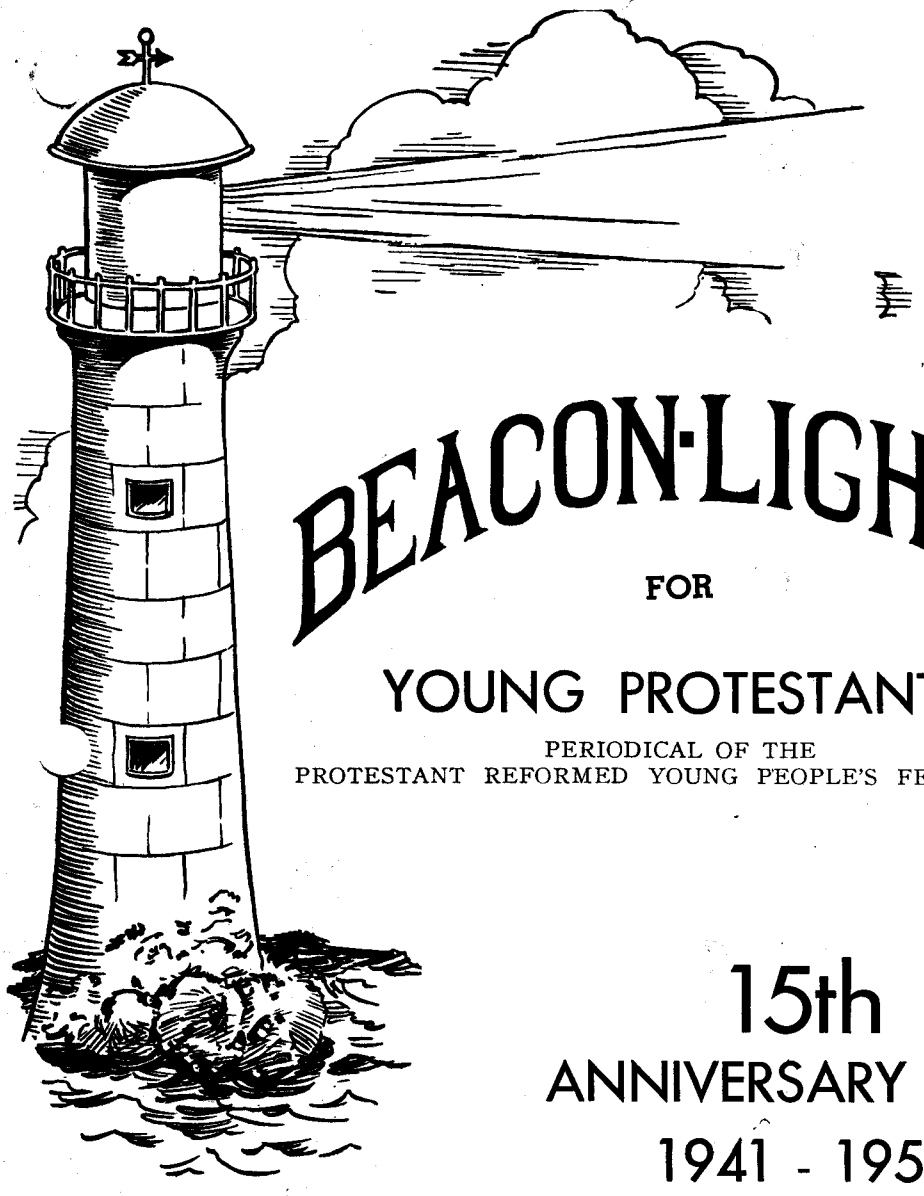

BEACON-LIGHTS

FOR

YOUNG PROTESTANTS

PERIODICAL OF THE
PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUNG PEOPLE'S FEDERATION

15th ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

1941 - 1956

VOL. 1 JANUARY — 1956 No. 10

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BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOL. 15 JANUARY — 1956 No. 10

A WORD OF INTRODUCTION*

The Publication Committee of the P.R. Y.P.F. takes great pleasure in introducing the first issue of our new periodical into your midst. It means to them the fruit of concentrated effort put forth during the last few months to make this paper possible, the removal of what seemed at times to be insurmountable barriers, the satisfaction of having reached a certain goal. But we realize that it means far more to all the members of the young people's Federation. To you it is the first fruits of the youthful, yet lively and ambitious organization it represents. Not 18 months ago the Federation was organized in South Holland, Ill. Not 5 months ago the second annual Convention was held in Grand Rapids, Mich. Today you have your own paper. And what this means toward filling the long-felt need in our young people's societies can only be surmised.

Here it is.

The appearance of this new periodical is in accordance with the mandate which the publication committee received at the last Convention. The Federation went on record as being in favor of developing a Federation paper and laid this matter in the hands of its previously appointed publication committee to be carried out. This, in turn, is in compliance with the adopted Constitution in which the development of a Federation paper is mentioned as one of the anticipated means toward realizing its purpose. And that purpose, as you may know, is fourfold:

A Stride Ahead.

"1. To unite all Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies so that they may work in close unity and secure a sense of solidarity.

"2. To seek the mutual edification of the members of this Federation and to strive for the development of talents as becomes Christian young people.

"3. To strive to maintain our specific Prot. Ref. character with a united front.

"4. To promote the welfare of the Prot. Ref. Churches in which we have a name and a place."

One stride toward realizing this purpose is made. And hereby "Beacon

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* *This article is a reprint of the first editorial from the first issue of "Beacon Lights," Vol. I, No. 1, January, 1941. Read it carefully, and note that what was printed exactly fifteen years ago this month can as well apply today as it did then.*

Lights" takes upon itself to serve this purpose.

