same characteristics. This "wart", too, remains—with reservation.

The fifth accusation, that of immorality, may be erased from the painting, for no proof has been found to support this—unless one would call breaking a monk's vow and becoming married an immoral deed.

The sixth "wart" of Luther, that of
being a glutton and wine-bibber may, too, be erased. Knowing Luther for an upright, honest man, could anyone say he would indulge in those very things he protested against so vehemently in his sermons?

The seventh, eighth and ninth “warts” may be forever erased from his picture—for, could we, knowing Luther as we do, accuse him of being lazy, he who worked as ten, of being mentally defective, he who wrote treatises, books pamphlets and gave sermons and lectures continually, of being a coward, he who feared not the devil and would die for his faith?

Of course, Luther was very human, as all leaders are, and as such, was slandered and reviled—as a true child of God always is. Always zealous, full of generosity and rejoicing when the cause of the Lord went on without him, never jealous—this man, with his virtues—and his faults—this hero of faith—was used as a vessel in the mighty hand of God that we may have the heritage we so enjoy today.

Hilda Ku’per

OSKALOOSA-PELLA MASS MEETING

THE REFORMATION Day mass meeting between Pella and Oskaloosa was held Sunday, November 4th, in our Pella Church. The meeting was opened with the singing of several Psalter numbers after which Rev. Gritters led in prayer.

Our Bible study was taken from II Kings 22:8-20. Rev. Gritters pointed out that in any reformation the basic reason is the same. After a departure from the word of God, God sends a great reformer. As soon as the true word is revealed he proclaims it to all the people even unto death.

The Oskaloosa society was in charge of the program. Alberta De Koning played two accordion solos, “Rock of Ages” and “God Be With You”. Henrietta Brink gave a reading on “John Huss, The Great Reformer”. May we, too, be thankful for a man like John Huss who gave his life that we may serve the Lord.

After a few closing remarks and a farewell to two of the Oskaloosa members who are leaving for Redlands, California, the societies joined in singing, “God Be With You”.

After singing Psalter Number 1 Rev. Howerzyl closed the meeting with prayer.

Herm Kelderian
Oskaloosa

There is that in God which is a shelter and refreshment to His people in all weathers and arms them against the inconveniences of every change. Is the weather cool? There is that in His favor which will warm them. Is it hot? There is that in His favor which will cool them. Great men have their winter house and their summer house but those that are at home with God have both in Him.—Matthew Henry.

Pastor Bob Leverly and his wife, Mary, were deep in thought as they drove out of the city and down the highway toward Leads Junction. A brisk wind was piling snow on the road, making driving difficult and hazardous. As they drove on, the storm increased in fury.

However, the thoughts of Bob and Mary were not centered primarily on the storm. They were thinking, hoping, praying about something far more important to them. They had just left the city where Bob had been supply pastor in the Ninth Avenue Church. Their labors at Ninth Avenue had been signally blessed. The spiritual life of the church had improved immensely. Shortly after Bob had volunteered to go to Leads Junction the church board of Ninth Avenue offered to give him the full responsibility of the pastorate. Bob would gladly have accepted the position had he not been convinced of his calling to Leads Junction.

A revival was certainly needed at Leads Junction. Previous ministers had either left voluntarily after repeated failure or had been rudely dismissed by the church board. Bob and Mary were also to experience much difficulty, occasionally to such extent that they were tempted to leave. They approached the Lord in prayer with each new trial and labored on until the end.

The various characters of the book are portrayed beautifully. There are Bob—young, vigorous, filled with a strong desire for the extension of God’s Kingdom; Mary—Bob’s wife, sincere in her faith, a great help to Bob in spiritual matters; Tuney Bangor—youthful, eager to serve the Lord, no matter what the cost; Nettie Waynesworth—very talkative, thoughtless when irritated; old Jake Hollis—faithful door-keeper of the church, zealous for the Kingdom; Elsa—Jake’s invalid wife, rejoiced at each triumph and prayed at each trial of Bob and Mary; Alta Colsprite—determined editor of the local newspaper, printed her paper to God’s glory; and Frank Waterspan—deacon of the church, put forth his efforts to hinder Bob’s work.

The book is interesting, easy to read, and revealing. Although certain objectionable factors, such as the altar call and the invitational type of gospel, are included in the story, the book as a whole cannot be condemned. Its errors are easily discerned and should not be
misleading. The few hours spent in reading this book are by no means wasted.

THE STREET SINGER by Sallie Lee Bell, Publisher, Zondervan Publ. House Priced $2.50.

The Street Singer is a novel of old New Orleans. The story has its setting in New Orleans immediately after the city was given to the Spanish by the French. The citizens, many of whom are of French parentage, rebel against Spanish rule. Rene Duval, one of the main characters of the story, is one of the leaders of the rebellion.

The leading character of the novel is Gabrielle Bronte. She appears first as a poor, but charming, street singer. Her mother has died. Her father is seriously ill. Gabrielle and her father had come to the city to find his half sister. They found that she had left for France earlier after freeing her slaves. They are staying by one of these former slaves, Marthe, as our story begins. It is here that Gabrielle's father is lying nearing death. Gabrielle is singing on the street, trying to collect enough money to enable her to purchase the much-needed medicine for her father. She is discouraged. Marthe, with her simple, childlike faith, introduces the Bible into her life.

When Gabrielle's father dies she is tempted to commit suicide. As she stands on the brink of the river, Rene discovers her and takes her home to his mother. Gabrielle and Mrs. Duval become intimate friends. Gabrielle, seeing her great sin, prays for deliverance.

Rene has already been carrying on a courtship with Celeste, a niece of the governor of New Orleans. Now he is attracted to Gabrielle also.

The author weaves an interesting story, touching on both the social and political life of Rene. The reader is surprised several times by the sudden turn of events. The story continues until at last Gabrielle is ready to give her life to save Rene's.

The author draws a dark picture of those who are not Christians and paints a bright picture of those who are. Gabrielle and Rene are idolized while Celeste and others are portrayed as darkly as possible.

The reader will no doubt realize immediately that all the acts of Gabrielle were not acts of faith. Even the which climaxes all that makes her a heroine is steeped in sin and would necessarily come from a weak or false faith, although it is not presented as such by the author.

The book is well worth reading, if not for its spiritual value, then at least for its literary value.

God's child or not—it is the same.
Upon each one some trials must fall.
The difference: Who trust His name.
Are by these things not harmed at
The Choral Society

of the

FIRST PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH

will present its Christmas Greeting with
the presentation of the contata

"And Peace On Earth"

and other Christmas numbers. The 85 voices plus soloist lead by Mr. A. Smith will present their program

DECEMBER 23, AT 9 O'CLOCK

Conveniently arranged after church services the Sunday before Christmas. it will take place in First Church.