BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

December, 1954

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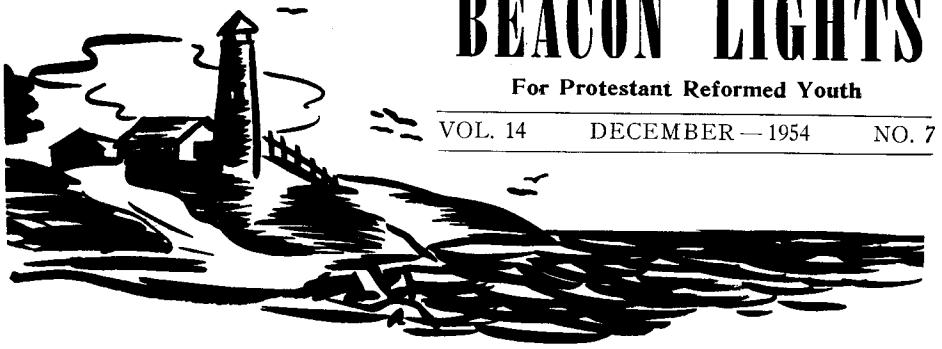

BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOL. 14 DECEMBER — 1954 NO. 7

The Star That Spoke

Have you ever found yourself on a clear, moonless night gazing upward at the stars? The stars can be so very impressive. One moment they will look like so many precious gems scattered carelessly against the background of a black velvet sky. Or again they will remind one of the many lights of a distant city viewed from a hill top, making one feel so far away, lonesome, small and insignificant.

People throughout the ages have been impressed with the stars. Thousands have examined them, attempted to count them, speculated about them. They have marveled at their beauty. They have sought to find out what they are. They have wondered what their importance is.

In ancient times this study of the stars was considered to be among the most important of the sciences. It was thought that the stars were somehow directly related to events on the earth and the life and future of every individual. Astrologers made detailed studies of the stars and presented various formulas according to which they thought they could predict the future. Movement of the stars, eclipses, comets and meteors were all thought to have special significance influencing the life of man. The astrologers of old labored under the misconception that if only they would listen aright the stars would speak to them.

But once, or should we say twice, there was in those years of old a star that did speak to a small group of astronomers. It told them a story.

Almost two thousand years ago on a clear, cloudless night a small group of magi, wise-men from the East were gathered together watching the stars. As they were watching that night, suddenly there appeared before them a star, a star that they had never seen before. They were astronomers, they knew the wonders of the skies, they knew the beauty of Orion, and the Pleiades; they knew the glory of the comets and the mystery of eclipses; but such a star as this they had never seen. This star surpassed them all, this star told them a story.

We don't know how that star spoke to them. It wasn't through mysterious signs or complicated formulas. It gave unto them a simple, clear revelation. Neither do we know how detailed was the story that it told. But what it told in essence we know. It told them that

a king was born. One can not help but think that these Magi had read the books of some faithful Jew, a member of the dispersion living in that Eastern land. Perhaps they had read Numbers 24:17, "There shall come a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel." They must have read the many beautiful prophecies about the Mesiah. Thus when they saw that beautiful star, it spoke to them as a revelation from God proclaiming the wonderful story that that King, Redeemer of heaven and earth, was born.

And what is the most amazing of all, they believed. They believed that a king had arisen out of Jacob. And that king was not only the king of all who believed; He was THEIR KING.

Immediately they set out to find their King and to worship Him. Many must have been the miles that they traveled, but their faith did not falter. They came to Jerusalem and asked not "Is it true that a king has been born?" No, their question was "Where is He that **is born** King of the Jews?"

What a strange situation, yet how sad. Men from the East had to come and proclaim to the people that their King had been born. And how much sadder still, Jerusalem did not rejoice. They could tell the Magi where the child should be, but they themselves did not care to go and worship the Child. Their only response was a feeling of fear lest someone might challenge the unjustly held throne of wicked Herod. They told the Magi to go to Bethlehem. They knew all about the Promised One, but knowledge can not bring faith. The wise-men left Jerusalem and went on their way alone.

But still the faith of the Magi did not faint or falter. God had revealed it to them through the star and they believed. Starting again on the road they looked to the sky. Again the star appeared. It reaffirmed the revelation and lead them on the way. It brought them to Bethlehem and the very spot where the King lay. Truly and amazing star: it had told them that the child was born, and now it led them to where He lay.

It would have shocked men of lesser faith. The Child must have been in one of the poorer houses of Bethlehem. They heard how that the Child had been born in a stable — strange surroundings for a King. But the faith that had believed the star and brought them from the East, the faith that had stumbled not at the unbelief of Jerusalem, that faith did not hesitate at earthly surroundings. **By faith** the Magi understood that He was not a king of material wealth, but a King, THE KING of spiritual believers. The star had been a manifestation, and they believed.

They bowed and worshipped the King of the Jews, their King. They worshipped the firstfruits of the Gentiles, taking the kingdom by force. They gave to the Child their gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Representative of their country, they stood for all the gentile world, worshipping the King.

We know little more of these wise-men who followed the star. God told them not to return to Herod and they departed by another way. But we may be sure that although they left, their hearts remained always with the Child. They believed the star, that this was the King, their redeemer.

B. Woudenberg, Jr.

PLEASE NOTE!

The name and address of the new editor-in-chief of Beacon Lights is:

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Let's go to the Christmas Singspiration,

December 19, at 9 o'clock

in our Hope Church.

Everyone else is going ! ! !

We Gratefully Acknowledge:

First Prot. Ref. Church of Redlands, Calif.	$10.45
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	$38.50

To all our Readers . . . .

We express our sincere best wishes for a blessed Christmas season and for the New Year.

The Staff of
Beacon Lights

EDITORIALS

Treasures in Heaven

Are you sometimes absent from your society meetings when some sports event or other entertainment is held on the night of your society meeting? Do you sit listlessly in church on Sunday with your mind on other things? Do you spend your time listening to your radio or watching television when there are other things to be done?

These things are common enough and may seem, in themselves, to be unimportant; but when we remember that they show what things we consider to be most important in our lives, they fit into a pattern that is disturbing. When we look at the things that we do and the way that we spend our time we wonder what we, as young people, have as our scale of importance: our standard of values.

The problem of values is as old as time itself. Every age has had its own idea of what man should be and what he should do. The Pharisees of Jesus' time thought of the perfect man as one who obeyed every letter of the law. And we know how wrong they were. The Epicureans thought that a man should live with as much ease and pleasure as possible. The Stoics repressed emotion as much as possible. The Romans admired only law and power. The Romanticist worshipped nature as god.

All these proved to be nothing but vanity; and they died. Now our American culture has arisen in their place. Americans value all things in terms of their financial returns. "If a thing will make us rich, it is good." American people are constantly seeking ways of making money and their entertainment is based on the artificial excitement and thrills provided by the movies, radio, and television. Anyone who listens to the radio or watches television experiences the artificiality of the American culture.

It is so easy for us, as Christian young people, to fall into the same pattern of thinking. We become so concerned about our physical welfare and temporal pleasure that we soon lose sight of the things that are eternally valuable. We would rather see how close we can come to the world without thinking of our spiritual welfare.

The things that we consider to be important make up our standard of values. Our standard of values forms our attitudes toward ourselves, our church, our society life, and our work. These attitudes, in turn, influence our motives for the things that we do. So then, our actions are always a reflection of our attitudes and values and become very important because they show what things we call important.

Our church societies often become dead because we do not do the necessary work to make a lively Bible discussion or a good program. No one will say that societies are unimportant, but if we examine our attitudes toward society we wonder how many people think that other things are more important. Society life is an important part of our spiritual growth. Are we giving it the proper place in our standard of values? Do we spend our time in seeking pleasure and then come to our society meetings with the excuse that we had no time to prepare? Every one says that society is important but

our contribution to our society is a better guage of our real attitude toward this part of our spiritual life.

The same principle may be applied to our reading. We all know what material is good to read. Look at the things that you actually do read and you will be able to tell what your standard of values really is with regard to your reading. It is so easy to read trash. Are you looking first for something that is easy? Are ease and artificial thrills at the top in our standard of values? How much time do we spend reading things that are thought-provoking and spiritually valuable?

Our societies are often poorly attended during the basketball season. This seems to show that many of our young people place a greater value upon sports than upon society meetings. The discussions in our societies are often poor because no one is prepared. These things seem to show that something is wrong with our attitudes and values. Isn't it time that we look at our standard of values and correct this fault?

Christ is speaking of spiritual values when he says "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust corrupt and where thieves do not break through nor steal."

What are these "treasures in heaven?" They are those things that promote our spiritual growth and serve the glory of God rather than those that center around our own physical comfort and earthly desires. It isn't easy to accomplish this. It can only be gained through prayer, study, and thoughtful attendance of divine worship.