"Beacon Lights" purposes to guide you on your course toward your goal. As an airplane pilot wings his way unhesistantly on his course by the sweeping rays of his beacon lights, so this paper designs to guide you on your way through this world of sin and darkness, that you may ever hold your course and unswervingly strive for your goal. Or, to use a more common, time-tried figure, as a ship at sea is in imminent danger of suffering shipwreck on some hidden shoal or treacherous rock unless the beacon lights guide it through the raging storm and murky blackness of the night, so Prot. Ref. youth must be warned of lurking heresies and threatening temptations which so easily beset them.

The Name

The young men of today are the leaders of tomorrow. The young women stand on the threshold of womanhood. Soon your place will be appointed you, wherever God may have planned to use you. And you must be ready. Whether that be in the home, or in the church, or even in the midst of the wicked world, equipped you must be, thoroughly furnished unto every good work!

Prot. Ref. young men and young women have especially high calling. To them is entrusted the maintenance of their Reformed heritage, the truth of God's Sovereign Grace, so commonly denied and consistently undermined in our time. That Truth cannot and may not perish from the earth, but must be carried on to the generations to come, even until the end.

May this periodical make its own contribution toward that higher calling. May it actually be Beacon Lights for young Protestants.

"Beacon Lights" comes to you with no false pretenses. No one imagines that this is a finished product in the sense that the height of attainment has been reached. We would rather consider this the first efforts in "striving for the development of a Federation paper." Practically all those contributing toward this paper, with the exception of Rev. Hoeksema, are fledglings in the work and must still profit by their mistakes. Besides, we anticipate expanding the paper with more and better departments as time goes on. Therefore we invite your criticisms. The publication committee cannot receive a better token of appreciation for its untiring efforts than a large "come back" of remarks and criticisms from all of our readers. Who knows but that we may soon be able to introduce the department of "Youth Speaks" in the succeeding issues.

Criticism Invited.

Although these introductory remarks are intended for the youth of our Churches who have called this periodical into existence, I am nevertheless certain that many parents would turn away from scanning these pages with a look of disappointment if no single word were addressed to them. Parents are vitally interested in the welfare of their children and believing parents are especially interested in their spiritual welfare. They want to know and have a right to know what their children are reading. Therefore, in the conviction that parents too will examine these pages I want to enlist your services. We need your support in this new undertaking. Not your financial support; in fact, we prefer that young people find ways and means to take care of their own financial obligations as much as possible and that they thereby develop a sense of responsibility. They will appreciate this paper far more if they realize that it has cost them some sacrifice. But we do need your moral support and your prayers. You can cooperate by

A Word to the Parents.

maintaining an interest yourself and by fanning the flames of youthful enthusiasm. Discuss the contents with your children; remind them, if need be, to read and make use of it in their preparation for the society; give it your wholehearted support.

In Conclusion.

Finally, we would urge all our readers to receive this periodical as your own. Read it and reread it, ponder upon its contents, turning them over in your mind to formulate your own opinions. Do not fail to use it before attending society in order that you may be prepared for the discussion. Discuss it with your friends and get them interested. Learn to use it to your best advantage. And, last but not least, make arrangements to preserve it for years to come.

And may God cause His blessings to rest upon these efforts for years to ome and forevermore.

C. Hanko

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

Grant, Almighty God, that as Thou shinest on us by Thy Word, we may not be blind at midday, nor wilfully seek darkness, and thus lull our minds asleep; but may we be roused daily by Thy Word, and may we stir up ourselves and all our pursuits, as a sacrifice to Thee, that Thou mayest peaceably rule, and perpetually dwell in us, until Thou gatherest us to Thy celestial habitation, where there is reserved for us eternal rest and glory through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

— John Calvin

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

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EDITORIALS

"Obedience"

No month is more significant in the history of our country than February. Even more so than the fourth of July. In February, the two important birthdates of the two statesmen — presidents occur: Washington and Lincoln. Thus we are reminded of our national heritage, as boys and girls, young men and women, who live in the United States. Such remembrance has its benefits to us.

But, such remembrance is secondary to the memory of our spiritual roots. These roots go back in history, further than any one nation's history. Our beginning is as children of God; and that beginning is in God's eternal good pleasure, which is before the foundation of the world. That is how long that God has loved us. Eternally!

How do we show this? Is our walk and way of life in harmony with this noble, mighty history? Young people, who are sinners, by nature answer, "No, of course not." But, is that all? Is this a mechanical confession; a confession made disinterestedly? Wait a moment; reflect on this. Reflection is helpful.

Take the subject of obedience to parents, for example. Take Paul's words in the sixth chapter of Ephesus. He writes, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right." How is this text lived? This is not all.

Paul goes on, saying: "Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

A few thoughts, in connection with these words, should be pointed out first.

Note that Paul is not saying that the first commandment with a promise is the fifth, which is the basis for these words in Ephesians.

Neither is he saying, in the second place, that obedience to parents results in a long life.

He is saying that obedience to parents is a foremost commandment. It is a word of God of primacy in Christian living; especially in connection with children's habits of life. It is not amiss to notice that "children" in this text, "Children, obey your parents," does not refer only to those in infancy, and early childhood. Indeed, the "children" here, refers to all children and young people living at home.

With these remarks made, it is profitable to listen to what Paul has to say about obedience to parents. He writes of three elements in obedience: it is righteousness; it is honor to parents; it is long life in the land of the promise, Heaven. Paul is teaching God-fearing children to be subject to parents, and to continue in subjection. It is a day by day, moment by moment activity. Never may children cease from this holy and virtuous activity.

From early morning to bed-time, the struggle to be obedient goes on. It means obedience to parents in all the little things that make up the totality of living in the fear of the Lord. Obedience includes the wearing of the right clothes, the getting to meals on time at the table; the washing of soiled hands, the praying for blessing on the food to be eaten, and the offering up of the prayer of thanksgiving; and the paying of attention dur

ing Bible reading. While away from home, and at school, it means obedience in connection with life at school, to remember the "do's" and "don't's" that Mother and Dad prescribe; the little courtesies that make riding the school bus with fellow passengers and driver a pleasant one, day after day.

