BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

THE JUNE ISSUE FOR 1952

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BEACON LIGHTS

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VOLUME XII JUNE—1952 NUMBER 9

GRADUATES, WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

MISS DELLA VANDER VENNEN
Grand Rapids, Michigan

IT IS THE evening of your graduation exercises. I see you line up with your classmates to await the first chords of "Pomp and Circumstance". Your hand feels cold and damp. You are frightened by the eyes that will be upon you.

Graduation is commencement. You are declared ready for new beginnings. Time for you to contemplate. Parents and teachers concernedly inquire about your future. A peculiar and separate role is committed to each of you.

Has your training in a Christian school or perhaps a Protestant Reformed Christian school been a blessing to you? Has it brought you a little closer to the goal of thoroughly furnishing you unto all good works? You must now prove that education is essentially action. Learning is an active not a passive process. You have become educated when your head and your heart begin to work. Are you reluctant to go further or are you eager for the fray?

You have reached a time when many choices are to be made with respect to education, vocation, avocation, church affiliation, friendships, perhaps marriage, and you must choose your Master (God or Mammon). We hear so often that life is short but a bad choice can make time infinitely long. The direction of your way will depend upon whether the knowledge you received in your soul has its beginning in the fear of the Lord.

Do you plan to enroll in higher schools of learning? If you work faithfully it is well worth the time and effort. A Spanish proverb says, "The pleasures of the senses pass quickly; those of the heart become sorrow; but those of our mind are with us even to the end of our journey." Seek Christian teachers. "The instruction of fools is folly."

Remember that knowledge is of real use only when we serve God the better because of it. Acquire enough learning to make you humble. What an utter failure so many have become when their education has made them conceited! Christian education makes you see God in all things—acknowledges God, the Creator as the greatest poet, artist, sculptor, author, doctor, preacher, musician, teacher. Christian knowledge leads you to see more clearly the destructive nature of sin in all phases of life and you flee to Christ. Therefore an educated braggart is a contradiction.

Does your way lead to industry? Be

industrious but don't set your heart on the fruits of your industry. Take care not to be enslaved by that root of all evil. "Money is a good servant but a bad master." Invest your surplus funds properly but remember the only lasting securities are the treasures of heaven. We leave this world without purse or scrip.

Some of you will labor with your hands. God has much respect for a God-fearing laborer. That is why He says a laboring man is worthy of his hire and that the sleep of a laboring man is sweet. There is dignity in tilling the soil, out in the fields with God. Seek ideals in your task that it may not be drudgery. A carpenter or a decorator can be a great man and his finished product a work of art.

We hope some of you may seek the teaching profession. In this kingdom work and particularly in our Protestant Reformed schools it may be said, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the laborers are few." I wish I had the gift to describe to you the joys, the satisfaction, and the blessings derived from this great work. Even Webster was impressed by the loftiness and seriousness of a teacher's calling when he wrote: "If we work upon marble, it will perish; if on brass, time will efface it; if we rear temples, they will crumble into dust; but if we work upon immortal minds, and imbue them with principles, with the just fear of God and love of our fellow men, we engrave on the tablets something that will brighten to all eternity."

The calling of a minister or of a missionary might be impelling to you. "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

Some of you boys may be called upon to fight for your country. We hope you will be heroic. Not that we are looking for medals, but that you return unspotted by the world. Heroism is the brilliant triumph of the soul over sin and the flesh. This is only possible if you are fortified by the Truth in Jesus Christ.

As time advances some of your present friends and classmates drift away from you and new friendships will be made. Seek Christian friends and be a good friend to them—in their joys as well as in their sorrows. When you have found truly good friends, keep your friendships in constant repair. Assuage an injury you have made with an apology. Don't cherish friends that coax you away from our churches. We are heirs of a wonderful rich truth even though other churches may offer you more outwardly.

In your expectations and plans there will be many frustrations. Accept them bravely and prayerfully. Remember that God is not dead, and without Him not a hair of man's head falls. Be content with the portion assigned to you. Read much from God's Word in solitude, affliction or stress. The more we trust God the less danger of ulcers or neurosis.

Neither were our nervous systems made to endure too much feverish hurrying day after day. There must be time for healthy leisure—time to stare at the stars, to listen to birds and little children. Cultivate your love for art and music. I'm inclined to agree with Shakespeare that:

> "The man that hath no music
> in himself,
> And is not moved by concord
> of sweet sounds,
> Is fit for treasons, stratagems
> and spoils."

Seek companionship with good books. They are a great aid in focusing your

thoughts away from self—a happy, healthful relaxation.

You are all parts of God's infinite plan which is wholly wise and good. As covenant children you are heirs of salvation. However, since God made you rational beings, not puppets, God accomplishes your sanctification in the way of your striving. You must ever strive to enter in at the strait gate. Because the Right Man is on your side your striving will be winning. Your tomb will not be a blind alley but a thoroughfare to heavenly mansions.

CONVENTION IN HULL — 1952

WE HAVE BEEN asked to write an article to serve as an inspiration for the young people to attend the convention in Hull this summer. Whether or not it is possible to write such an article remains to be seen, but we do hope that we may serve to encourage as many young people to go to Hull this year as came to Kalamazoo last year...

For I am sure that Hull is expecting a big crowd, as big a crowd as if the convention were being held in the east. And the hearts and the hospitality in the west, and also of our people in Hull and the surrounding territory, is big enough to take care of all that come. There will be plenty to eat, served like they want to give you more. There will be places to go, places to which we as church-concious young people will be interested in going, places which perhaps many of us have heard about but never seen; and there will be things to do... many things (I was almost going to suggest rabbit hunting by carlight...) to occupy the short, only too short, time that the convention takes. Best of all, most of us will have to travel a few miles to get to Hull. What better way is there to spend a week of your vacation?

But then there is the convention itself. I really do not have to say anything about it... about the meetings and the things that happen only at young people's meetings just because they are young people's meetings, the singing, the fellowship, the informal arguments, the business meetings, the outings, and, of course, the BANQUET, and those final leave-taking moments with the refrains of "God Be With You 'Til We Meet Again" echoing thru the night, all belong only to our own young people's conventions which thru the years have meant so much and come to occupy such an important and worthwhile place in the society life of our young people... there we feel the "tie that binds our hearts in christian love" from east and west and north and south in the common confession of the same truth.

Are you going to miss it...?

We here in Kalamazoo are sympathizing, shall we say, at least, that we are thinking of the committee in Hull with our own experience still rather clear in our thoughts... thinking of all the anxious moments, of the seemingly endless plans and details, of all unfinished and tentative projects which can only be realized and brought to conclusion in the few hours which the convention actually takes... thinking, too, of the wonderful pleasure and enjoyment that was ours in entertaining all the young people. We are happy that the Board accepted the invitation of the Hull society. From our past contact with the young people in Hull we know that this year's convention will not be less worthwhile or valuable than any other. And we are sure that if the ef-

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fort is made to attend the convention in Hull all the young people will be happy that this opportunity to go to Sioux County was not declined and that extra work and time involved was not in vain.