F.H.

Young man, do, you really want to be a missionary? If you really do, you will, for whenever the Lord gives us the will to do so, He also provides the way, the means and the field.

THE BIBLE A MISSIONARY BOOK

Every book in the New Testament was written by a foreign missionary.

Every Epistle in the New Testament that was written to a church was written to a foreign missionary church.

Every letter in the New Testament that was written to an individual was written to the convert of a foreign missionary.

The one book of prophecy in the New Testament was written to seven foreign misionary churches in Asia.

The disciples were called Christians first in a foreign missionary community.

The language of the books of the New Testament is the missionary's language.

The map of the early Christian world is the tracings of the missionary journeys of the apostles.

The problems which arose in the early church were largely questions of missionary procedure.

Of the twelve apostles chosen by the Lord Jesus every apostle except one became a missionary.

The only man among the twelve apostles who did not become a missionary became a traitor.

"The Expositor"

The staff of Beacon Lights wishes to announce that space is available in this magazine for announcements concerning young people's activities in all of our Protestant Reformed Churches. This includes hymn sings, mass meetings, etc., which could be promoted by advertising in Beacon Lights. The back cover or other space may be used, depending on the importance of said activity.

These notices **must** be in the hands of the Editor by the 10th of the month previous to the month of publication.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Of What Value Is Chrismas?

Although I am almost finished with the series that I began when the Beacon Lights was again published last winter, and although it would be possible to finish that series in this issue, I think it may be well to pause, since this is the December issue, and call to mind a few thoughts concerning Christmas and Christian Living.

It is true that in this age of commercialism, when the church itself comes under the influence of the world, in its celebration of Christmas, we are very easily lead away from the true spiritual significance of Christmas as a Christian holiday. It is often true that with the glitter of gifts and tinsel the greatest miracle of all times is obscured to us. It is true oftentimes, that the excitement of merry-making obliterates from us the wonder of grace: God became flesh. It is true that we are so concerned about presents and eating, that the mystery of Bethlehem is lost sight of.

If that is the case, then there is no reason why we should celebrate Christmas at all at least as a Christian holiday. The question is, Why Christmas in the Church? The world answers; to make money; to have fun; to exchange gifts. Last November six there was a Santa Claus parade in downtown Grand Rapids to usher in the Yuletide season. One just barely recuperates, financially, from the past Christmas and the next season is on its way.

Why Christmas in the church? Why does the church have a Christian holiday called Christmas? And do not say that you have heard often, that Christmas is so abused that you have no need of it. Maybe that is true. But it is a danger.

Why do we, as Church, set one day aside for Christmas?

Let's answer that question.

Certainly the church did not set this day aside in order that we might have this day of the year to shout "Merry Christmas" to each other and shower our friends with gifts even though the Magi brought to the Christ, gifts of frankincense, myrrh and gold. If that is all Christmas means to us, then we might just as well strike the holiday out of our Christian calendars.

You may say that it is the day that we commemorate the birth of Christ. And in itself that is true enough. But Christmas is not the only time that we talk of the incarnation. We speak of it the year around, for it is of central importance in our life in the midst of this world.

You may answer that this is the day on which one thousand, nine hundred and fifty six years ago Christ was born, and therefore we commemorate His birthday. That is not true, for the exact date of the year is not even known.

Why, then, do we have Christmas as a Christian holiday?

The answer is that once a year the church comes together to commemorate in a special way the great miracle of God: that He sent His Son into the likeness of sinful flesh.

The story itself is very simple. Luke tells us that Christmas story — "And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she

should be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger." That is really all there is to it. There is more about what happened before Christmas, and what happened after Christmas, but that is the Christmas story. There is nothing so complicated or so strange about that. A child can understand that story. "And she brought forth her firstborn son . . ." But, at the same time, all the theolcgians in all the ages of the church, and all the students of Holy Writ from the beginning of time have never been able to fathom the depths of that simple story. A child can understand it, oh yes, but the wisest in the church of God cannot comprehend it. For it is the wonder of God, the miracle of miracles, the center of the Christian's faith.

And on Christmas we go as the church of Christ with the wise men, with the shepherds, to that humble manger outside of Bethlehem, to pause for a moment at the side of the Christ child.

And on this coming December 25th when we are brought there again, what is your reaction? Do you turn away in disbelief, more interested in the things of this world? Do you pity the poor child who came into the world in such abject poverty? That is the same as unbelief. Look at the shepherds. There is no pity in their eyes. Do you try "to make room in your heart" for this child who could find no room in the inn? No, we pause with the shepherds and the wise men and worship. For we have before our eyes, the wonder of God.

And what thoughts go through your mind as you stand there?

As you gaze on that babe this thought enters your mind: this is the eternal Son of God Who is coequal with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, Who is highly transcendent above all that is of this world and everything in it. This babe is the Most Blessed One, the Only Holy One. But He is Immanuel — God with us. God in our flesh come by way of the womb of the virgin Mary, to be like us in all things, sin excepted. And then you can only marvel at this great wonder.

Or you can see in this child that is in the manger before you a human nature like ours perfectly united with the divine nature in the person of the Son of God. And again you marvel. How is that possible? It is a wonder of God.

And certainly to learn of these things you go to Bethlehem on Christmas.

But there is more that is important to you. This thought also passes through your mind. This child is called Jesus — Jehovah Salvation. And then you see that in that child is the most amazing of all wonders, that He is the gift of the love of God whereby He came into your and my flesh in order to take upon Himself that flesh and blood, and in order to suffer for our guilt that we might be free from our sin.

And that is important, isn't it? You are concerned about your sin, aren't you? And you have come to the conclusion that there is no escape in yourself from the dungeon of your iniquity. Therefore, as you stand beside this manger, let this thought enter your soul also, that here is God's manifestation of the salvation He has prepared for you.

And then as you leave that manger on December twenty five, the blessedness of that experience lingers with you as you pursue the way to the hill called Calvary, and to the Garden of Joseph, until many Christmases later, you shall again see Christ return to take you to Himself in glory. We will not find that truth anywhere else in all this world. We will not find that truth if the world dictates our celebration of Christmas. But if God in His grace leads us this coming Christ-

(Continued on page 11)

TRUTH VS. ERROR

Missions

(Continued)

"Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."
— Mark 16:15

This passage is one of the key-texts of Scripture circumscribing the mission calling of the church. With it we should also consider Matthew 28:19, Luke 24: 45-47, Acts 1:8. Space does not permit quoting them in their entirety. The interested reader can look them up in his or her own Bible. From them we wish to deduct some important conclusions which will aid us in arriving at the truth concerning the matter of missions.

The first of these is that Christ speaks in these passages to His disciples and through them unto His church, commissioning them to preach the Gospel to every creature. It is **the Gospel** that is to be preached. Mark that carefully, young people! Think about it seriously! Consider that without Gospel-preaching there is no mission labor performed! Not really! And this places us imperatively before the question, "What is the Gospel"?

Of course, all that pretends to be the Gospel is not. There are as many parodies of the gospel today as there were in the days of the apostles. (Galatians 1) The proclaimers of these caricatures claim to be fulfilling the mandate of Christ and apparently deceive many but a careful analysis of the message they bring in the light of Christ's specific commission exposes them as distributors of fraudulent wares. Christ commanded that **the Gospel** be preached and the preaching of anything less than this or contrary to this cannot be classified as the fulfillment of this commission.

There is only one Gospel. This is the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to Matthew, its proclamation consists in instructing in "whatsoever things Christ has commanded." From the passage of Luke it may be stated that the gospel consists of the preaching of repentance and remission of sins through the correct understanding and setting forth of the Scriptures as these testify of the sufferings and death and resurrection of Christ. Further, according to Acts 1, the Gospel is the effective witnessing of Christ through the power of the Holy Ghost.

The missionary-preacher, therefore, does not go through the city like the huckster, offering his wares at attractive prices. Neither does he proclaim the promise of salvation for everyone "if they believe." It is often alleged that missionary activity is impossible unless the missionary can proceed in some way from the supposition that God intends or wills to save every indivdual. I maintain that the moment one proceeds from such a supposition, which is contrary to the Word, such a person is unfit to carry out the mission-mandate of Christ. **The Gospel** cannot be preached from a false supposition. Neither can it ever be said that one who gives utterance to the lie is doing as Christ has commanded.