While in school, obedience to parents at home, includes, for Christian young people, the proper disposition toward teachers and school administrators. The lessons to be learned, the work assigned, the rules during lunch and recess time; all these are areas where obedience is to be manifested in all walk.

After school is over and the return to home is complete, godly young people once again reveal their desire to continue to be in subjection in obedience. At home, besides the duties that are common to the home, are also the duties that look forward to life in the church. Then catechism, Sunday School lessons, memory verses, and young people's society Bible outlines, are all to be diligently learned.

Nor is this area confined only to home, church and school. There are other areas. For that matter all the spheres in which the Christian young person lives are spheres in which, providentially, God places him, or her, whatever the case may be. As citizens, the laws of the land are to be observed. Ordinances of communities, regarding road travel, safe driving speeds, hunting and game conservation, are but a few examples of where obedience to the God-ordained, legally constituted authorities is proper.

Again, where and when young people work for daily employment, is opportunity to live Paul's exhortation. Therefore, no willful slacking, no dishonesty in production, no compliance with worldly labor union tactics, are the standards of conscientious Christian workers.

Situations could be multiplied. Obedience is the Christian virtue that applies to the sum total of young people's living. Be obedient, and keep on being obedient, to parents and to all in authority, is the heart of what the apostle wrote.

We have a beautiful illustration of obedience in our Lord Jesus Christ. Luke, the evangelist tells the church, concerning Jesus: "And he went down with them (his parents) and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them" (Luke 2:51). In perfection, Jesus exemplified true obedience.

But, are we like Jesus? No. He was the Son of God in human nature. We could never be like Him, as to His essence. We are creature. He is God, in the flesh.

Further, we are not like Him spiritually. We always sin, especially in obedience. He is perfect, in obedience. Young people (and adults too) are, spiritually, the image of the devil. His works we do, willingly. The Devil was, and is, a rebel. We are to. Apart from Christ, we shall never love God's commandments and precepts; especially obedience.

What is the way out? Isn't Jesus our Example? True, He is our Example — and more than our Example. He is our need. He is in fullness, what we are in emptiness. What we — and young people — need is grace; the grace of obedience. We need to approach our Lord in humble prayer and supplication, for grace to walk in the way of obedience, since we cannot, of ourselves. We are helpless to do this without Him.

For a godly walk in this virtue, it means that God, through the means used, by the young people, of prayer and supplication, will work this grace in the heart and life of His children. When He does, then the joy of such a spiritual experience fills our hearts with thanksgiving. As boys and girls, thank God

(Continued on page 8)

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Christian Holidays

We are in the midst of the "holiday season." This is not only true of the world, but also of the church. In less than six weeks we commemorate four Christian holidays. November 24 was Thanksgiving Day, December 25 was Christmas, and on December 31 and January 1 we will celebrate Old Year's Day and New Year's Day.

I thought it rather fitting in the midst of our "holiday season" to say a few words about holidays in general. However I am not interested in this article in national holidays such as Decoration Day, the Fourth of July, Labor Day, etc., but rather do I wish to say a few words about Christian holidays.

According to our Church Order, Article 67, we are to observe nine such holidays. The article reads, "The churches shall observe, in addition to the Sunday, also Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day, Pentecost, the Day of Prayer, the National Thanksgiving Day, and Old and New Year's Day."

It is rather interesting to notice that in the first years after the reformation, there were no "christian holidays" recognized at all. Rome, as the head of the Roman Catholic Church, had multiplied these days no end, and the result was that these days became days of idolatry and worldlimindedness. In a reaction to this, the reformers almost without exception, banned the observance of these days completely. They did this for the following reasons: 1) The festive days are not ordained of God, but are a human invention. 2) They minimize and detract from Sunday worship. 3) They lead to paganistic celebrations and promote licentiousness.

In the Netherlands, however, this practice of the reformers did not last. The government, then in sympathy with the reformed movement, and a part of it, proclaimed certain days to be observed. This was partly due to the fact that the people themselves demanded such days. Furthermore, the employees looked for ward to these days as periods of rest and relaxation when they could lay aside their normal duties. The churches therefore, also followed suit, for if the government proclaimed these days as holidays, the tendency of the people would be to spend the day in idleness and indulgence in the pleasures of the flesh. Therefore it was thought proper to commemorate these days by means of services in the churches. As the government made legal holidays out of these occasions, the churches, although not in agreement with the movement, were forced by practical considerations to observe them also. It was thought better to introduce church services, than to allow the people to spend the time in worldliness.

So, first of all, the Christian holidays were limited to Christmas, Easter, New Year's Day and Ascension Day. But under further pressure, the number was increased to the present amount.

The question, therefore, arises whether or not it is well for the church to commemorate these Christian holidays. And if our answer is in the affirmative, then we may ask, what is the proper way to commemorate these days?

It should be noticed, first of all, that the objections which the reformers raised

against Christian holidays certainly bear some weight. It is true in our day, as has probably never been true before, that these days have become paganistic, and tend toward licentiousness. And although that is true of the world, to a great extent, it cannot be gainsaid that this danger has also made inroads into our reformed circles and homes. The commercialism and the pagan customs of these days have certainly influenced us to a rather marked degree.

It may also be noticed in this connection, that the holidays are not days set aside for the purpose of commemorating a single event to the exclusion of commemorating this event on other days of the year. I mean, that it is not alone on Christmas that we think of the birth of Christ, nor is it alone on Prayer Day that we lift up our hearts in prayer before the throne of grace. Even as it is true that the cross of Jesus Christ is the very center of every sermon that is preached in our churches, so our commemoration of Good Friday must not be limited to one day of the year. Because our lives must constantly manifest our gratitude to God for what He has done, so also it is wrong to set aside just one day to be thankful.