If we may inject a serious note, we should notice, too, that it will be an important convention. Important from the business aspect, important for the future of the federation and especially for the future of Beacon Lights and the policies that govern the paper. It is imperative that good, talking delegates be elected to the convention, that they be encouraged to be present, and that as many visitors as possible also be present, so that as broad a segment of the young people as it is possible to get, may be in Hull to decide these questions. For they are matters which belong essentially to the young people, and should be decided by them.

We are not overlooking, and do not wish to forget, the spiritual side, which is really the only side, of our convention. The speeches, the devotions, the attention which given to the theme chosen by the host society from many points of view, is the attraction, should be the attraction, of the convention. But there we have the advantage of doing these things... listening, talking, discussing, studying, together, with representatives from the societies of most of the churches. All the activities of the convention are directed to the promotion of the spiritual welfare of the young people... and must be considered thus by those who attend.

Are you going to miss it... ? I am sure the good people of Hull will be disappointed if you do... and so will we all.

—Rev. E. Knott

EDITORIALS

GOOD HABITS

DO YOU HAVE any bad habits?

We commonly speak of habits as being either good or bad, and by habits we sometimes mean practices which, through constant repetition, are done without a conscious act of the will. Habits may also refer to the manner in which we go about the routine matters of our life.

There is a distinct difference between habit and what we call instinct. A baby is normally born with certain inherent qualities by which, without being taught, it cries and coos, and sucks; this we call instinct. God has so created a child that without receiving instruction in these things it does them, as we say, instinctively. It is, however, necessary to teach a child to speak, to write, or sing. This teaching may be accomplished first of all by example and demonstration and later by explanation and command and finally by reading and study.

Thus also habits are formed, for if a child repeatedly sees or hears a thing said or done, he will also say and do the same thing, and it becomes a habit.

Thus we see how marvellously God endows the child with latent qualities, which, when labored with, produce the result of its being able to repeat what is explained and to duplicate what is demonstrated to him. Therefore it is so tremendously important, even to the infant and very young child, what it sees and hears.

The educational world in general fully recognizes these facts also, although not ascribing the marvels of it to God, yet using and working with them to try to produce qualities which it terms character, morality and good citizenship. It also attaches tremendous importance to **what** a young child is taught and **how** it is taught. It believes that not only example, but also its environment plays a very important role in the development of a child. Forming good habits early in life produces good character, they say. It is strange that although knowing and recognizing these facts, the world so often fails to follow and live up to its own standards and ideals.

Now what must **we** say who profess to live by and out of the Word of God? We also recognize the fact that a child normally repeats what it sees and hears, and we also think it to be of the utmost importance that the child be made to see and hear, by example and precept, that which is good.

What then is different about our approach, and how do we conceive of habits?

Essentially our approach is diametrically opposed to that which we commonly come into contact with, because the child is usually presented as being naturally good, although undeveloped. This development, if properly nurtured in a suitable environment, under capable leadership and good example, will produce excellent results.

We, on the other hand, by the authority of the Word of God, confess that the child (man) is, by nature, depraved—"incapable of doing any good and inclined unto all evil"—**dead!**

This confession necessitates that we view the facts in an altogether different light than the world does. They begin with a naturally good child and we begin with an evil one. They commence with a live one; we with one dead by nature.

These opposing views produce also opposing results, for we believe, again by the authority of the Word of God, that given all the suitable environment, all the proper nurture, and all the capable leadership and good example, the end-result is still a "dead" child. It is like a dead tree, which, the more one waters and fertilizes, the more rapidly the decay progresses.

Can we in the light of the foregoing in any sense speak of teaching a child good habits or of helping him to form good habits?

Not surely, if by teaching or forming good habits is meant that a child naturally dead and unregenerate can be taught to do things good and pleasing to God, nor can such a child be aided to form habits that might produce this result.

In what sense can we then speak of good and bad habits, and must we teach our children good habits?

It must be borne in mind that God does not look on the outward habit but on the inward motive and that only **that** can be pleasing to the Holy God which is done out of the motive of love to Him and a desire that His Name alone may by it receive all the praise. Measure all your deeds and words and thoughts by that absolute standard and you will be forced to confess that all **your** works are as filthy rags—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

We must seek a suitable environment, give capable leadership and good example to our children according to God's Word. We must teach them good habits and warn and admonish them to refrain from all bad habits.

We do not mean to confine this as referring only to our young children, for it surely pertains to each one of us. We must cultivate good habits and must continually fight against the bad habits which we so easily form and follow.

You have, no doubt, often heard the remark in sermon and prayer that our coming to church and our coming to God in prayer must not be out of custom or habit. By this is meant a formal, superficial, outward coming to the church building without a spiritual hungering and thirsting to come to God's house to hear His Word speak to us and to feast on His spiritual food and drink, which builds and nourishes our fainting souls and laves our spiritual thirst—or on the other hand a lethargic mumbling of a few words and phrases without a pouring forth of our hearts and a lifting of our souls in praise to God in prayer. This is truly an abomination to God.

God is a God of means and therefore we take our small children upon our knees and teach them the habit of prayer and later take them by the hand and lead them to church, so that they may learn the church-going habit. We send them to catechism and later to societies in order that God, by grace may use these things as means in His hand to bring our children unto Himself. Thus not mere outward form and custom, but habits sanctified by God's grace are pleasing to Him and are surely enjoined upon us and upon our children as means that we may grown thereby.

We learn by doing and form habits by repeatedly doing. Let us then do that which is good in His sight in order that, by doing that which is good and fleeing from evil, we may grow in sanctification and grace.

"Little children, keep yourselves from evil."

CHRISTIAN LIVING

REV. G. VAN DEN BERG
Oak Lawn, Illinois

"TO LIVE IS . . . CHRIST"

HUMANITY CLASSIFIES itself into two schools. In the one is enrolled the vast majority of the world's populace who lived by the slogan: "For me to live is pleasure, money-making, social prestige, etc." In one word, life in this school consists in "self-gratification". No doubt you have already observed that honorary degrees, titles of recognition and gold-sealed diplomas are freely granted to anyone who discovers a formula, whether righteous or unethical, by which the student body of this school is able to procure more of the desires of the flesh. Whereas life consists in the abundance of things which one possesses(?), the one objective of all the instructors, scientists, sociologists, economists, moralists, religionists, etc. of this school is to lead the populace of this world to an enrichment of mundane things.

There is another school in this world in which only a tiny minority of humanity is enrolled. Their philosophy is diametrically opposed to that of the first mentioned school, for those enrolled in this small institution live under this radically different slogan: "For me to live is Christ...". No doubt you have also observed that in this school there are no honorary degrees, titles of recognition and beautifully inscribed diplomas given but that instructors and students share together a common lot of suffering, trial, tribulation and struggle. And you must carefully note that they who are least in that school are honored above all.