Christ ordered that the gospel be preached. The gospel is good-news; the comforting tidings of unconditional salvation in Christ, "Who of God **is made** unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption." Tell the world of Me, the Christ! Tell every creature

that Christ is Lord, to the glory of God! Tell the heathen (nations) that the Lord reigneth. (Ps. 96:10) Tell them that He, Who through atonement has delivered His cause from the bondage of sin and death, has the victory and in the day that has been appointed He will reveal it unto the ends of the earth. Tell them that God, in Christ, reconciled the world (according to sovereign election) unto Himself and that He shall be glorified in that world even as He shall be justified in the righteous condemnation and destruction of the world of iniquity. Tell them of the counsel of the living God and of the glorious purposes revealed out of that counsel which through all ages are not only realized but stand immovable. Tell them that God does all His good pleasure without fail and no one can frustrate His purposes. Tell them that Jesus is not a beggar who impotently attempts to break the will of man. Neither is He a kind giver whose gifts are ineffective until man has consented to accept them. But tell them in the words of your confession, Canons VII-IV, Art. 11 "But when God accomplishes His good pleasure in the elect, or works in them true conversion, he not only causes the gospel to be externally preached to them, and powerfully illuminates their minds by his Holy Spirit, that they may rightly understand and discern the things of the Spirit of God; but by the **efficacy** of the same regenerating Spirit, pervades the inmost recesses of the man . . ."

Tell them of the Sovereign God of our salvation!

Tell them "that the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, **gathers, defends,** and **preserves** to Himself the elect church . . ." (Heid. Cat. q. 54)

Then you preach the Gospel! Then you tell the Truth! Then you fulfill the mission-mandate of Christ!

Oh, to be sure, there will be a two-fold reaction to the preaching of that Gospel. This cannot be avoided. Christ Himself intimated as much when in Mark 16 He spoke of "those that believe and those that believe not." In His own earthly ministry He experienced this with the multitudes always being divided in their evaluations concerning Him with some contending that He was an impostor while "the little flock" believed that He was The Prophet sent from God. To all men it is not given to know the things of God. From the wise and prudent it is hid. (Matt. 11:25) These things are done in parables that others may not see and be converted. (Mark 4) To babes they are revealed that the purposes of God may be fulfilled. How wondrous are the ways of God, unfathomed and unknown. The preacher does well to remember this always lest he become discouraged in preaching the Gospel and begins to appease his carnal hearers by distorting the Gospel. Ours is the task "to sow and water" but it is God Who gives the increase. Let us never pretend to be wiser than God but let us be faithful to preach nothing but the pure Gospel remember that God is pleased to use it to save the believing ones. (I Cor. 1:21)

Young people, insist upon this as the first principle of the mission of your church. Don't begin in China and Africa! Don't start with complaints about budget and cost! Begin with this: "Do we have **The Gospel** to preach unto the world?" We do! Indeed so! Then only are we situated to engage in mission work and to "go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creatuer."

Rev. G. Vanden Berg

QUESTION BOX

Question: — Can we as parents and preachers in admonishing our young people in seeking their help-mate rightfully use Samson as an illustration against seeking one from the world.

Answer: — The reference is, I take it, to Samson's love of strange women, definitely to his marrying into a Philistine family. The doing was wrong, sinful in the sight of God.

Yet Samson was a true believer. The Scriptures make this unmistakably clear. First, of his mother it is stated, "And the woman bare a son, and called his name Samson: and the child grew, and the Lord blessed him." It is not the teaching of the Scriptures that the wicked are blessed. But God blessed the lad. It means that He assumed toward him an attitude of favor and that in His love was preparing him physically, mentally, and spiritually for his life's calling, so that, as blessed of God, he loved God, His cause and His people. It means that, as constrained by a living faith, he assumed the obligations of his Nazariteship and was ready and eager to serve the cause of God as deliverer of Israel. It is wrong to take the Lord's blessing him as having no other effect than that Samson grew up to be a man of prodigious strength. If this endowment had not included a sanctifying grace, it would not have been reported of him that he was blessed of God.

That Samson in making war upon the Philistines, was active from the principle of a saving faith is clear from the epistle to the Hebrews. Here the passage occurs, "For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson . . ." Thus the sacred writer included also Samson in the cloud of witnesses by which God's people are encompased. And the writer concludes, And these all (thus also Samson) having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Thus Samson, too, lived by the promise. He was a man of true faith. In that faith he warred God's warfare and began to deliver His people. But he was a man of such gross sensuality that on the surface it is not apparent that the mainspring of his actions was faith.

As moved by the Lord he went down to Timnah. For he understood his calling. He must begin to deliver Israel. But he must have an occasion for beginning the conflict. And his seeking occasion was of the Lord. So the Sacred writer reports. But the narrative does not make plain whether Samson hoped to find what he sought through mingling with the Philistines in Timnah or through marrying into one of the Philistine families that dwelt there. Be this as it may, he did the latter. Arriving in Timnah, he saw there a woman, one of the daughters of the Philistines. A brief courtship followed, and he resolved to marry the girl. But it was a forbidden marriage that he contemplated. For in Ex. 34:16 and Deut. 7. 3 sq., marriage with Canaanitish woman is forbidden. And when the Lord thy God, shall deliver them before thee," so the passage reads,"thou shalt smite them, and utterly destroy

them; thou shalt make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them; neither shalt thou make marriages with them; thy daughter thou shalt not give unto his son, nor his daughter shalt thou take unto thy son. For they will turn away thy son from following me, that they may serve other gods: So will the anger of the Lord be kindled against you, and destroy thee suddenly."

In Jos,13:3 the Philistines are included in the Canaanites.

Samson hastened to tell his father and his mother of his find, and ordered them to get the woman for him to wife. But his godfearing parents remonstrated with him. They warned him against such a venture. They said to him, "Is there never a woman among the daughters of thy brethren, or among all thy people, that thou goest to take a wife of the uncircumcised Philistines?" But his only reply to them was, "get her for me, for she pleaseth me well."

But now the sacred writer adds, "But his father and his mother knew not that it was of the Lord, that he sought occasion from the Philistines: for at that time the Philistines had dominion over Israel."

Certainly, this cannot mean that Samson had received a revelation from God that he should take him a wife from the uncircumcised Philistines. For then God would have been in conflict with His own revealed will as expressed in Deuteronomy 7:3. Samson's seeking occasion against the Philistines was of the Lord, but not his seeking it through that marriage. The latter was not of the Lord but of Samson himself.

But, of course, according to God's counsel, Samson had to marry that woman. For the Philistines had to give him occasion. It means that the forbidden marriage was just another instance of sin serving God's counsel, another instance of God achieving His ends through the perverseness of men, in this case a man, who, as to the heart of his dispositions, was a true believer. In time: that marriage was a forbidden one certainly. It was exactly Samson's love of strange women that proved his undoing.

Certainly then, as parents we can use Samson as an illustration in admonishing our young people against seeking their help-mate from the world.

G. M. O.

NEW THEOLOGY

A pantheistic god, instead of a personal God; a human savior, instead of a divine Saviour; "infallible" scholarship, instead of the onfallible Bible; "modern thought," instead of "thus saith the Lord"; a development of religious ideas from a human mind, instead of a revelation from God; the natural in all things, the supernatural in nothing; reformation, instead of regeneration; culture, instead of conversion; a change of environment, instead of a change of heart; the energy of the flesh, instead of faith and prayer; interest in the secular, instead of zeal for religion; nobody afraid of hell, and nobody caring much about heaven; everybody coming out right anyhow, and nobody on the wrong track except those who cling to the myth, "once for all delivered unto the saints."

— Selected

(Continued from page 7)

CHRISTIAN LIVING

mas to His manger, and instructs us by His Spirit in these truths, then we are blessed indeed. Then we have a reason for commemorating Christmas as a Christian holiday. Then we see that Christmas is for the Church of Christ the most blessed of any day in the year.

H. Hanko

NATURE STUDY

Fire in the Earth

The fire of Hell has been pictured for us in scripture as 'fire and brimstone' and this figure has stood during the ages as the portion of the wicked who are hated by God. A tangible variety of this fire and brimstone has been experienced by many people who live in the vicinity of an active volcano. To the Romans this phenomenon was surface evidence of activity at the forges of Vulcan as arms were prepared for Mars, and the mountains came to be known as volcanoes.

A historic instance occurred on the island of Martinique in the West Indies on the morning of May 8, 1902. Eyewitness stories in the news accounts of that event describe a spectacular scene. Mt. Pelee, which rises over 4,400 feet on the northern tip of the island, supplied the eruption. On it's southern slop was the coastal city of St. Pierre with a normal population of 25,000 augmented to about 40,000 by refugees fleeing to other parts of the island during the preceeding days. For days, the crater had been active with repeated minor explosions, throwing hot mud and rocks about, with heavy falls of ash on the surrounding country, and pillars of fire over the peak at night. On that fateful morning a great blast of flaming gases swept down the mountainside and wiped out the town, leaving only one survivor, a prisoner in the local jail. One of the loggers on a ship in the harbor gave the account that all the inhabitants were killed and all but one of the eighteen ships in the harbor were nearly destroyed. He compared it to the burning of a large oil refinery and stated that a muffled roar could be heard for miles. Without warning, there was a tremendous explosion which ripped out the side of the volcano and sent a solid wall of flaming gasses over the town and the harbor. Only 25 of the 68 men aboard his ship escaped and the masts and smokestack were swept off the ship as if they had been cut with a knife. This ship was not even within the harbor.