Nevertheless, Christian holidays in themselves are not wrong. It is perfectly fitting for the church of Jesus Christ to set certain days of the year aside for the commemoration of certain events. The keeping of certain days was a very integral part of Old Testament legislation for the nation of Israel.

What then is the purpose of these days? If it is true that every day of our life must be a continual commemoration of the events which we remember in a particular way on certain days, why set one day apart for this purpose?

For this we may undoubtedly advance two reasons: 1) It is well, and indeed, necessary, that we have our attention drawn by means of the preaching of the Word to the particular significance of the cardinal events which we commemorate. Although this is done on other occasions, nevertheless, it is not often that one entire sermon can be devoted to one particular subject or phase of a subject; but the subject is often treated in connection with something else. Thus the days we set aside, offer a good opportunity to study the particular significance of a certain important event in the Christian calendar. 2) Closely related to this, is the fact that the people of God in the midst of the world often have to be reminded of certain of these events which we commemorate. Thus it is often necessary that the church be reminded to pray without ceasing; and Prayer Day offers the occasion for this reminder.

Let us look briefly at each one of the Christian holidays and say just a word about it's significance.

New Year's Day. As we stand at the beginning of a new year, we do not vow to make ourselves and this world better, but rather we remember that the future is in the hands of God, and that He leads and directs all things in such a way that He may afterwards take us into glory.

Prayer Day. The original purpose of this day was to begin the seedtime in the name of God, calling upon Him, and committing the future harvest to Him. In our complex economy, we are not all farmers. But nevertheless, the purpose of this day is to be reminded that even in respect to the things of this world, our heavenly Father cares for us, and that therefore, the ground of our prayers must be sought in Him.

Lent season and Good Friday. It is customary in our churches that in the six or seven Sundays previous to Easter the church devotes its Sabbath discussion of the Scriptures to the fact of Christ's death. In this we are sharply different from the Romish Church with

their emphasis on penance during the Lenten Season. But it is nevertheless well that we devote this time to a special study of the significance and the historical fact of the suffering and death of our Savior.

Easter. We are reminded of the great joy of the church in the resurrection of Christ, and the happiness of that church as it becomes partaker of the blessings of the resurrection.

Ascension Day. Christ has gone into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father from which place he directs and controls all things to serve to His final appearing upon the clouds of heaven.

Pentecost. From His place at the Father's right hand, He pours out of His Spirit upon all His church so that by that Spirit they become partakers of His blessings, and are guided and comforted in all the truth.

Thanksgiving Day. Although this day was originally set aside as a day of Thanksgiving for the abundance of the harvest, our attention is called to the fact that thanksgiving must characterize our entire pathway in this world as we walk in gratitude to God. We are directed to the things of this present time which we have received, and learn that we must thank our Father for everything, for He gives us all things to save us.

Christmas Day. We devote our attention to the fact, and the significance of the mystery of Bethlehem when God became flesh and dwelt among us.

Old Year's Day. It is not the purpose of this day to become sentimental as we dwell in the past and think about all that has happened with the result that we either gloat over what we accomplish, or drown our sorrows in revelry, and mutter, "Well, I am glad that is over." Rather we are directed to the truth that this world with all that it contains passes away, but God has prepared for His people a better city, the Jerusalem which is above, and wherein righteousness dwells.

May our celebration and commemoration of the Christian holidays be spiritual.

H. Hanko

Alas, yet liveth in me the old man; he is not all crucified, he is not perfectly all dead: yet he covetheth against the spirit and moveth inward battles and suffereth not the realm of the soul to be in quiet. But thou that hast lordship over the power of the sea and suagest the movings of his floods, arise and help me; bring to naught folks that will have battles. Knock them down in thy might and show thy greatness and be thy right hand glorified: for there is to me none other hope nor refuge but in thee, my Lord God. —Thomas A Kempis

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TRUE REST

Rest is not quitting the busy career;
Rest is the fitting of self to the sphere;
'Tis the brook's motion, clear without strife,
Fleeing to ocean, after its life.
Deeper devotion nowhere hath knelt,
Fuller emotion heart never felt;
'Tis loving and serving the highest and best,
'Tis onwards, unswerving, and that is true rest.

—T. Sullivan Dwight

OBEDIENCE

(Continued from page 5)

that we have not received as we deserve; thank Him that His eternal good pleasure is to deal with His own in sovereign and particular mercy, out of deepest love. In this consciousness, stir thyself unto obedience, to parents, and all in authority. Paul says of such obedience, that it is righteousness. So it is.

James McColla

TRUTH VS. ERROR

One Only God

"We believe with the heart, and confess with the mouth, that there is one only simple and spiritual Being, which we call God; and, that He is eternal, incomprehensible, invisible, immutable, infinite, almighty, perfectly wise, just, good, and the overflowing fountain of all good." (Art. I, Confession of Faith)

We assume that there is not one among our readers who would be willing or would desire to debate the general content of the above article of faith. We trust that it is not necessary to prove to you from the more authoritative source, Holy Writ, the truth of the above statement but suppose that you are already acquainted with that proof. Our readers are not avowed atheists, but rather covenant young people of Reformed conviction who believe "that God is and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." (Heb. 11:6)

This fact immediately places us before a very grave danger. The danger is that we become satisfied with an affirmative answer to the question: "Is there a God?," and we fail to proceed to study the revelation of that God in order that we may know **Who** and **What** He is. Our confession becomes a mere matter of abstract theory which we maintain over-against the equally abstract theory of unbelief. The result is that from a practical point of view we deny the very God we confess, and our whole life becomes a glaring contradiction to the truth we claim to profess. A cursory view of the camp of nominal Christendom today confirms this conclusion.