These two schools are not to be physically separated and identified in the world but the student body of both are intermixed in the family, in school, in the office and factory, and in all spheres of life though they are always spiritually distinct. This existing situation gives rise to the very serious problem of retaining one's identity and receiving for one's self instruction only in the school to which one properly belongs. The practical consequence of this problem is that we frequently find those who belong to the "world's" school within the "church" and, likewise, those who belong in the "church" enrolled with the "world". Let me cite only a few examples of this. Samson, whom the Lord blessed and who was moved by the Spirit of the Lord was subsequently allied unto and deceived by evil Delilah. Peter, the apostle, temporarily chose self-protection and honor instead of the reproach of Christ. And many of Jesus' disciples went back and walked no more with Him. (John 6:44). Likewise, of the other school Ananias and Sapphira were first accounted with the church. Demas forsook Paul because he loved this present world. Even in our present time it is common experience to meet those within the church who have no appetite for the Bread from Heaven but who divulge a pathetic lust for the world's morsels You may find them at the roller-rinks and bowling alleys but their place in the

spiritual activities in the church is vacant. Or if theirs is not the pleasure-lust you find them so preoccupied with gathering dollars for the rust to corrupt that there remains no time for instruction in the things of God. And so also there are many who are still outside of Zion's walls but who belong and must, therefore, also be brought within.

Sometimes it is said that alarm should not be sounded when youthful Christians conduct themselves thus and apparently enroll in the world's school and practice the philosophy: "For me to live is pleasure...". Those who reason thus aver that this is only natural and that in a little while they'll settle down in marriage and then things will change. Such reasoning is as deceptive as it is untrue. Satan is not only an enemy of youth. He is a foe through all of life. Was it in youth or later life that Noah, Isaac, Moses and David conducted themselves carnally? And was it not in youth that Joseph, Samuel, Josiah and Daniel were honored by the Lord? These instances will teach us that each stage of life has its own peculiar spiritual temptations and perils and there is the same need for the youthful saint who just commences his pilgrimage as for the matured saint who is approaching its end, to walk together most cautiously. "To live is Christ" means first, a beginning with Christ; secondly, an unbroken continuation with Christ; and thirdly, an ending with Christ. This we must teach and practice and never may we declare a vacation in which the constituency of Christ is given opportunity to wander off into the world.

Unmistakably it is Christ Always or Christ Never. It is not the Christ 'Now' and the Christ 'Then' with the Devil in between. When this is the practice of our living we are in reality serving Antichrist under the guise of a formal Christianity.

"For me to live is Christ" is another way of saying "to me Christ is all". In that beautiful name is expressed the purpose and reason for my existence. In Him is my joy, my hope, my ambition as well as the whole substance of my life. It is not a matter of "accepting Him" today only to find that tomorrow I have lost Him but it is so that "it is not I that live but CHRIST LIVETH IN ME". The practical dynamics of that confession are sadly oblivious in the present pleasure and world-seeking century. The power of this confession will be evidenced as we learn and understand and spiritually realize that the "things that are seen are temporal and perishing while the things that are not seen are eternal".

To bring us to that realization, God has given us "means". Chiefly we refer to the properly instituted means of grace but from our discussion may not be excluded the many subsidiary spiritual assistants. Prayer, christian fellowship, mutual study and discussion of God's Word and many others are helpful to make CHRIST ALL unto us. Only those souls who faithfully use means are kept alive in Christ while those who neglect these things starve and perish.

"Be not weary in .well-doing...".

You will receive many discouraging setbacks. You are very apt to become thoroughly discouraged. The inclination is present to listen to Satan's tempting whisper: "What's the use?"... But... will it be said of you, "This one began to build and was not able to finish...".

Receiving "grace upon grace" we go from "strength to strength" and from "glory to glory". And if we faint not "in due season we shall reap".

'For me to live is CHRIST," and... then only "to die is gain".

TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ANDREW PETTER
Grand Rapids, Michigan

PRODUCTIVE LABOR

IN OUR DAYS of painful labor problems the question easily begins to play in our minds, what is the meaning and purpose of all the labor and struggle of man in what we call the world of labor and industry?

It is in these days that the Executive Department has seized the steel mills to assure the continued production of the vital products, and that the Federal District Judge has written his opinion which reads that the seizure was unconstitutional. This ruling, followed by an order to return the seized mills, will again throw the wage negotiations on the table between the private operators and the employees, with the result that practically all the members of the CIO steel workers walk out immediately.

In practically the same news reports we are told of a walkout in the oil industry that will cut off about one-half of the nation's refined oil.

These are just samples to indicate the ominous nature and extent of such work stoppages and we give them merely for that purpose and without further comment. By the time these remarks appear in print they may almost be forgotten.

When we try to give an evaluation of these things there will be various reactions that will immediately occur to us.

Someone may propose that it is merely a case of political jockeying with a view to the coming election and has nothing to do with profits and wages in the industry itself.

Another may propose that it is a natural attempt of labor to get a concession and adjustment, long overdue, and it is using the war-crisis and the political hour of decision to advantage. Or that it is merely labor's insatiable lust for power, or for wage increase for less work.

On the other hand it may be suggested that it is capital's gluttony, capital's power-lust for building great empires of industry over which to have undisputed influence and lordship, or lust for ever more millions to be pressed from the bodies and souls of human raw-material.

Or it may be suggested that it is capital keeping a long-range lookout for necessary investments to bridge the inevitable slumps, depressions conversion-gaps, tax-burdens, etc.

We all know the arguments and the phrases more or less. But also here we can apply the observation of the wit, Mark Twain I believe, namely it is like the weather: "everybody is talking about it but nobody is doing anything about it."

And yet this is not quite correct. For although we cannot change the weather we do all take account of it and we do all adjust ourselves to it. It surely does not leave us indifferent.

So it is with the question of labor.

Now in the first place we must of course make a correction in the impression that arises from the words: Capital and Labor. In the abstract, and

without thinking of the concrete meaning of the words, we would be inclined to say that the first stands for the small minority of people "who have all the money"; the second stands for the great majority, the "people who do the work", for wages.

It is evident that such a classification breaks down immediately, when we try to use it. Undeniably there is a small minority that holds great capitol, but from there down the scale there are all sizes of capital-holders down to the simple man who is publicly regarded as only a "daily worker". And on the other hand there are "people who do the work" in endless degrees of wealth and financial power, besides what we would consider the laboring man.

And that which in the abstract we easily call the "class-struggle" between capital and labor, in concrete reality often develops into a struggle of the man on the lower rung against the next higher or visa-versa, and so all the way up (or down) the ladder.

In general thus we can view it as man's concern for his place in the productive process, and his share in the product.

But when we come to circumscribe the extent and scope of this productive process we soon discover that it includes everything that is considered of value and that is made available by our expended effort.