Another, perhaps even better known, was that of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in August of the year A. D. 79, which destroyed the cities of Herculaneum and Pompeii. Nearly seventeen centuries later the buried remains of those doomed cities were discovered, and the story they told gripped the world's imagination. Roman sentries were buried at their posts. Family groups in the supposed safety of subterranean vaults were cast in moulds of volcanic dust cemented to a rocklike hardness with their jewels, candelabra, and the remains of food. Suffocating clouds of dust, steam, and hot gases brought death. Subsequent falls of debris effected burial in a manner that framed the victims in a gigantic still picture cut from the movie of their final terror, surrounded by the undimmed color and form of their ancient civilization. It was after a thousand years of repose, during which civilization grew on the Bay of Naples, that Vesuvius began to erupt.

One of the greatest explosions of modern times occurred at Krakatoa in 1883. Krakatoa was a volcanic island in Sunda Strait which separates Java from Sumatra. In August of that year, a series of explosions started which culminated with a gigantic spasm that blew two

craters to bits and left water 900 feet deep in one place where the island had been 2,600 feet high. The noise was heard in Australia and a wave of pressure in the air was recorded by barographs around the world. A wave of water set up by the event drowned 36,500 people in the low coastal villages of western Java and southern Sumatra. Columns of ash and pumice went miles into the air. By the next year, observers determined that the amount of sun heat reaching the earth's surface was only 87 percent normal. A similar effect was observed following a series of eruptions throughout the world in 1902.

Volcanoes are in many ways more interesting and instructive than earthquakes. They can be located definitely as danger spots, and they rattle before they strike. Also, volcanic vents pour out materials from greater depths than can be observed by any other means and supply evidence bearing upon the constitution of the earth as a planet.

A volcano is a special kind of mountain. It differs structurally and geneticallly from the majority of the world's mountains. It is semetrical and has a hollow cone at the top as is typified by Mt. Ararat which was the landing place of Noah and his ark. It has, for instance, a 17,000 foot cone. Mt. Fuji in Japan and Mt. Mayon in the Philippines are examples of unusually perfect development of the shape toward which most volcanoes tend. The areas around these mountains are marked by the presence of volcanic ash and lava quite different from the rocks of which most mountains are composed.

The borders of the Pacific Ocean are dotted with volcanoes. Notably active groups occur in the Aleutian Islands, Japan, the Philippines, the Netherlands East Indies and the Hawaiian Islands. The west coast of North America has it's share and Central America is particularly active. The west coast of North America is relatively inactive at the present moment, though Mt. Lassen in California erupted in 1915. Peaks such as Mts. Baker, Glacier Peak, Rainier, Hood, Crater Lake and Shasta are inactive volcanoes which were completely formed by ancient eruptions.

A universal feature of volcanoes is that they are motivated by molten rock which has invaded the outer crust as what is called magma. Sometimes this merely supplies the heat that produces a steam or gas explosion on other occasions, it wells out at the surface, where it is called lava. Such indications would seem to be telling a story of some subterranean sea of molten rock. That was the first explanation of science and was fashionable for over a century. The fact that shock of earthquakes could be felt over the whole earth, indicate that the earth cannot have a large sea of liquid in its interior. This explanation would require this molten rock to travel almost 1800 miles to the surface at places and this is contrary to all that we know about the laws of physics.

Lavas of the world are remarkably similar in general nature. This widespread uniformity of material seems to indicate a globe-encircling shell of basalt which would serve as the primary source for erupted molten rock. The top of this layer is now believed to be a depth of nearly 20 miles. Down there, the rock is quite hot but the extreme pressure keeps it from melting just as water boils at a higher temperature at sea level than on a mountain top.

In the process of mountain making, large segments of the outer crust are subjected to shoving, pulling, and distortion, which result in the formation of giant abyssal cracks. Buckling naturally releases some of the pressure in the basalt and the heat starts toward the surface, carrying molten rock or magma and lava

with it. As the magma rises, it disintegrates even more and also heats the surface as it moves. This causes surface gases, boiling springs, and finally may result in lava flows which will eventually give rise to mountains. Thus, a large body of magma may approach the surface and form what we call batholiths. These are simply large deposits which accumulate near the surface and give rise to ground heat and even volcanic mountains. Many of these beds of magma have solidified and become solid rock, the lighter portion of which is granite. The alignment of groups of modern active volcanoes, as well as Pacific islands perched on volcanoes, is attributed to their relationship to abyssal cracks through which basalt welled up from the substratum.

The activity of a volcano runs in cycles. A burst of violence is followed by exhaustion and quiescence, while energy is stored for another outburst. An eruption of Vesuvius in 1906 was followed by seven years of repose. The third eruption in the series broke loose in 1929 and it was the climax to the series. Etna volcano on the coast of Sicily erupted violently in 1928 and Lava buried Maxcali up to 16 feet. The Day before St. Pierre was destroyed, Soufriere volcano in Guatemala erupted with disastrous results.

In contrast to the violence of Mediterranean volcanic eruptions, the Hawaiian Islands supply examples of the opposite extreme. Eruptions there are climaxed with an occasional quiet flow of lava. Thus the islands are built up by the periodic flow of lava. Episodes in the history of Hawaiian eruptions have been divided roughly into 11 year cycles, with a supercycle of about 130 years. It is probably no coincidence that sunspots vary in a similar manner.

Volcanoes have caused great catastrophies and destroyed many persons as well as much property. Besides, as we mentioned, the fine ash and dust that they send into the atmosphere has effected the heat of the sun on the erath. One compelling reason that people persist in settling near volcanoes is that the ash and lava are very fertile and thus are highly cultivated. However, today, measures are taken to safeguard against lose of life because the forewarning of the volcanoes are wisely heeded. Volcanoes often combine with the snow and ice of the far north to create floods and glaciers. Volcanoes have been the major factor in the creation of many of the Pacific islands and are even now in the process of creating new ones and enlarging the bounds of the present islands. They also account for the romantic disappearing islands of the Pacific. A major eruption may bring the crater well above the sea's surface; however, destructive forces often break the rim of the crater to such an extent that it is no longer visible.

Dwight Monsma

BEYOND TODAY

If we could see beyond today
  As God can see;
If all the clouds should roll away,
  The shadows flee,
O'er present griefs we would not fret,
Each sorrow we would soon forget;
For many joys are waiting yet,
  For you and me.

If we could know beyond today,
  As God doth know,
Why dearest treasures pass away,
  And tears must flow;
And why the darkness leads to light,
Why dreary paths will soon grow bright;
Someday life's wrongs will be made right,
  Faith tells us so.

— Selected

BIBLE OUTLINE

LESSON IX

THE TRUE SONS OF ABRAHAM NEW CREATURES

Galatians 3:7-9

1. We should keep the following very strongly in mind in the study of this entire Chapter **from verses 3-29:**

a. That the point at issue in this epistle is whether man is **justified** by **works of law** that we perform, or whether we are justified **simply by faith.** That is the issue.

b. To decide this **fundamental** question Paul lets the **Scriptures** speak. He does not simply quote at random but he quotes **key-passages,** which are like beacon-lights casting their light on the meaning of the entire relationship of **the law** to the Promise. In these passages we see the **Scripture** on this point, the entire Scripture and not merely some Scripture-**passages.** The entire **Scriptural** teaching is layed open in these key-passages. They are directives for the understanding of all Scripture. These Key-passages are Gen. 12:3; Deut. 27:6; Habakkuk 2:4; Deut. 21:23; Gen. 12:7; 13:15; 17:7 and 22:18 and 24:7.

c. That the axiom is: neither circumcission has any power nor uncircumcission but a **new creature.** This new creature is the being out of faith, the gift of God — out of faith that is energized by love. Compare Gal. 3:7-9 5:6 and 6:15.

2. The question of whether a man is justified by **works of law** or by the **hearing of faith** can only be decided by an **earlier** consideration, by a **more primary** one. This consideration is: what really constitutes one to be a **son** of Abraham. What instruction and promise did God give Abraham as to his sons, as to their identity. This is the perennial question in the whole New Testament Scriptures. Notice the following in this section:

a. That Paul here establishes that the sons of Abraham are indeed only those who are the sons of God in Christ Jesus; that they are indentical in person and number and spiritual character. See Rom. 9:6-13.

b. That the relationship between these two is not such that one is a son of Abraham and therefore a son of God in Christ, but that the exact opposite is true: one is a son of Abraham because he is a son of God by virtue of sovereign election, calling, justification and glorification. Gal. 2:29. Having been created by God in Christ unto good works, also the good work of believing unto righteousness, one is a new creature and, indeed, a son of Abraham.

c. This fact that one belongs **to Christ,** and, therefore, is a son of Abraham Paul demonstrates from the **history** of salvation from the relationship of the promise given **to** Abraham and the law given **through** Moses. If one does not need to be a new **creature** by the wonder of grace — then the contention of the Jewish legalists stands! However, Paul silences this proud and haughty boast by the Scriptures. These Scriptures are able to make those wise unto salvation who are of the faith in Christ Jesus.