The Word of God, too, is very cognizant of this grave error and by no means is silent about it. In His law, God informs us that there is no other God beside Him and warns fervently against the sin of idolatry and image worship. To make another God in any form, manner, or fashion is essentially the denial of Him Who is alone God." You cannot serve God and mammon!" That's the truth! To attempt to do so in any maner is to deny GOD! Yet, that is just what you and I are always prone to do even though theoretically we acknowledge Him and even express agreement with the truth concerning Him.

This practical denial of God stems from two main sources. In the first place, there is the fact which we cannot escape that our old nature is perverse and corrupt. By nature we do not want God. We want a god but not GOD. Our minds are enmity against Him. Our wills are obdurate and rebellious. The truth we hold under in unrighteousness and change the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man and worship the creature more than the Creator. (Romans 1:20-25, 8:7, etc.) Natural man is a spiritual ignoramus, or, as Scripture calls him, a fool. The only remedy for this evil is the grace of regeneration acording to which we, the children of God, are made new creatures in Christ.

But, in the second place, even those regenerated often manifest a dual spiritual life. On the one hand they confess God while at the same time in many ways He is denied by them. Theoretical truth and practical error are often mixed. Why? Because the children of God do not always live in the full consciousness of the truth concerning Him and, there-

fore, do not live consciously as before His face. His glory, power, justice, majesty, and greatness are not always seen but in our minds we too often have a partial or even erroneous conception of Him. We are not aware of Him **as He is!** From this fact stems much practical error and the remedy for it is that we more and more diligently apply ourselves to a thorough study of His Word which is the medium of revelation to us. Didn't you ever notice that those christians who have difficulty being convinced of various practical evils are generally those who manifest the least desire to study the Word of God? Loose practical christian living is characteristic of those who show indifference toward the things of God and the constructive labor and instruction and activities of the church. They frown upon knowledge, despise instruction and are devoid of wisdom.

Therefore, it is important that we not only confess the truth of the first Article of our Confession of faith but we must also understand what we are confessing and to achieve this, we cannot escape the necessity of studying it carefully. These must not be empty words but rather the expression of a firm and sincere conviction. Do not forget that what is expressed in this article of faith is in reality contradicted and denied by every conception of God that has become common today and is the product of philosophic speculation rather than revelation. People speak much of religious revival. Statistics are quoted revealing astounding increases in church membership. More and more there is found a general profession of God. But, of what God? If you insist on maintaining every element of your confession concerning God, expressed so beautifully here, how much agreement among nominal christians would you find? Is it, perhaps, time to discard these out-dated, dogmatic expressions or at least recast them in a modern mold so that your and my expression concerning God may also meet with general acceptance, and our churches may enjoy this outward growth too? Or, will you have the courage of faith in the midst of wide-spread apostacy to "believe in the heart and confess with the mouth" the truth concerning God revealed in His Word even though your belief meets with general disagreement and you are abused and despised because of your confession? The latter is the position of the truth!

It is quite significant then that we begin our confession with a statement concerning GOD! Even this in itself is contrary to the popular trend. God is not first; man and his salvation is! This we firmly deny and maintain that ere we are able to say anything at all we must say something about God. A mere statement then it must be for all the volumes of all the libraries in all the world are not adequate to express His fullness This we must also realize. God is the incomprehensible One. What we state can only be a brief summarization of some of the pertinent facts concerning God gleaned from His own revelation. God is God. God is One. God is a simple Being. God is infinite Perfection. God is the incomparable One Who we cannot limit to the scope of our definitions. To say anything about Him and to appreciate Him means that we know, first of all, His Infinitude. Without that we are speaking only of an idol!

The knowledge of the true God is the basis of life. "This is eternal life, that we may know Thee, the only true God . . ." (John 17:3) Distort the conception of God and all of life is corrupted. See then why we must begin here. Your and my view of God determines our view of all things and affects vitally our relationship to all things in every sphere and department of life in the world. In the

(Continued on page 15)

BIBLE OUTLINE

HELPS FOR BIBLE STUDY
BOOK OF ACTS

Chapter 5

Introduction

It is quite evident that the first part of this chapter is related to the last part of chapter 4 by way of contrast In the closing section of chapter 4 evidently in close connection with the return of the apostles from their first imprisonment and "trial" before the Jewish council, we have described to us, from a positive viewpoint, the spiritual condition of the church at that time. The immediate and special manifestation of the presence of the Lord, through His Spirit, in answer to the prayer of the church, had the result that the church was strengthened and encouraged and emboldened. It is described as being unified (of one heart and of one soul); as having all things common, even to the extent that none said that any of his worldly possessions was his own); as being emboldened to preach the gospel of the resurrected Lord (the apostles gave witness with great power); and as having great grace. In that connection the last few verses of the chapter go into detail as to the attitude of the believers toward their earthly possessions and as to their complete willingness to practice brotherly kindness toward one another in respect to these posessions. And finally, we have the outstanding example of Barnabas, "The Son of Consolation." Chapter 5 continues this description from a negative point of view with a description of the first open manifestation of sin in the church at Jerusalem. It gives us a very pointed illustration of the fact that even then, in the midst of this almost ideal but that even then, the disturbing influence of sin marred and diabolically attempted to wreck the life of the believers. And the extreme wickedness of this sin within the church is demonstrated in the severe visitation of judgment, through the word of the apostles. This we have in the first section, vss. 1 to 11, which cover the sin of Ananias and Sapphira.

The second section of the chapter, vss. 12 to 16, may be said to be related to the third section, vss. 17 to 40 (concerning the second imprisonment and trial of the apostles), as occasion and event (not cause and effect, however). The great manifestation of power, through the apostles, and the rapid growth of the church evidently occasioned the indignation of the Jewish leaders, and led to the second manifestation of official opposition against the apostles. This is evident from the word "then" introducing verse 17. Nevertheless, I would also find a connection between the first and second sections of the chapter, indicated in the last part of verse 11 and the first part of verse 13. One effect of the punishment of Ananias and Sapphira was that "great fear" came "upon as many as heard these things. And this undoubtedly acted as a deterrent, so that "of the rest durst no man join himself to them."