Throughout the ages the economic theories have tried to give an analysis of all the principles involved in this entire process. The old Greek philosophers in their theory of the state; the Christian teachers of the church as Aquinas, Luther, Calvin; the various economist schools: the mercantile, the classical, the socialist, all tried to give some account of the purpose, the value, the incentive, the dignity—with respect to labor.

We quote here a recent author on economics, "One thing seems clear. We know very little about the motivating forces which compel men to work. Although the concept of an **economic man** whose chief aim in life is to acquire the greatest amount of wealth with the least possible effort seems woefully narrow and inadequate, we have no other concept which permits an analytical approach to economic activity."

This certainly looks like a case of groping in the dark. And it strongly suggests that within the circle of human life there is no answer for these questions.

And it also teaches us that for an answer we shall have to go to the Bible. There alone we can find the goal, the purpose, the value, the valid incentives, the norms for life, also for the labor of man in his complex life and environment.

We may believe that this Biblical teaching is of such a nature that it also enlightens the children of God as he lives amid all the tension and strife of the modern labor problem.

To some of these teachings we shall give attention in following numbers, the Lord willing.

The old preachers were available twenty-four hours a day; but their successors are invisible six days a week and incomprehensible the seventh.

—R. E. Day

Blessed are those who never gossip about the faults of the church, but work to make it better.

—Religious Telescope

NATURE STUDY

CLARENCE DE BOER
Kalamazoo, Michigan

LIVING DUST

"DUST TO DUST, the mortal dies, both the foolish and the wise." Psalter.

"Where is the dust that has not been alive? From human mold we reap our daily bread." Young.

Again the eager farmer turns to plow the apparently lifeless soil. Possibly he observes a few worms and small bugs but aside from this the ground appears dead. If he would but examine a small portion of it under a microscope he would readily see that it is literally teeming with microscopic animal and plant life which is busily engaged in decomposing organic matter.

What happens to the stubble of the grain, the weeds, the fallen fruit, and the waste products of animals? All of this organic material must again be converted into its elements so that it can be used by new plants. This process of decomposition requires a variety of organisms as well as a variety of appetites.

Have you ever smelled the "rotten-egg" like odor given off by decaying plants and animals? This is hydrogen sulfide gas which serves as food for a certain family of bacteria. Another group of bacteria lives on wet paper, cotton and rope for it digests the cellulose. Even from the depths of the ground bacteria have been discovered which live in crude petroleum. Possibly some of you have heard of bacteria, found in certain wells, which live on iron and produce a reddish corrosion on the lavatory fixtures. One of the strangest diets of all is that of a unique group of microbes which live on carbolic acid.

Molds are universally present in the air and soil, and they need very little food to carry on their destructive life. Moisture seems to be their chief concern for their appetite is very adaptable. Because of the rapid growth and preference of molds for darkness and moisture the tiller of the soil greatly fears a damp season.

A little known but very important group of micro-organisms are the actinomycetes which occupy a place between the bacteria and the molds. Research in the last decade has revealed their important position in nature. They also are universally found and occupy a place in the upper strata of the soil where they are engaged in breaking down and consuming dead plant and animal material. Many secrete substances which destroy other harmful bacteria.

Most of these micro-organisms have amazing appetites. They have no fixed mealtime as humans do but they eat continuously. In fact some consume twice their weight in sugar every hour. The amount that these small creatures consume can be tested by delicate instruments and fairly accurate computations can be made as to their food consumption. When one stops to consider that the average cubic inch of crop and pasture land contains from 50 to 160 million bacteria alone one realizes the significance of the title—"Living Dust"

—continued on page 14

LIFTING THE LID. . . . .

SEYMOUR BEIBOER
Grand Rapids, Michigan

V

MODERNISM IN EDUCATION

THE MAJOR PURPOSE of building schools and colleges during the colonial period of our history and well into the nineteenth century was to instruct students in the Christian Religion. Many of our large universities such as Yale, Columbia, Harvard, and others were begun for this very purpose. The primary purpose of education in those days was to teach and engage students to know God in Jesus Christ and to love and serve Him in all sobriety, Godliness, and Righteousness of life with a perfect heart and a willing mind. This was also true of elementary education in those days. Children were taught the three R's for the sole purpose of being able to read the Bible, to read and write edifying literature, and to live a good simple Christian life. Children were required to recite the entire catechism and several chapters of the Bible from memory. The children, besides learning the catechism by heart, had to have a personal, practical, knowledge of the same. The textbooks used in this era were predominantly religious. A famous American elementary textbook of the past is "The New England Primer". It was first printed in Boston between the years 1687 and 1690.. It was the most used textbook during the Colonial period and continued to be until around 1830. A total of three million copies or an average of 20 thousand copies were sold per year over a period of 150 years. The contents of this textbook is as follows: a table of the letters of the alphabet in the various forms; a famous collection of two letter syllables made by putting one consonant and one vowel together; short tables of words of one, two, three, four and five syllables; a rhymed and illustrated alphabet beginning:

In Adam's Fall
We sinned all;

an alphabet of lessons for youth made up of Bible verses; the Lord's Prayer; the Apostle's Creed; a picture of John Roger being burned at the stake with his wife and ten children, together with a poem written by him shortly before his death; a so called shorter catechism of the Westminster Assembly of Divines; the Ten Commandments; and John Cotton's "Spiritual Milk for Babes Drawn Out of the Breasts of Both Testaments".

From the above facts one can see that instruction in the Christian Religion occupied a major place in the curriculum of early American education. Although the people of that day neglected subjects like music, art, and science; nevertheless they developed a hardiness of character and a stedfastness of purpose which helped to make America the truly great nation that it is.

But alas, a radical change in education took place in the period between the Revolutionary War and 1870. Before this period Christian instruction was enforced by law in all the existing states and the schools were maintained by the churches and the local congregations. During this period the schools gradually became controlled by state and city governments, thus providing free education for everybody. It was

during this time that instruction in Christianity became outlawed and atheistic modernism was substituted in its place. Space does not permit me to describe in detail how this change came about, but it is evident that the devil took advantage of state supported education in order to spread his counterfeit religion. Today reading of the world's greatest literature, the Bible, is outlawed in many states; while students are forced to spend hour after hour studying modernistic and man-centered literature under the camouflage of "English." Today it is unlawful for a Christian teacher, by the grace of God, to show the Way of Life to unconverted students, but it is perfectly alright and even mandatory for an atheist teacher to atheize those students that had a good bringing up. To prove these facts I would strongly urge our people to read the books entitled, Crucifying Christ in Our Colleges; The Fifth Column in Our Schools; and The Heritage of Hell, all of which are written by Dan Gilbert.