3. Paul adduces just one Scripture passage to show who the children of Abraham are. He quotes Gen. 12:3, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Notice the following:

a. That this passage is taken from Moses' account of God's speaking to Abraham in Ur of the Chaldees. It is the **point of departure** for all correct understanding of the Word of God. It gives so to speak the fundamental framework of the building of **God's good-pleasure in history.** This passage expresses God's saving purpose for **all nations.** Christ's own brethren, given Him by the Father, are in every tongue, tribe, people and nation. Such is the teaching of Scripture, of **all Scripture!** Read Gen. 12:1-6! Read it against the background of Gen. 9:24-29, where we see the perspective of Noah's prophecy in its broad Christological outline of the gathering of the church from the beginning of the world to the end. Read this passage also against the wonder of the forming of the nations as described to us in Gen. 10 and 11. Notice the positive purpose of God in the confusion of tongues at Babel so that the nations were formed and the deep way of sin and grace is unfolded before our believing eyes. What a point of departure! Notice this same point of departure by Paul in that great sermon recorded in Acts 13:13ff. There too it is the departure from the love of God in elective grace!

b. That these "blessed with faithful Abraham" are:

1. They are said to be "blessed into" Abraham. The Greek verb is like the dutch "inzegenen," blessed into a happy union like in marriage. So the nations will be blessed into a new manhood, a new race in Abraham, that is, in Christ. Eph. 2:15. But this "man" is then really new, a **new** creature, presently in the new Jerusalem, in a new heaven and new earth where righteousness shall dwell.

2. This "the Scripture" foresaw. Here is the Foreknowledge of God in the Scriptures; here we have unfolded the secret counsel of God concerning our redemption. And this **unfolding** was:

a. Not simply a **prediction** to Abraham as to what God would do for the church. Abraham is part of this church. Hence, here is more than cold prediction.

b. Here we have God Himself coming to Abraham **preaching before as gladtidings** (gospelizing to Abraham). The Gospel-tidings to Abraham is "in thee shall all nations be blessed." That is not an addition to the Gospel, some "fine print," a foot-note, but that is the Gospel-tidings. It was Gospel-tiding in which Abraham saw the day of Christ, the day of Pentecost from afar — and rejoiced. John 8:31ff. The "father" receives gladtidings that many children will be born into his family. Children who will dwell with God in the Father's house with its many mansions. John 14:1-3.

c. And these will all **live out of faith.** They would simply trust in God, trust in God through Christ, having the confidence that Jesus loved them and gave himself in their behalf a ransom for their souls!

QUESTIONS:

Why does Paul not explicitly state here, as he does in Rom. 9, that the elect are the sons of Abraham? Why they that are out of faith? What is the inner harmony between "out of faith" and "elect?" What is the Pelagian-Arminian position on this point? Do they who deny election really have a new creature? Can they have certainty of salvation? Can we make our election sure apart from the infallible fruits of election? Is faith such a fruit? How is this faith wrought in our hearts?

LESSON X

THE CURSE OF GOD UPON ALL WHO LIVE FROM WORKS OF LAW

Galatians 3:10-14

1. It should be perfectly evident to the observant reader of Scripture, to one who studies unto salvation, that, in this sec-

tion, Paul is still discussing the general theme: **Only those, who live out of faith, are the sons of Abraham.** Paul is, therefore, not introducing a new subject in these verses. He is still explaining the subject of who really are the children of Abraham. The very nature of the law and of being under law is the most powerful argument against any attempt to be justified by law and works of law. That is the force of the conjunction "for" in verse 10. Paul shows from the implicit nature of law, that anyone who lives **from the principle** of works of law cannot possibly live out of Christ. Such a person has denied the Cross of Christ. For the living out of law is not living out of faith. These two are mutually exclusive of one another. The man living out of works of law is the man without grace; the one living out of faith is a new creature. Through law he has **died unto law,** in order that he might live unto God.

2. We should notice the following here:

a. That Paul makes the bold statement, which allows for no exceptions whatsoever; he establishes the absolute fact that as many as are out of works of law **are under curse.** This is the principle that stands from A to Z! It is an inexorable rule. It is the principle of law as applied to the guilty and corrupt sinner; and the law cannot make any exceptions. It is weak through sin, it **cannot** do ought else but damn! Rom. 8:3; I Cor. 15:56. Thus Paul teaches here in verse 10.

b. That Paul **proves** this from Scripture:

1. First he calls attention to the fact, the dictum of the law of God as superimposed upon Israel. God did this through Moses and Joshua. Moses gave the commandment and Joshua executed it at Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim. See Deut. 27:26. In verse 10 Paul calls attention to these historic words spoken by the Levites at Mt. Ebal when all the people answer "Amen." The congregation had answered "Amen" to these terrible cures! Did they understand what they were doing? Was this not zealing their doom forever?! It meant that if they ever sinned even in the least and did not keep all that was written in the book of the law they should be cursed!! It meant nothing less. Someone will say: but at Mt. Ebal there were also "blessings" mentioned! Yes, but these were "conditional." It was the condition of the **obedience to the law,** perfect and constant obedience. Was there any hope of this? Of course, not. Read Romans 3:9-20. Notice the following:

a. That Paul does not at all make mention in this passage of the blessings of those who would keep the law. This is noteworthy! Why? Surely, the man that doeth the same shall live thereby. Why is the man under law under the curse? Because simply no one ever kept the law. Everyone in the history of Israel from the historic moment of Mt. Ebal till the time when Jesus was nailed to the Cross, yea, even now, ever kept the law. The most zealous, Paul himself was such, ever kept the law. **As many** as are out of works of law are under the curse. And this curse brings Israel in Captivity of sin and death, into Babylon! It was such that God's fierce wrath brought Israel into the dispersion, scattered throughout the world!

b. All of Israel's history, all through the period of the Judges, the Kings etc. testifies so very loudly and only, that the law perfects nothing. Hence, Paul could not write of the "blessings" upon those who keep the law! There simply were no blessings!

2. Secondly, by calling attention to another **historic occasion.** It is the historic occasion at the end of Israel as a theocratic nation, when the Kings of Judah and the nobles were led captive to Babylon. Mt. Ebal at the taking of the land! Here in Habakkuk 3:4 at the time when the land is being taken from Israel!

Notice that Paul cites two historic occasions! And notice how this clinches his argument. For from this word of God in Habakkuk the following is evident:

a. That Paul does not simply **draw a conclusion** that there is a curse upon all.

b. Paul lets the Scripture **speak.** He interprests Scripture here in the light of Scripture. For the truth is that the only hope in darkness, the only beacon light seen from the watch-tower of prophecy is: **the just shall live by faith!** Read Hab. 2:4 in its context. This passage is a "key-passage" to the understanding the possibility of Israel's saying "Amen" to the curses of the law at Mt. Ebal. They always looked beyond the law to the Promise of God made to the fathers. The believer, at Ebal, saw the blood of atonement on the altar at the foot of the mount. Looking at the end of the law, the great Redeemer to come, the believer said: Amen! Compare Acts 13:41 which is the entire book of Galatians in a nutshell.

3. And here is the solution to the entire problem of the law. Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse, as it is written: Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

a. He redeemed us from under the curse. He came under the law. He did not simply buy us to make us His own, but He came to re-claim us. We were and are his own. He is our Goel, our deliverer who came to redeem us from Egypt's bondage!

b. This too, that Christ came and redeemed us is not after-thought. Neither is it an appendage to the law, something God would use in case that the obedience to the conditions of the law failed. This is the word of the Cross spoken by Moses already in Deuteronomy 21:23. Hence, God never intended to save Israel, His people, by the works of the law.

c. Christ came in order that we might receive the promise of the Holy Spirit into our hearts. He shed forth this Spirit on Pentacost who dwells in Christ as in the head, and who has come to dwell, make His abode in us the members.

QUESTIONS:

May we simply quote these "curses" and "blessings" of the law as they were placed before Israel at Mt. Ebal and apply all this to the saints of the New Testament, and say: see the Bible speaks of "conditions?" Is Roman-Catholicism not guilty of this? Does Rome too not say that we fulfil such "conditions" to justification by virtue of being in Christ by "baptismal grace?" Is such insistence on "conditions" not a tempting of God? Is the command of faith and repentance not quite different from a confrontation with "curses" and "blessings?" What is the truth of the Gospel that is at stake in the matter of "conditions" as a **pre**-requisite to enter the Kingdom. May we read the Ten Commandments to the Congregation and omit the "preface of the Law?" Why not?