The chapter closes with two verses in which the effect upon the apostles of this second act of persecution is described. vss. 41, 42.

With these brief remarks concerning the content of the chapter and the relation between the various sections, let us ask a few questions more, in detail.

* * *

I. The Sin of Ananias and Sapphira, and its Visitation. vss. 1 to 11.

A. The sin as such:

1. What was the occasion of their sin? vs. 1. Is there any indication in the rest of Scripture as to sins that have to do with possessions? Does this indicate that there is something wrong with the possessions? In other words, is the sin in the material things themselves, or is it in the possessor of the material things? Is money the root of all evil, or is the love of money the root of all evil?

2. The nature of the sin:

a. What constituted the **act** of sin as such?

1) Would it have been improper in itself to contribute only part of the money, keeping back the other part?

2) Or did the sin consist in this that they kept back part of the price, while they openly stated, or at least left the impression upon the church that they brought the whole amount? Support your opinion from the text.

b. The nature of the sin:

1) What does Peter say as to the nature of the sin? vss. 3 and 4b. Why is this, peculiarly, a lying against the Holy Ghost? What elements are there in this sin which make it, in distinction from other lies, a lie against the Holy Ghost? How must the statement, "Thou hast not lied unto men" be understood? Had they not lied to men? Had they not lied to the apostles and to the believers?

2) What was it that Ananias conceived in the heart, vs. 4? Why does Peter use the very strong expression, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart . . .?" In connection with this, and also in the light of the closing part of chapter 4, can anything more than covetousness be attributed to Ananias and Sapphira as the **motive** of this sin? What is so Satanic and so anti-Holy Ghost in this sin?

3. Significance:

a. Is such a sin still possible in the church today? Does it actually occur, also?

b. Is it as evil now, as then?

B. The punishment:

1. The punishment as such: vss. 5-10

a. What was it? Why was the punishment so immediate and public?

b. How was it inflicted? By whom?

c. Why was Sapphira included in the punishment? vss. 7-10. What evidently characterized her entrance into the assembly? vs. 7. Why does the apostle quiz her, while it is not recorded that he questioned Ananias in a similar manner? Why does he ask what may be called "leading" questions? What is meant by "tempting" the Holy Ghost?

2. The significance of this punishment:

a. Was the punishment unduly severe? Was it more severe than excommunication?

b. Is it not true that no time was allowed for repentance? Should there not have been a period of admonition, and the well-known various "steps" of sensure, ending with excommunication in case of persistent impenitence? Can it be said that they committed the unpardonable sin?

c. Does the punishment here inflicted give any basis for the idea that the church possesses the sword power as well as the key power? Explain.

d. What can be adduced as positive reasons for this severe punishment? Is there any other indication of this reason, besides Peter's words, as to the nature of the sin? Does the effect mentioned in vs. 11 give a clue as to the reason also? What was

that fear? Was it, as far as the church is concerned, a terror? Does God terrorize His people?

II. The Demonstration of Power through the Apostles, vss. 12-16.

A. As Such:

1. Many signs and wonders wrought by the hands of the apostles:

a. Note: These were evidently signs and wonders of a positive nature, whereas, also, in the case of Ananias and Sapphira there was a sign and wonder, but of a negative nature in the latter case, there is a demonstration of wrath; but in the present passage, a marvellous demonstration of mercy.

b. What is the distinction between, and the relation between, signs and wonders?

c. What wonders were wrought? Why are those with unclean spirits specifically mentioned? (In this connection it will be profitable also to discuss somewhat the nature of "devil possession." But in the present connection I would suggest that you don't allow the discussion to be sidetracked on this subject.)

d. How were the wonders performed? Cf. vs. 12a and vs. 15.

e. Where were they performed? What was Solomon's porch? Did the church have the right to use this as their gathering place? Why was a place like this used?

2. Significance:

a. Undoubtedly this tremendous demonstration of power (which, by the way, was not just an instance of one day; you have a general description, covering a period of time in vs. 12) focused much attention upon the apostles.

b. What was the purpose of all this? Was it merely to increase the fame and stature of the apostles? Was it merely to add multitudes to the church? Must we not rather view the apostles here in their **apostleship,** as witnesses of the Lord? And therefore is this not again to be viewed as a demonstration of the power of the risen Lord, an instance of the things that Jesus **continued to do?**

B. Effect:

1. What was the immediate effect of these wonders and signs? vs. 16a.

2. What was the effect as to the growth of the church?

a. Was this merely an instance of so-called miraculous faith?

b. Why does Luke here give no numerical account of the growth?

3. How was the church viewed at this time by the people? vs. 13.

4. "The rest," vs. 13:

a. What is meant by this expression? Does it not indicate that there was a distinct and definite assembly, already, that was known as the church?

b. Why did they not **dare** to join? Is it good that this should be the case? Can you see a reason why the Lord wanted it thus, especially at this time? Should the church always be such, to the extent that this is possible, that "the rest" dare not join themselves to them?

III. The Second Instance of Persecution: vss. 17-40.

A. The apostles Captured, Imprisoned, Miraculously Released, Recaptured: vss. 17-26.

1. The occasion:

a. What was the reaction of the Jewish leadership, vs. 17?

b. What is the significance of the mention of the Sadducees here?

c. How is their angry desperation to be explained? Cf. also vs. 28b.

d. What should have been their reaction, spiritually speaking? What, then, was the result, as to their

guilt, when they reacted evilly to this great manifestation of power?

2. Capture and imprisonment:

a. What was the difference between the first and second instances of capture and imprisonment? Compare 4:3 and 5:18.

b. What was the common prison, and why were they put there?