The devil invented the public school system in order that the coming generations may be taught to serve him without any reservation whatsoever. Why is so much time and attention allotted to "English" (modernistic ungodly literature, pardon me) and to the social sciences such as history and economics? This is done in order to impress upon the minds and hearts of the students the modernistic philosophy that God is man's higher self and that man is getting better and better as the ages progress. These subjects can be readily adapted to suit this doctrine with very little convicting of the conscience, by witholding the truth if necessary and substituting a lie in its place. This is equally true when subjects of equal and of more importance are slighted.

The study of the natural sciences such as chemistry, geology, biology, astronomy, electricity, etc., forcibly reminds mankind that there IS a God that created the universe and controls it according to His good pleasure. Although modern man will try to evade God by imagining that the universe was gradually developed by an evolutionary process; yet he cannot escape the fact that there is a God far mightier than himself. The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Psalm 19:1-3. This is the reason why the natural sciences are deemed of less importance in modern education.

Mathematics and physics reminds one that God is a God of order and a God of infinite perfection. It is God that says two plus two equals four and man MUST comply with it even in order to fulfill his sinful lusts and to fill his measure of iniquity. Think of what a chaotic condition the world would be in if there were no standard system of measurements. Without mathematics, all of our modern inventions would be virtually impossible. Often thoughtlessly, man violates God's laws of physics and is instantly punished for it. God's laws of inertia, momentum, gravity, etc. are major factors in every traffic, home, and industrial accident. Thus mathematics and physics are reluctantly taught for the sake of self-preservation and self-satisfaction. Modern educators never teach their children to provide for God's kingdom, the aged, the sick, and the poor, but teach them how to pile up worldly treasures which shall be a testimony against them in the Judgment Day.

The study of hygiene and physiology

reminds us that our bodies are fearfully and wonderfully made and deserve the finest and utmost care. Yet this important subject is often neglected entirely in modern education. The reason for this is that the theatre, the night clubs, and the sale of liquors, cigarettes, narcotics, etc., must not be hampered in any way whatsoever. The cruel system of modern industry, that wrecks men's lives, and from which they are ejected for inability and old age before they are fifty, must not be tampered with. Sinful lusts must not be restrained in any way whatsoever. No wonder that our hospitals and insane asylums must be increased and expanded these days! People now days take more care of their gold watches, automobiles, and money than they do of their bodies, whose mechanism is much more intricate than any machine ever invented. For example, the finest and most expensive camera ever built can not even be compared with the human eye.

In the foregoing paragraphs I have showed how modernism is spread by means of tax-supported educational institutions. For this reason we as covenant people can NEVER send our children to the public school. Even our Christian schools must be more than just a school with a little Bible study or a chapel service added to it. God MUST be recognized throughout the ENTIRE curriculum. And if our governments or the UNGODLY educational alliances of our day attempt (they have done so, are doing it today, and will continue to do so in a greater degree) to make laws, rulings or requirements that would force or lead our Christian schools to deny the Living God or rob Him of any honor due to Him; we must become as fearless and bold as Daniel and his three friends even if we should have to suffer for it. Dan. 3:16-18; 6:10. Today we need more apostle Peters who will denounce this ungodly system of education which also is invading our own Christian schools by leaps and bounds. Acts 4:13; 5:29.

In my next and final installment on this subject I hope to tear off Modernisms hypocritical cloak of piety and reveal its true inward nature, that it is nothing more than a stool-pigeon for Communism, the devil, the Antichrist, and for all the powers of darkness that exist on this earth.

NATURE STUDY

continued from page 11

—for the earth teems with hidden life.

When the useful bacteria which are **found in the soil, water and intestines** of animals and humans are compared numerically with the disease producers they out number them 30,000 to 1.

In this season of Spring and new life it is indeed wonderful to behold the unfolding leaves and the growing plants but let us not be unmindful of the "Living Dust."

A genius is an ordinary fellow with his heart harnessed to his task. Call the roll of the great, and, sure enough, you will find that those who become leaders are men and women who fall in love with their jobs.—**Prog. Mail Trade**

The Military Mail Bag

KENNETH EZINGA
Grand Rapids, Michigan

GREETINGS, FELLOWS:

Just one letter this time.

S.F.C. Elmer Wielenga from Redlands. Present address, Korea. He sends us the one and only:

Dear Friends:

I have been in the Army a year and four months, so that it is high time I drop a few lines to the BEACON LIGHTS.

I have been in Korea for seven months now, and enjoy the BEACON LIGHTS more than I did in the States. I mean to say it has helped me more *since I haven't* been able to go to church.

Since I have been in Korea I have heard very few sermons. The only time I get to go to services is when our outfit goes in reserves. I have been on the line two months since we left the last reserve area, and have never seen a Chaplain. In this outfit the chaplain never comes on the lines. That is why I enjoy the BEACON LIGHTS more since I have been in Korea.

I am very thankful for the sermons, Church papers, and Beacon Lights that are sent to me. I find spiritual food in them.

I long so much to get home to my wife, especially so we once again together can go to the Protestant Reformed Church in Redlands, California.

I will tell you a little about my job, then sign off. I am a Platoon Sergeant in a Heavy Weapons company. I have ten machine guns and fifty-two men in my platoon, so it keeps me going. But I always find time to read the Bible and church papers I receive.

Your friend in Christ,
Elmer Wielenga.

Thanks very much, Elmer, may God bless and keep you safe until the day you can once again be reunited with your loved ones.

Once in a great while it is interesting to read statistics. I don't know if this will be the "great while" for you, but here they are.

Remember, if you don't write, we will. Maybe we can bore you into writing in self defense.

There are now 100 of our boys in Service. According to our records, Pvt Willard J. Baar of First Church, Grand Rapids, was number 100 to leave. I really don't know if he should be congratulated or not. But if anyone would like to write him, his address is:

PVT. Willard J. Baar, U.S. 55269914
5012th ASU, Det. 3
Food Service School
Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri

Every branch of the service is represented, and our men are scattered over the face of the earth.

Just look at our own United States—22 different states. Then there's Korea, Japan, Guam, Germany, Alaska and the Canal Zone.

Nineteen of our churches have given up some of their men.

Here's a break-down of which ones and how many:

First Church, G.R.	40
Second	7
Creston	3
Hope	4
Grand Haven	4
Holland	6
Kalamazoo	2
Hudsonville	2
Redlands	5

—continued on page 22

BIBLE OUTLINE

REV. MARINUS SCHIPPER
South Holland, Illinois

OUTLINE 29

4. A TRUSTWORTHY JUDGMENT RE MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY

(ICor. 7:25-40)

a. Occasion for its pronouncement.

It is difficult to determine precisely what it is that is the occasion for the judgment the apostle here pronounces. In verse 26 the apostle speaks of "the present distress" or perhaps better translated "the impending distress." And in verse 28 he speaks of "trouble in the flesh" or better translated "tribulation for the flesh". And in verse 29 he declares "but this I say, brethren, the time is short" or possibly better translated "the time is being shortened."