LESSON XI

THE EXACT TERMS OF THE PROMISES TO ABRAHAM

Galatians 3:15-17

1. It should be borne in mind that Paul is still discussing the question: **How is a man, guilty man, justified before God.** Paul's Gospel is: man is justified purely by faith, without works of law that we perform. Such is the general subject which Paul is discussing even in these verses. Thus far the chain of the argument was as follows:

a. That in our christian experience we do not receive the graces of the Holy Spirit, the foregiveness of sins and the hope of everlasting life, except **out** of the faith of Jesus Christ. Thus it was with

Abraham and thus it must be with all his spiritual children. Gen. 15:6.

b. That it never was God's purpose to save only the **natural** children of Abraham. For before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees the word of the Lord was proclaimed unto him **as glad-tidings:** "In thee shall all nations be blessed." Gen. 12:3.

c. That it is evident from all of the history of Israel that no flesh is justified before God by works of law which we perform, for it is written: "cursed is every-one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to perform it. Deut. 27:26 and Deut. 21:23.

d. To these alient points of argument Paul now adds a **fourth point** in Gal. 3:15-18. This fourth point is: the **exact terms** of the **Testament,** the Covenant of God with Abraham. The **intent** and meaning of the Testator is written in the terms. And these terms are not written in ambiguous language. The terms are very exact.

2. In general we should notice the following in the verses 15-17:

a. That there is an earnest appeal here in these verses to the readers. Paul writes: "brethren." Vs. 15. It is an appeal to what Paul and the brethren have in common in the Lord and from their heavenly Father! Paul is very tender toward them while at the same time he is severe with a severity of love. The love of Christ constrains him.

b. That Paul here reasons from the lesser to the greater he reasons from what is true in a merely human testament to the same truth in a Divine Testament. He points out a certain analogy, a certain parallel truth. As the one **being ratified** cannot be annulled or added to so also the other cannot be changed!

c. That the entire thrust of the Covenant is that it is freely given in grace to the heirs. It is given wholly unconditionally. Vs. 18. Writes Calvin: "For if you view it as conditional the word **gave** would be utterly inapplicable." Vs. 18.

3. We should, more particularly, notice the following points:

a. That Paul posits the general thesis here: No testament, **being ratified,** can be set aside or changed. The terms of the Testament stand!

1. It makes very little difference whether it be interpreted as being a Pact or agreement, as far as Paul's argument from a human covenant to a Divine Covenant is concerned. However, we fail to see the need of considering Paul to be speaking a pact or agreement, even in the human testament. Our reasons are:

a. The term employed by Paul in the Greek is "diatheeke." It uniformly, in Scripture, refers to a "testament." See Hebrews 9:20.

b. There is no need of departing from this sense here. The mere fact that Paul reasons "according to man" does not call for our considering the term "Covenant" to be an agreement, as if the text read "suntheeke," agreement, pact!

c. Besides the analogy of the two, the Covenant ratified amongst men, and the Covenant rather points to the fact that Paul has a testament in mind, a matter of "testamentary disposition."

2. When a "testament" is ratified it is made valid before the law. It is publicly confirmed, solemnly ratified. The term in the original means: confirmed up to the present moment. Such a confirmed testament:

a. Cannot be set aside as nul and void, as being of no value before the law unto the heirs.

b. Nor can anyone add fresh clauses or new "determination by testamentary disposition." See "Word Pictures" of A. T. Robertson. He refers to Deissman's "Light of the East." In the inscriptions the use of this word "adding thereto" has the specialized meaning of "determining by testamentary disposition." This also

points toward the fact that Paul has human "testament" in mind and not "an agreement."

b. All this is applicable to God's Covenant Words to Abraham.

1. "The promises" spoken to Abraham by God.

a. The Promises (notice the plural) refer to the very definite, individual promises recorded to us in Gen. 12:7:13:15 17:7; 22:18; 24:7, which read.

b. These promises **were spoken**. The **uttering** of these promises is conceptually different from the promises themselves. The speaking of these promises was really like the preaching of the glad-tidings, news concerning the Promise, the Great PROMISE!

c. God was very careful when He preached these promises; He was very careful in the wording. The terms are very specifically layed down. He preached very accurately to Abraham lest Abraham be confused by ambiguous language. The word of God remained perspicuous, clear and lucid; it was understandable for Abraham so as to rejoice in the day of Christ, seeing it from afar.

2. Hence, the exact term "Seed" each time and not "seeds." The entire fulfilment of the Testament depended on the labors of the "Seed" as of one, and not upon the individual efforts and good works of the "many." It is solely founded on the merits of the Christ, the Messiah, Who redeemed us from the curse of the law. Hence, the Testament can never be read and administered as did the Jews. For a contract is signed by both parties while a Testament is administered by the one to the other.

QUESTIONS:

Why do we call the two parts of the Bible "Old and New Testament" and not Old and New "Agreement?" What is the meaning of the term "testament" in comman legal language? Do two nations make a testament or an agreement? When was the Covenant of God ratified and how? Is there a distinction between the promise of the Gospel itself and the preaching of the same in the Reformed Confessions? Compare Canons II, 5 and III, IV, 8. Why do those, who wish to speak of "conditions" in the Covenant, insist that **preaching** and **promise** are identical?

LESSON XII

THE INABILITY OF THE LAW TO CHANGE THE COVENANT TERMS

Galatians 3:17-22

1. In the verses 17, 18 we have the "conclusion" of Paul, as he applies the truth of a ratified Covenant, as it is even amongst men, that it cannot be annulled nor can a change be made by "testamentary disposition." Applied to the matter of the **exact terms** of God's Covenant this gives us the following:

a. That what is said by the Lord in the law with its "curses" and "blessings" in no way annuls or changes the **terms** of the Testament. The law cannot even touch the authentic terms of the Coveant! Verses 17, 18.

b. It should be noticed, that the "lawgiving" at Sinai was 430 years after the promises were "spoken" to Abraham. The former, the lawgiving, cannot annul the latter. Notice, that the law has as its working principle: the man that **doeth** the same shall live thereby! It says: Cursed is everyone that remaineth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to perform it. Such is Mt. Ebal. Deut. 27:26. But the **terms** of the Covenant, the Testament say: all the salvation of the children of Abraham depends on the One, that is, the Seed, who is Christ.

c. In the light of the foregoing how can salvation by works of law ever be proclaimed as being the terms of the Testa-

ment. It is not the New Testament in Christ's blood?

d. If the "inheritance" spoken of in the Testament to Abraham were out of the "work of law," the effort of the many and not of the Seed, then it is no more out of the Promise. And then what we receive from the Lord is not "graced upon" us from moment to moment up to the very present hour. Then salvation is "conditional" upon our efforts, else work is no more work!

2. In the verses 19-21 Paul raises and answers the question: **what is then the purpose of the law?** Forsooth a most natural question. If the promises stand then the **terms** of the Covenant cannot be annuled! Why did the Lord then add the law later by the space of 430 years? Surely God does nothing without good reason and why purpose, does He?

Paul gives the following answer to his own question: four points!

a. It was added **for the transgressions** sake. This implies that since the law is the power of sin (I Cor. 15:56). God added the law **to produce** these transgressions in Israel. The exceeding sinfulness of sin must be manifested. (Rom. 7:8-13) God put all **under sin** that he might be merciful to all. Verse 22. No lurking sin may remain dormant in the hearts of the children of God. (Rom. 7:8). Sins generally must be manifested so that "where sin abounded grace might much more abound." (Rom. 5:20, 21) For the law could not possibly have been added to give life. Had there been such a law righteousness would be out of the law. Verse 21. Scripture clearly teaches that the letter of the law kills. II Cor. 3:6b. The law is on an entirely different nature than the promise. For the "law is not out of faith." Verse 12. It was added for the transgression sake. That is point I.

b. It was but of a **temporary nature:** it does not abide forever. It was added: until the Seed should come, to whom the Promise was given." Vs. 19. When Christ came He kept the law; he became a curse under the law of God, hanging on the tree. Thus he nailed the hand-writing on the Cross which was against us. Col. 2:14. All that was transacted at Mt. Ebal, all the "curses" to which Israel had answered "Amen" came upon Him. And in Him they are taken away and all the promises are in Him yea, and therefore through Him "Amen" unto the glory of God, the Father. Point II in the meaning of the law.

c. The law did not directly come from God without the mediatorship of angels and men. There were "go-betweens." There was a double interposition at Sinai.