3. Miraculous release; recapture.

a. By whom? vs. 19. Was it known to any except the apostles?

b. What was the manner of this release? vss. 19 and 23. Was it evident from this that a miracle had been performed in behalf of the apostles?

c. What was the reaction of the leaders? vs. 24. Of what should this miracle have convinced them? Was their reaction, then, simply an intellectual matter, or an ethical one?

d. What instructions does the angel give the apostles? Did they obey? From a human and sinful point of view, was this not rather foolish, to release someone from prison and then instruct him virtually to beg for recapture? What was the divine wisdom in this? What purpose must it serve?

e. What was done when the leaders received word that the apostles were preaching in the temple as though nothing had happened? How were the apostles treated in this recapture, and why? What does this again indicate as to the attitude of the leaders?

B. The Hearing, vss. 27 to 33:

1. The high priest's question:

a. What accusation was brought against the apostles this time?

b. What does the last part of this accusation reveal as to the conscience of the council-members? Is this accusation true, at least in the form in which it is presented? Did the apostles intend to bring Jesus' blood upon their heads? Is it not true that they had assumed the blood of Jesus upon their own heads? What does this again indicate as to the spiritual, ethical attitude of the Jewish leaders? Again: was theirs a mere intellectual error? Do thy not clearly condemn themselves in this whole transaction? Does it not also become very evident in this affair that the enemies of God's cause become foolish in their wicked rage, and that in their foolishness they can do nothing but blunder in their every act of opposition?

2. The answer of the apostles:

a. Through Peter as their spokesman (notice again what a different Peter this is than the Simon who thrice denied the Lord!), they give a brief and pointed reply.

b. Note the various elements in this reply:

1) The fundamental reply is in vs. 29: they must obey God rather than men.

a) How is this differently stated than in chapter 4, vs. 19? Why this difference? Had the Jewish leaders indicated their own judgment of this matter by their actions? Did this reaction of the Jews have any effect on the apostles' adherence to this principle? What is the implied condemnation in this first statement?

b) How does this constitute an answer to the high priest's accusation?

2) This act of obedience to God required that they preach the gospel, and this the apostle proceeds to do, even at the trial:

a) How is it plain here that they emphatically preach the gospel of **God?**

b) What is the implied accusation in

the expressions, "the God of our fathers" and "to Israel"?

c) Why do the apostles openly remind the council of their sin? What was this sin? Was it now still a sin to which can be applied the words of Jesus at the cross: "they know not what they do?"

d) Was it necessary for the apostles to furnish proof of the claim that they make in verse 32? Again: what is the implied condemnation of the Jewish leaders in these statements?

e) How did this constitute a defense over against the accusation of the high priest?

3. What is the reaction of the council? vs. 33. Was there anything in Peter's words to infuriate them so? How should they have responded?

C. The Advice of Gamaliel, and the Outcome: vss. 34 to 40.

1. The advice of Gamaliel:

a. Who was he? Was he qualified?

b. Why must his advice be in secret?

c. What was his advice? vs. 35, 38.

d. Upon what does he base his advice? What can you say as to the instance from history which he gives? What is to be said of the reason he gives in vss. 38, 39? Is not his reasoning quite logical? What is the flaw in it? Even granted that his reasoning is correct, as such, in vss. 38 b, and 39, is his conclusion correct, namely, that on this basis they must "refrain from these men?" In fact, must they refrain from any men on the basis of this reason of Gamaliel? Do we simply stand on the sidelines and watch what happens to a movement, and then finally decide whether it is of God or of men? And in the case of the apostles, was it not already evident that their work was of God?

2. The Outcome: vs. 40.

a. The council is said to agree with the advice of Gamaliel.

b. Do they act entirely in harmony with this agreement?

c. What is to be said of this outcome?

1) From their point of view, is the procedure of the Jews wise or foolish? Why will, also this plan of theirs fail?

2) In the same connection, what was, evidently, the divine purpose in so directing the Jews' plans, that they release the apostles, and even decide to follow a policy, temporarily, of "hands off"?

IV. Apostles' Reaction to Persecution:

A. They rejoice: how do they find reason for rejoicing at this occasion? Why is it that they are not said to rejoice in their release?

B. They cease not to teach and preach Jesus Christ:

1. They take advantage of their release, and immediately, and with renewed vigor, teach and preach; and that too, still in Jerusalem. They, evidently, give no thought to flight.

2. Thus once more, persecution does not harm; but, rather, must serve the cause of the church. H. C. H.

ONE ONLY GOD

(Continued from page 10)

measure that your view, the Protestant Reformed view, stands opposed to every philosophical theory and humanistic evaluation of God; — in that same measure your life ought to be a testimony against and antithesis to practical modernism which originates in **man's** predictions of God. Your confession, the truth, is rooted in His own self-revelation and your life then becomes the expression of your confession, doesn't it? What you confess about God, therefore, is a very practical matter that determines your living the "truth or error." In so far we cannot afford to be unconcerned. G.v.d.B.

CURRENT COMMENTS

One Big Union

In New York City last December 5, two men seized an oversized gavel, and, banging it on the rostrum, jointly called to order a convention of more than 1400 people. The men were George Meany and Walter Reuther; the convention was that of the newly formed AFL-CIO, product of the merger of the nation's biggest unions, the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. This merger, forming one immense labor organization of 16 million workers, was viewed with mixed feelings. Some were glad, others indifferent, still others rather skeptical, or even fearful. The question uppermost in the minds of many was what the result of all this would be. The union, long a great power and influence in America, had a newfound strength and even greater power than ever before. The two largest unions in this country, which had often fought each other in the past, are now united to fight together.

The biggest fear stemming from the merger was that of political control, which many think the union will attempt to win and perhaps succeed. Labor leaders, of course, have tried to discount such a possibility, but the decisive political role played by organized labor in states where labor is strong is proof enough that such a fear is not without foundation. Both Republicans and Democrats, speaking at the convention, have recognized the political power of the union, agreeing that the union has a right to political roles, seeking to get the labor vote for their party.