Some of the commentators refer you to the tribulations that precede and accompany the second coming of Christ. They insist that the apostle believed that the parousia was imminent, and had forewarned the Church that intense affliction lay just ahead for those in Christ. And in view of this advises that it would be better to be single than married, since one will have enough trouble for himself alone without having also the trouble agitated by the special care for a wife and possibly children. (See Matthew 24).

Others think that the "distress" and "tribulation" refer to the persecutions which children of God endure throughout this dispensation, and more particularly towards its end. And in view of this, the apostle points out the preference for single life. (See John 16:33)

Now it seems to us that this can hardly be the occasion for the apostle's advice, for the simple reason that were it so the apostle would simply warn against marriage absolutely. But this he does not do. Though it may be true that the apostle expected Christ's return and its attending circumstances imminent and though it is true that Christ had forewarned His Church of persecutions and tribulations in the world and in Matthew 24:22 declared that "for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened," to which vs. 29 is said to refer, and though we are unable to determine exactly what the "trouble" or "distress" is to which the apostle refers, we believe there must have been some local disturbance in Corinth which prompted the Church to inquire and the apostle to advise regarding the advisibility of marriage under these conditions. It appears that there was some impending distress, the nature of which was so exacting that it raised the question in the minds of some: would it be better for the time being to desist from marriage?

In respect to this the apostle will render his own judgment, for he knows of no expressed command of the Lord. The Church may consider the apostle's judgment as trustworthy, for he has had mercy conferred upon him by the Lord, so that he is trustworthy also in his judgment and advice. He had obtained mercy to be Christ's apostle, and therefore was apt to teach and instruct

the Church as a truthful and faithful witness. As such his word of judgment must be received.

b. Its content.

As to his judgment as such, the apostle answers two-fold. In the first place, it must be clearly understood that it is not sinful to marry, or to remain single or unmarried. If one is already married he is not to break that marriage. (vs. 27) And a wife is bound by the law as long as her husband lives. (vs. 38) By implication this means too that one who does not marry also does not commit sin by remaining in the unmarried state.

In the second place, the apostle throughout this section of the Epistle clearly intimates that it can be profitable to remain single or unmarried. For one thing, the apostle warns that those who marry shall have trouble for the flesh. This cannot mean that the apostle is warning against domestic troubles, in which husband and wife quarrel with each other, or parents and children have difficulty in regulating the home and the differences that arise in the administration of the home. Though these can be and often are troubles for the flesh. Undoubtedly the apostle has in mind the fact that when troubles like persecution, war, sickness, etc., come, the troubles for the flesh are increased when one has another or others to think about besides himself. Surely a single man can go to war much easier than a husband and father. And when the Church is assailed for her faith, it can be endured much more effectively when there are no physical attachments of wife and children. It is much easier for a young man who is unmarried to reject the union than it is for a father of a family of children. And it appears that under the present, impending distress the apostle advises the young not to marry for this reason. He means to say that one can meet the impending circumstances more capably when he is unmarried.

c. Its intent.

That there is purpose in his advice is plain from several considerations. In the first place, the apostle would have them be free from anxiety. They must be "without carefulness", vs. 32. It lies in the very nature of their calling to center all their attention and care on their service of God. Nothing else may have preëminence in their lives. Therefore those that have wives must be as though they had none, those that weep as though they wept not, etc. This is most difficult to do. Of this the apostle is full aware, for he admits that one who is married cares for the things of the world how he may please his or her mate. Yet definite heed must be given to our calling, and our hearts may not be so over-taxed with anxiety that we are unable to fulfil it.

In the second place, it is evident that positively the apostle would have the church set her mind on the heavenly scheme. In the last part of verse 31 he shows that the scheme of this world passes away. The world, this cosmos, in which we live, as it is developing under the power of sin and corruption, has a definite pattern which all men by nature follow and to which they conform. This world with its pattern is like a drama on a stage. It passes before you, but surely it passes off the stage. It is always in the process of passing away. But the children of God do not belong to that world, because they are being transformed in the renewing of their minds into the image of Christ. (Rom. 12:2) They belong to another world which God had eternally in mind, that is, an heavenly.

This world which shall presently re-

place the old one also has its pattern. And to this the Church is required to set her mind. To be married and given in marriage, we must not forget, belongs to the pattern of the world that pattern of the world that passes away. It is not therefore the most important thing in life. If therefore it is possible for us to be devoted to the heavenly scheme without any distraction, this is to be preferred as most desirable.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is is necessarily sinful to be subject to anxiety?
2. Does the apostle mean that because he only gives his advice, having no expressed command of the Lord, that his advice may be ignored?
3. Does verse 39 have anything to say about the matter of divorce?
4. What is the significance of the word "holy" in verse 34?
5. What does the apostle mean when he says in verse 40 that he has the "Spirit of God."?

OUTLINE 30

C. GIVING NO OFFENSE. I Cor. 8.

1. OCCASION FOR THIS SUBJECT.

Evidently the Church had asked the apostle's advice regarding the eating of flesh offered to idols. No doubt many in the Church had only recently been converted from idolatry, and idolatrous practices. The connection between idolatry and impurity was very close, especially in Corinth, though the problem concerning the eating of meat offered to idols was not new, as is evident from Acts 15:29; 21:25.

The matter concerning which the apostle is required to shed light may be classed as belonging to adiaphora, that is, a matter which in itself is indifferent, ethically speaking. It is one of those things one may do or not do without committing a sin. It all depends on the subjective state of the mind and heart of the one affected. The questions here was relative to the eating of meat which has been offered to idols. This left-over portion "was either eaten sacrificially, or taken home for private meals, or sold in the markets." And the question was: "What were Christians to do about eating such portions either buying in the market or eating in the home of another or at the feast of an idol?" There were some who being more enlightened, acted on the basis of their superior knowledge about the non-existence of the gods represented by the idols. Since their conversion to Christ, they know the emptiness of idol worship. Paul admits that all Christians have this knowledge, but the problem can not be solved by knowledge. Only love edifies, builds up. To us, i.e., to the Christians, there is only one God, and one Lord Jesus Christ.

The apostle continues by making the distinction between the stronger and the weaker brother. The stronger is he who has this knowledge that it can not possibly be sinful to eat meat just because it is sacrificed to idols. His conscience is free when he eats. He believes he is in harmony with the will of God, and does not violate any precepts when he eats of this meat.

On the other hand, there is also a weaker brother. He with "a conscience of the idol" eats that same meat as a thing offered to idols. And his "conscience being weak is defiled."

2. THE SIN OF GIVING OFFENSE.

Now that weaker brother may see the stronger eating say in public, What will be the likely result? He may be ashamed of his own attitude,

and just for his own sake also eat of that meat, while his conscience tells him all the time that he sins by doing so. In such a case he very really sins, for he says to himself "it is as sin against my Lord to eat, but I am ashamed to confess Him here in public; hence, I rather deny the Lord than appear silly in the eyes of others."