1. It was given by Moses. Vs. 19. See John 1:16, 17.

2. And it was given through angels to Moses. Compare Hebrews 1:14 and Hebrews 2:2. See also Acts 7:34. Not so the Promise. Here the Angel of the Lord came and spoke directly to Abraham. Gen. 15:1-6.

d. The law must needs be in the form of a "contract." It must needs be conditional, dependant on what we will do, keep it or reject it. And therefore it will certainly condemn us to hell. Not thus is the Promise of God. This is in God who is one. He became His own Mediator. His mighty arm reveals itself in Jesus. Grace and truth become a realty to us in Christ. John 1:16, 17. He fulfils the "conditions" of the law. These are never placed on the shoulders and hearts of God's people. That would be tempting God. Acts 15:10. This too shows that salvation is not out of works of law by the intention of God. It could not annul the promise of God to Abraham.

3. And so the "law" did not change or annual the Promise. There is no justification by works of law. Such is the clear testimony of Scripture. It is for "those believing." Vs. 22. It is never **for every-**

one, if they believe! Thus the Scriptures are clear and Paul draws straight lines, interpreting Scripture in the light of Scripture.

QUESTIONS:

What is Paul's exact meaning when he speaks here in this Chapter of "law?" See Verses 10-12. Does Paul mean with law merely the teacher of our sins and misery? Or does he have reference to the law as it was given to Israel at Mt. Ebal placing men and women under the "curses" of the law? Josh. 8:30-35. May we simply confront the congregation in the preaching with these curses and blessings? Do we still need the law as a teacher of sin? Heid. Cat., Question 3, 4. Does this place us **under** law or does this leave room for being **under grace?**

Young People's News

Michigan

The young people of our various churches in Grand Rapids and vicinity met togather at our Creston Church, Tuseday evening, Oct. 26, to enjoy a Reformation Mass Meeting.

The singing was under the capable directing of Mr. A. Heemstra. The "King's Ambassadors," which consists of: Don Faber, Chuck Westra, Don Knoper, and John Bult, accompanied by Jim Jonker, favored us with two numbers. Betty Engelsma and Audrey Klaver sang a duet accompanied by Fran Flikkema.

Student Herm Hanko was the speaker for the evening, His speach was entitled: "Martin Luther And The Reformation." In his introduction he pointed out that: "It is 437 years ago that Dr. Martin Luther nailed the ninety five theses on the bulletin board of the church at Wittenburg.

It is not my purpose to elevate Martin Luther to the status of a hero, and thus

to inspire hero worship in you, for then we would be falling into the same error that we were delivered from in the reformation. For it is evident to all of us that it was not he who was the author of the Reformation, but Christ Himself who cares for His church and who will preserve it from error until the day when He shall take it unto Himself.

In his first point Mr. Hanko said: It should be evident to us first of all that it required a momentous change in the soul of Luther in order to break with the Catholic Church. Do not say that Luther was not a faithful member of this church. For so the situation was also before the mind of Luther. In that church he had been born and brought up and instructed. And he was thoroughly trained in all the doctrines of this Romish religion.

But although the father of Luther had determined a career of law for his son, Luther himself was theologically inclined. He entered into the convent at Erfurt of the Augustinian Order and made his studies in theology. And having completed his studies, he was ordained a priest in 1507. He was then appointed to the university at Wittenburg where he soon attracted a great number of students from all parts of the country whom he both instructed and inspired.

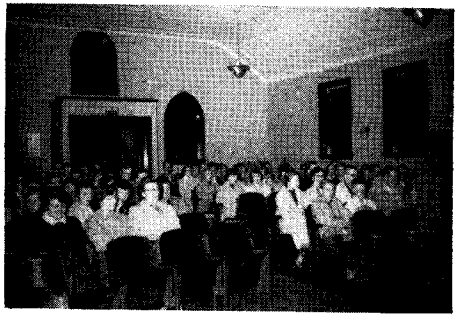
To Luther the all important question in his life was, How can I be saved? And this question of the salvation of his soul really forms the principle and backbone

of the whole Luthern Reformation. But the church had a ready answer. You can be justified by confessing your sins to the priest — Luther did so; the church answered, by doing good works and living holy lives as faithful sons of the church — Luther did that; the church said, you can obtain peace of soul by self denial and self torment — and Luther tells us himself that he did also that; the church said, make a pilgrimage to Rome and kiss the toe of the Pope. Also that Luther tried. The church said, buy indulgences signed by the pope as a declaration that your sins are forgiven — and undoubtedly Luther did. But the question remained. There was no peace of soul. How can I be justified before God?

It was in the convent at Erfurt that Luther uncovered a Bible from under many years accumulation of dust. And there for the first time Luther came across the words, "The just shall live by faith." But yet Luther could not find peace, for the text remained an obscurity to him. Trying yet to find peace for his tortured soul in the clergy he set out for Rome. And although he performed all the prescribed works of penance, his soul was filled with loathing and he returned to his home in disgust. Then it was that the full force of the words he had read swept through his soul: "The just shall live by faith!"

A profound change had taken place in Luther — greater than he himself realized. He had become a different man. The break had been accomplished that was necessary for Luther to sever his relationships with the powerful church of which he was a member.

In his second point he continued: The pope had offered indulgences to forgive the past, present and future sins of an individual if only he would pay enough money. And so blazing with righteous anger against this horrible corruption, Luther nailed 95 theses on the bulletin



board of the church where he was wont to preach. Thus the reformation was launched and the blaze was spread over the length of the empire. The split had been accomplished!

But this break did not reach its climax until he made his public refusal to recant and return to the bosom of the church at the Diet of Worms. He ends his defence with the ringing familiar words, "Here stand I. I can do nought else, God help, Amen!"

In his final point Mr. Hanko showed how the Reformation continues in the Church. During the glorious period of the reformation already there were many who sought to compromise the truth which the reformers had worked for. Think of Pighius who attacked the doctrine of the sovereignty of God as Calvin maintained it; think of the pernicious theory of common grace which was the cause of our separate existence as Protestant Reformed Churches; think of the recent schism in our own denomination because of the conditional theology of those who have left us.

In every way possible the devil seeks to destroy the true church of God. But we take note of the fact that God, by powerful and glorious means preserves His church and therefore will preserve it till Christ shall come.

You as young people who are the future of that church, hold fast that which thou hast that no one may take your crown.

Learn our truth in the societies, in the catechism, in the home so that you may understand it and preserve it to teach it to the generations that follow.

We were then favored by another number from the "King's Ambassadors," after which recess was held and a delicious lunch served in the church basement.

After recess we enjoyed a debate on the topic: Resolve that, all our young peoples activities should be centered around the church. Herm Woudenberg and Jim Schipper were the affirmative speakers, and Case Lubbers and Dale Mensch the negative. The affirmative took the debate.

I am sure I can speak for everyone present as well as for myself when I say that we certainly enjoyed ourselves and spent a well worth our while evening, and I'm sure everyone went home with the real meaning of the Reformation in their hearts.

Northwest Iowa and Minnesota

The Doon Young People's Society sponsored a very interesting combined Organ Dedication and Reformation Day Program on the evening of October 28, at the Doon Church.

The program was opened with prayer by Rev. H. C. Hoeksema. Then we were favored with several organ selections rendered by Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema, and a double duet by a number of Doon's girls. A Dedication talk by Rev. H. C. Hoeksema followed. The speaker spoke on the relationship of music and Reformation.

After the speech we were favored with a vocal solo by Sidney Stellinga accompanied at the organ by Miss Margery Stellinga, after which Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema again rendered several organ selections. There also was singing by the audience. The meeting was closed with prayer by Rev. H. C. Hoeksema.

Refreshments were served by the ladies of the Doon Church immediately after the program.

This was indeed a very special and happy occasion for Doon's young people who had attained unto the goal which they had set four of five years ago. Congratulations on your fine new organ!

The Hull people were glad to celebrate this happy occasion with you.

An evening of Christian fellowship was enjoyed by all who were present.

A Choral society was formed by a group of members from our Doon and Hull congregations. The society meets every Monday evening at 8 o'clock in the Doon Church under the able leadership of Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema. At present we are practicing Christmas numbers.

Beverly Hoekstra

WOULD I BE CALLED A CHRISTIAN?

Self Appraisal

Would I be called a Christian,
If everybody knew
My secret thoughts and feelings,
And everything I do?
Oh, could they see the likeness
Of Christ in me each day?
Oh, could they hear Him speaking,
In every word I say?

Would I be called a Christian,
If everyone could know
That I am found in places,
Where Jesus could not go?
Oh, could they hear His echo
In every song I sing?
In eating, drinking, dressing,
Could they see Christ my king?

Would I be called a Christian,
If judged by what I read?
By all my recreations,
And every thought and deed?
Could I be counted Christ-like,
As I now work and pray?
Unselfish, kind, forgiving
To others every day?

— Mrs. J. F. Mose

Lifting the Lid . . .