Well in such a case the stronger brother must refrain from eating meat, in order not to put a stumbling-block in the way of his weaker brother. If he nevertheless eats, knowing that he will cause the weaker brother to stumble, he thereby leads that weaker brother in the way of perdition. As far as he is concerned, he will let the brother, for whom Christ died, perish. The apostle does not say that the weaker brother shall perish, for whom Christ died. That is forever impossible. But he asks the stronger brother the question which in effect amounts to this: Shall, as far as it is in your power, as far as your attitude is the cause of it, through your greater knowledge, that weaker brother perish? Do you dare to assume the attitude that you care not whether the weaker brother stumbles and perishes, while Christ died for him? Will you not give up meat that your brother sin not? while Christ gave up His life that he should not perish?

3. THE CONCLUSION.

The answer to that last question is of course negative. "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend."

This is Paul's principle of love (vs. 2) applied to the matter of eating meats offered to idols. Paul had rather be a vegetarian than to lead his weak brother to do what he considered sin.

Questions for Discussion

1. What is conscience? Weak conscience? vs. 7.
2. What is your judgment of those churches which use grape-juice instead of fermented wine in the Lord's Supper, on the principle that it may mislead a weaker brother?
3. What are some of the practical implications of this chapter?
4. In what way does one sin against Christ when he sins against the brother? vs. 12.

OUTLINE 31

D. PAUL'S SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE FOR THE GOSPEL AN EXAMPLE.

I Corinthians 9.

1. THE CONNECTION OF THOUGHT HERE.

This chapter may be considered as a sort of interlude between chapter 8 and chapter 10. The line of thought expressed in chapter 8 is taken up again in chapter 10:27ff. He had given advice on the question of eating meat sacrificed to idols, and in chapter 10:27ff he concludes his advice on this matter.

In chapter 9, the apostle broadens out on the idea of foregoing one's privilege for the sake of the brother. He closed chapter 8 with the declaration that he would eat no meat forever if he by doing so would make his brother to offend. He now shows how in his entire ministry he lived by this principle of forsaking his privilege for the Gospel's sake, and for the sake of the Church.

2. THE ASSERTION OF PAUL'S LIBERTY—(vss. 1-11)

a. His right as an apostle.

In the vss. 1-6, the apostle maintains

the idea that he was an apostle not only, but also as an apostle was not below the rest of the apostles in their rights . He had the power (authority, right) to eat and drink like the others. He had the power (the right) to be married and care for a wife as well as Peter and the Lord's brethren. He and Barnabas had the right to desist from doing manual labor as well as the rest of the apostles. By the latter he is evidently referring to the fact that he and Barnabas had received no help from the Church at Antioch when they went out on their first missionary journey, but were left to work their way at their own charges. This Paul preferred to do always, also particularly at Corinth. There was only one exception to this, and that was the gifts he received from the Church at Philippi. But certainly he had a right to expect the same treatment as the rest of the ministers of God's Word. It was also his privilege to be materially supported by the Church.

b. Proved by experience.

The apostle appeals to the congregation with an argument they all clearly understand to show that his position was in no respect below that of other apostles. He uses a three-fold illustration from everyday life to show this. A soldier who is called to military service does not go at his own expense. The man who owns and plants a vineyard cannot be denied the eating of the fruit which he himself has planted. The keeper of sheep will surely not be questioned when he drinks of the milk of his flock. Surely on this same basis no one could deny the apostle also the right to live of the Gospel. But if this argument will not suffice, Paul has yet another.

c. Proved by Scripture.

He will prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he has rights. Surely all will understand the Scripture which said: Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the ox, etc. And this Scripture, this commandment, was not given merely because God would have a special care for the beast which labored for its master, but this was written specifically, says Paul, for our sakes, for the apostles, for the ministers of God. When these ministers minister spiritual things it is expected that they shall reap the carnal things, the material necessities of life which the Church possesses and should use for the care of her ministers.

Questions for Discussion

1. Is it not peculiar that Antioch sent them away without assistance? How do you account for this? (Acts 13)
2. Would it be wrong today for a minister to do manual labor on the side for a living?
3. What is the content of "the freedom" in vs. 1?
4. How was the Church the seal of his apostleship? vs. 2.

OUTLINE 32

3. THE SELF-DENIAL OF PAUL'S LIBERTY—I Cor. 9:12-27

a. More proof of his liberty

In the vss. 13,14, referring to the care the Lord provided for the priests in the O. T. by way of commandment, Paul lays one more proof before his readers of what also is to be expected with respect to ministers of the gospel. By law God provided for the Levitical priest's material welfare in the old dispensation. They were to have of the fat of the sacrifices which the people brought. (See Leviticus 5,6 and Numbers 18:8-20). Of this the church at Corinth was fully aware if she under-

stood the O. T. Scriptures. But even if she didn't, she should know that the Lord Jesus also had something to say about this. When He sent out the seventy, He gave them commandment, "and in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the laborer is worthy of his hire." (Luke 10:7) Definitely therefore the Lord has seen to it that His Church shall provide for His ministers. They may therefore expect their wages. Christ commands it.

b. The self-denial as such.

From the foregoing, it should be abundantly evident that the apostle could have taken advantage of the "power" (right) like others and, instead of doing manual labor, "lived of the Gospel." But this power he did not use. In vss. 12 and 15, he avers that he made no use of this right. He deliberately declined to use his right to pay in Corinth. He was willing to "suffer all things" vs. 12. The word "suffer" comes from a word the root meaning of which is "roof", hence to cover up, to conceal, to endure. He was willing to be and to bear all things for the Gospels' and for the Churches' sake. Though he was free, he enslaved himself to all. (vs. 19). Unto the Jews he became a Jew; to those under law, as being under law; to those without law, as being without law; to the weak, he became as weak. He was made all things for the Gospels' sake.

c. The purpose of this self-denial.

As I see it the purpose of the self-denial was three-fold. In the first place, the apostle's intent was not to abuse his power (right) in the Gospel so that the cause of the Gospel of Christ be hindered. (vss. 12, 18). I suppose this means that he would never have it said of him that he preached the Gospel only for money. He would not have the Gospel, and its rich content depreciated by the fact that its preaching had added to Paul's personal gain.

In the second place, he denied himself with the expressed purpose that by all means he might save some. (vs. 22). That Paul could become a Jew to win the Jew, come under the law to win those under the law, etc., does not mean that he could set aside principles, simply to gain converts. We know Paul better than to do that. But tactfully he applied himself to the work of winning souls. A preacher must be a soul winner, not, of course, in that silly sense in which it is spoken of in our day. As though Christ cannot save His own souls. That was not Paul's intention. Rather he would not allow his own person, and character to stand in the way of getting the Gospel across. Too, for example, assume an aggressive attitude, a proud and haughty spirit in the presense of the weak, would spoil all contact with them. This is one of the hard tact with them. This is one of the hardest things for a preacher to learn. Paul was a master in this.

In the third place, it seems to me that there is something subjective in this self-denial of Paul. He was also concerned about his own salvation. He would also be partaker of the things of the Gospel he preached to others. (vs. 23). He could not bear the thought that while he preached to others, he himself should be a castaway. He therefore personally brought himself into subjection like the runner in a race; the boxer in the arena. Surely should the apostle preach sincerely to others while he himself lived carelessly, he would not only be a hindrance to the Gospel, but he would also lose the certainty of his own salvation. And how necessary also this is for the preacher of the Gospel. He must always preach to himself as well as to others.

But there is more significance in this.

Also the Church must learn from Paul's example to walk in fear, or to put it in the words of Paul in another passage: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God Who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure".

Questions for Discussion

1. Should a church pay her minister what he is worth, or what he needs?
2. What do you think of churches who vie with one another in the matter of salaries to get a certain minister?
3. Does the minister not have to reckon with his salary when he is considering a call?
4. Is there any significance in the fact that Paul does not say in vs. 22 that "to the strong I became as strong?"

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OPEN FORUM

Dear Mr. Editor:-

In regard to the request of our Doon Young People's Society which appeared in the **Open Forum** department of the April issue of **Beacon Lights,** the Federation Board would like to inform our readers that it has decided to make available all the requested information. Mimeographed copies of all the decisions of the Board and its correspondence to and from the persons involved will be sent to the secretaries of each of our member Young People's Societies. All persons interested may obtain this material by contacting either their society secretary or the secretary of the Federation Board. We hope that in this way all will be satisfied and receive the necessary information to acquaint themselves with the past actions regarding the matter.

MILITARY MAIL BAG

continued from page 3

Bellflower	2
Hull	4
Rock Valley	2
Pella	4
Orange City	1
Oskaloosa	1
Manhattan	8
Edgerton	2
Randolph	1
Oaklawn	2

Yes, I know that adds up to only 97. We have the other three names but don't know to what church they belong.

Another name on the discharged list: S.F.C. Fred Schaafsma. This swells the grand total of dischargees way up to two. Will you be number three?

That's it, men. See what happens when you don't write? Our column doesn't amount to much, does it? Let's make it a good one next month. We'll be waiting.

We wish to acknowledge the following gifts for BEACON LIGHTS, which are sincerely appreciated:

English Men's Soc, 1st	$50.00
Doon Y. P. Soc.	5.00
Hope Y. P. Soc.	20.00
Kalamazoo Y. P. Soc.	25.00
Manhattan Y. P. Soc.	35.00
Talitha Soc., 1st.	25.00
A Friend	4.50
2nd Singspiration	34.87

—THANK YOU

QUESTION BOX

REV. G. M. OPHOFF
Grand Rapids, Michigan

I have this Question.
How would you explain Ezekiel 33:11:

> "As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turneth from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel."

This Scripture passage, if it is to yield to us its right meaning, must be explained in the context. Regard must be had to the verse immediately preceding: "Therefore, O son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak saying, if our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live?"

What the Jews who thus spake meant is clear. It is this: We have transgressed against the Lord. In His eyes we are guilty. But it would be useless for us to repent and turn to Him for pardon and grace. For He wants us in hell. Hence, let us eat, drink, and be merry. For tomorrow we die.

Now this is a terrible way of reasoning about the good God. What it would mean were it true is that God has pleasure in the torment of the wicked **as such**—mark you, **as such**—and that from sheer love of cruelty, just to see the wicked suffer, He cast them into hell even though during their life-time they were truly penitent and contrite.

So to reason about God is blasphemy. It is to change His glory into the image made like unto a devil-god.

True, God did not in His eternal and sovereign good-pleaesure c h o o s e in Christ all men unto life everlasting. Some He appointed unto eternal damnation to punish them as fallen and hardened — fallen according to His sovereign decree and hardened by His sovereign working — with eternal damnation on account of their impenitance and rebellion.

But this does not mean that He has pleasure in the death of the wicked **as such**, nor that He delights in their evil doing. On the contrary, His purpose in reprobating some was to reveal His utter abhorance of sin that He might be feared and praised as God holy and righteous. Being the kind of God He is, He delights in well-doing. Accordingly, it pleases Him when the wicked turn from their evil way and live. And He also commands every one of them without exception to repent and believe in Him thru Christ and be saved. He moreover seriously promises eternal life and rest to as many as come to Him and believe in Him. And in His just judgment and holy wrath He punishes the impenitent and rebellious with everlasting desolation. This is the truth contained in Ezek. 33:11. What we deal with here in this Scripture is God's **moral will** also called the **will of God's command** and His **revealed will.** And, of course, only the elect do repent. And their resolution to repent as well as their repentance as such has God's counsel as it sovereign cause and the grace of God as its only fountain.

Now God being the kind of God that He is— a God not having pleasure in the death of the wicked **as such**, but a God who delighteth in well-doing and who therefore is pleased when wicked men turn from their sins and live and who accordingly receives all such men in Christ and speaks in their hearts His

peace, why should the house of Israel, why should the wicked die, when they turn from their evil way? Coming to God as penitent sinners, they will not die but live. In fact, they already live, have life in themselves, believing as they do in Christ. Let the house of Israel turn therefore. For why should they die? asks the prophet in the name of God, meaning that if they continue in their rebellion and perish in their sins, they certainly cannot blame God. On the contrary the fault will be all theirs. For He hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked **as such**, but that the wicked turneth from his way and live, He being holy God.

Once more, it is with God's command with which we deal in this Scripture and with the God who delighteth in well-doing. This is God's moral will. But the Scriptures also teach the will of God's sovereign counsel. According to His moral will, God commanded Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go. But according to His counsel He sovereignly hardened Pharaoh's heart, so that the king disobeyed. Indeed, the Scriptures teach both these wills. And therefore God's believing people hold to both and they also have need of both as believers.

And now let us listen to the rest of the Lord's reply to the complaint of the Jews (Ezek. 33:10) with which we are here occupied: "Therefore thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, the rightousness of the righteous (not, of course, the truly righteous, but the apparent righteous, thus, the hypocrite who **openly** apostatizes) shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth.

"When I say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust in his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he committeth he shall die for it.

"Again when I say unto the wicked, thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right;

"If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that which he hath robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die."

The point to this reasoning of the Lord is clear. It is this: The wicked that truly repent of their sins shall live. They are saved. The (apparently) righteous that apostatize (openly) and return to their vomit to serve the lusts of the flesh shall surely die in their iniquity. The Lord then does not, as those complaining Jews contended, cast a truly pentitent sinner into perdition. And so the Lord continues and concludes: "Yet the children of thy people say, The way of the Lord is not equal: but as for them, their way is not equal.

"When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.

"But if the wicked turn from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby.

"Yet ye say, the way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you, every one after his ways." —Ezek. 33:12-19.

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