The Seduction Of Youth

PART II — THE FAMILY

The secret controlling powers of Communism know very well that God builds His Church here on earth through the line of continued generations, and that the home is the basic God ordained institution where children are to be brought up and trained in the fear of the Lord. Therefore they, and the Devil, are constantly trying to disrupt and destroy that basic social unit, on which all the other social institutions rest. In Communist controlled countries the children are simply taken from their parents at an early age, and sent to government controlled institutions where they are brought up in the fear of the Antichrist. In America, and in all of the rest of the ree countries of the world, the secret controlling powers of Communism take the parents away from their children, not by force, but by enticement; thus leaving the children to themselves, exposed to all of the snares of the Evil One.

In Titus 2:4-5 the Apostle Paul teaches the young women to be sober; to love their husbands and children; to be discrete, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their husbands, that the Word of God be not blasphemed . The secret controlling powers of Communism not only teach the very opposite, (via all that trash you hear over radio and television about what you can buy at any drug store or newsstand) but create conditions that almost force the American mother to neglect her family. The continual skyrocketing cost of living, and the desire for relatively expensive luxuries, by means of high pressure advertising, are only two of the many conditions created by the rich Masonic Jew rulers of the world to ıtice the married woman to neglect her God given duties and to seek an office or factory job. Do you know that these rich Jew rulers have absolute control over the styles of clothing, automobiles, furniture, houses, etc. in order to drain the financial resources of the masses into their own pockets. They create that urge "to keep up with the Joneses" by means of high pressure advertising via the radio, television, magazines, and the daily newspapers. Think of the installment plan and the charge account system of buying luxuries and necessities which keeps many a household in debt. It is very hard nowa-days for a head of a family of growing children to "keep ones head above water" on a single income. Think of the vast amounts of money taken from the income of the average family in the form of taxes of all kinds. Nowadays one must carry several kinds of insurance policies in order to meet the tremendous financial burdens imposed upon the family income in case of sickness, death, accidents, fire, etc. If the mother remaines at home caring for her family, the father in many cases is forced to work at two jobs in order to provide for the necessities of his family. There are also many jobs that require a man to be away from his family for long periods of time. Many factories work 24 hours a day and seven days a week, which keeps many a father away from his family at a time when he is most needed. Think of our unstable economical "situation with its frequent unemployment and lay offs." Consider the case of that father who owns and runs a small business (a small grocery store for example) which keeps him from his family night after night trying (almost in vain) to complete with the big businesses. And don't forget those miles of "red tape" imposed upon by

our governments, that one must encounter for the privilege of doing business these days. In fact the rich Jew rulers of the world make it almost impossible for the man on the street to honestly maintain a small independant business of his own.—a la communism! Yes indeed, the whole economic setup of today is so designed by the Masonic Jew rulers in order to break up that God ordained institution, the family. Furthermore, they take special pride in disregearding the Word of God and of the Triune God, Himself (Gen. 3:16; I Cor. 11:3; 14:34; Eph. 5:22-24; I Tim. 2:9-15; I Peter 3:5-7) by elevating the woman to the same level as the husband. Take a look in any magazine or newspaper and note the numerous pictures of "society women," "career women," cigarette smoking, booze drinking women with crimson painted, claw hammered fingernails, painted lips, cheeks, and eyebrows, adorned with all kinds of jewelry. Doesn't it remind you of that wicked Jezebel? (II Kings 9:30) Indeed this wilful disregarding of the Word of God is a cause for much of the family quarrels, homicides, adultery, divorce, dissertions, etc.

The secret controlling powers of Communism, having complete control over our federal, state, and local governments, have repealed the stringent divorce laws of a generation ago in order to reduce the marriage bond to a mere contract which may be broken at any time. Then also consider the problem of unwanted children. Our land is flooded with a generation of children who have never known the blessing of a happy home. Statistics show that by far the greater majority of all juvenile crime cases come from broken homes.

Thus far we have only heard half of the miserable story of how the haters of the Lord and His Annointed seek to destroy the idea of the family from off this earth. It is late in the afternoon and father and mother have just come home from their respective jobs. Is there time to spend with the children; either playing with them or instructing them in the fear of the Lord? (I might also add the fact that many families live in overcrowded apartment houses, tenments, and house trailers. Due to limited space there is very little opportunity for the enjoyment of worthwhile hobbies, such as sewing, fancywork, handcrafts, music, etc.; or for the accumulation of toys and games for the children pictures, worthwhile books, or even such things as chinaware. Yes, those "little things" that make a "home sweet home") Is there time for that family hour? Oh no!, they are much too tired, and perhaps, irritable, after a hard day's work; secondly, there are many household duties to be performed; and supper must be prepared. Neither is there time for family worship at the supper table, as father is in a hurry to attend that union meeting; mother must attend that bazaar at the church tonight (of course no time for the study of the doctrine or God's Word); Jane has to attend that Campfire Girls' meeting; Johnny is in a hurry to attend that basketball game; and —Junior can't hardly wait any longer because the next Wild West show is about to begin on the television. Thus the famliy is not only broken up during the daytime, but also every evening of the week and especially on the Sabbath. Again, no time for spiritual things. Many parents send their children to some Sunday School, but stay at home themselves in order to "rest up" for next week's work, or to catch up on the work around the house. Besides all this, there are many attractions on Sunday to lure the people away from their families and from God himself; such as the extra large, and attractive edition of the Sunday newspaper; the ball games; the Sunday joy ride; the theater, etc.—Yes, exactly a

the rich Masonic Jew rulers of the world prescribed. Just listen to this:

"In order that the masses themselves may not guess what they are about, we will further distract them with amusements games, pastimes, passions, people's palaces. Soon we shall begin, through the press, to propose competitions in art, in sports of all kinds; these interests will finally distract their minds from questions in which we shall find ourselves compelled to oppose them, (especially in matters concerning the Lord and His amointed, as is plainly evident elsewhere in this article, S.B.) Growing more and more unaccustomed to reflection and unable to form any opinions of their own, people will talk in the same tone as we, because we alone shall be offering them new directions for thought — of course through such persons as will not be suspected of solidarity with us." (Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion).

And now, dear reader, after reading a small part of this secret Masonic document, which could be properly termed, The Doctrine of the Anti-Christ, do you dare to say that you were not, are not, and will not be deceived by the Devil and his allies? Do not deceive yourself. In this MONEY MAD, and SPORTS CRAZY nation of ours, it is only through God's sovereign grace that covenant parents even desire to rear their children in the fear of the Lord, and that we as young people, instead of going along with the world, can still desire to attend church, society meetings, catechism classes and our annual Young People's Conventions. Yes, that grace of God is so amazing, that I must conclude this installment with the following lines:

Now Israel may say and that in truth,
If that the Lord had not our right maintained,
If that the Lord had not with us remained,
When cruel men against us rose to strive,
We surely had been swallowed up alive.
Yea when ther wrath against us fiercely rose,
The swelling tide had o'er us spread its wave,
The raging stream had then become our grave,
The surging flood in proudly swelling roll,
Most surely then had overwhelmed our soul.
Blest be the Lord who made us not their prey;
As from the snare a bird escapeth free,
Their net is rent and so escaped are we;
Our only help is in Jehovah's Name,
Who made the earth and all the heavenly frame.

Seymour Beiboer

HOW AND WHEN?

You asked me how I gave my heart to Christ,
I do not know;
There came a yearning for Him in my soul
So long ago;
I found earth's flowers would fade and die,
I wept for something that would satisfy,
And then, and then, somhow I seemed to dare
To lift my broken heart to God in prayer.
I do not know
I cannot tell you how;
I only know He is my Savior now.

You asked me when I gave my heart to Christ,
I cannot tell you how
The day, or just the hour, I do not now remember well;
It must have been when I was all alone
The light of His forgiving shone
Into my heart so crowded o'er with sin.
I think, I think 'twas then that He came in.
I do not know,
I cannot tell you when;
I only know, He is so dear since then.

— Anon

IF JESUS CAME TO YOUR HOUSE

(Author Unknown)

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two—
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what you do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there—
That serving Him in your home is joy beyond compare.
But—when you saw Him coming would you meet Him at the door
With arms outstretched in welcome to your heav'nly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in,
Or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard,
And wish you hadn't uttered that last, loud, hasty word?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder—if the Savior spent a day or two with you,
Would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you go right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace,
And would you find it hard each meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you always sing and read the books you read,
And let Him know the things on which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you everywhere you'd planned to go,
Or would you, maybe, change your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they'd stay away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know the things that you would do,
If Jesus came in person to spend some time with you.

—Indianapolis Star

Mr. Gise Van Baren
1132 Bates St. SE
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Oct

Don't Miss . . .

THE CHRISTMAS SINGSPIRATION

At our HOPE CHURCH

On December 19, at 9 o'clock

Tell your friends

This is for ALL our people