A writer from Nunica, Michigan hits the merger with an article in the Public Pulse of the **Grand Rapids Press.** We quote:

"A day to remember? Dec. 5, 1955. A day we might all very well put in our book as the day that the enslavement of everyone in the United States began. And also the day that marks the beginning of the end of our way of living as we have known it.

"The labor unions from the time of their beginning in Italy have always had but two purposes: first, to enslave everyone; the second, to control all money and I do mean control in the hands of a small band of men.

"If they did not know very well where they were going and that no road block would be in their way, no man in his right mind would have dared to deliver the blast that was delivered at the celebration of the formation of the greatest single dictatorship in the world today. A labor union does not obey our laws, nor do the courts think they should.

"If as small as they were they can exert that much influence, just what do you think will be the outcome, being now just one body? Oh well, never mind, you will all soon find out about pressure as on your bended knees you beg for mercy and receive in return only a sneer, so prepare."

We cannot agree entirely with this writer, however, as he carries things too far. But we, as Christians, must not view this union merger indifferently. The power of the world is going. Although it is too early for any definite prediction, this could very well be the first step in the

building up of the anti-Christ's kingdom — the world uniting against the true church. The union, constantly attempting and often succeeding to choke out those opposing it, would remind us of the words of scripture in Revelation 13:16-17, "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." This need not necessarily be interpreted literally as a physical mark on the body. The mark could very well be a union membership card. The time may soon come when no one without such a card may buy or sell. That the union is striving for more authority is plain. Not only does the merger evidence this, but there are other things also. Need we mention the fact that more and more firms are becoming "closed shops" so that it is increasingly more difficult for a Christian to obtain employment? Or the fact that a steady pressure is being kept on independent, non-union businesses to join the union? And that if they refuse, the union attempts to take and often effectively does take trade away from them in order, if possible, to run them out of business? The fulfillment of this prophecy has already begun.

We must constantly be on our guard against the union. We must never, no matter what the cost, join and thus support such a godless, wicked organization, an organization incompatible with the spiritual life of the child of God. For this organization, with its materialistic principles, is definitely contrary to the Word of God. To maintain a stand against the union, with its growing might, will become harder and harder. It may mean loss of a job, trouble, persecution, and even death. For we know that great tribulation, foretold by Christ in Matthew 24, is sure to come; and that except those days be shortened no flesh would be saved. We need not fear the future however, for we can by faith fight the good fight, stand fast till Christ comes again. And we testify with the Psalmist of old, ". . . though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." For we know that nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jim Jonker

Northwest Iowa and Minnesota

The evening of Sunday, October 30, a Reformation Day program was held in the Hull Memorial Building. This program was sponsored by the Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies of Hull and Doon. After the prelude by Harriet Hoksbergen, George Hoekstra, the chairman of the evening, read Scripture and opened with prayer. The program was continued by singing several Psalter numbers and "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." Bernice and Delores Bleyenberg sang a duet entitled, "Remember Now Thy Creator."

The main number on the program was a Reformation address by the Rev. J. A. Heys. Here is a short synopsis.

When we hear the Reformation story of Luther and the papal bull and the ninty-five theses that he nailed to the door of the Wittenberg church, it may seem as though God should thank Luther for something. But this is not the case, Luther still felt indebted to God. God was not only in Luther, but He was in all the regenerated elect of that day.

Back of all the Reformation is "Luther's Quest for Search of Justification."

Luther was born to devout and strict parents, which belonged to the Catholic Church. Luther was impressed that God demanded obedience. He knew rebellion and sin were punished in hell.

As a child, Luther was slow in learning. Later, he became very brilliant and entered law school.

Luther found joy in the truth and did not keep it to himself, but told others of it too, even as the Shepherds of Bethlehem told the glad tiding. By grace he found peace of being justified by faith.

Luther never expected a split in the church. He was not proud and rebellious to set the church in turmoil, but God intended it to relieve the Church from the bond of the Roman Catholic Church.

This is a fruit for us. The church of today enjoys peace to know and believe that they are justified by faith and have peace with God. The truth makes us free. Today we stand in the same joy as Luther of being justified by faith.

He engrafted us and made us one plant with Him, and frees us from the terrors of hell. God gives us proof by the sacrifice finished by Christs' blood. In sovereign election, we are engrafted to Christ, and by faith partakers of Christ and all His benefits.

Following the address, Sidney Stellinga sang a solo entitled, "The Love of God." The audience sang a Psalter number, during which an offering was received. The Rev. H. C. Hoeksema of South Holland, Illinois closed the meeting with prayer, after which the Doxology was sung.

The Protestant Reformed Young People's societies of Doon and Hull are now holding combined meetings frequently.

On October 14, 1955 the Choral Society of North-west Iowa began a new season of work. We have planned to prepare for a Christmas program.

Beverly Hoekstra, Reporter

PROSPECT

(II Corinthians 4:16-18)

Though darker, rougher, grows the way
And cares press harder day by day,
  And nothing satisfies,
The promise sure before me lies
Of that blest place beyond the skies
  Where Jesus waits for me.

With sight too dim to visualize
The scene, though spread before my eyes,
  I know it will be fair;
Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard
The things that are for us prepared,
  But Jesus will be there

Though absent, I have known His love,
And by His mercies daily prove
  The wonders of His grace,
He, whom not having seen, I love,
Will call, and in His home above
  I'll see Him face to face.

With patience, in His love I'll rest,
And whisper that He knoweth best,
  And I am satisfied.
Then, clinging to that guiding hand,
A weakling, in His strength I'll stand,
  Though I be sorely tried.

Though burdened with a load of care,
He's promised me the strength to bear
  The trials that appal;
So, hiding pain away from sight,
I'll let my life be fair and bright
  While waiting for His call.

— Robert E. Pentecost

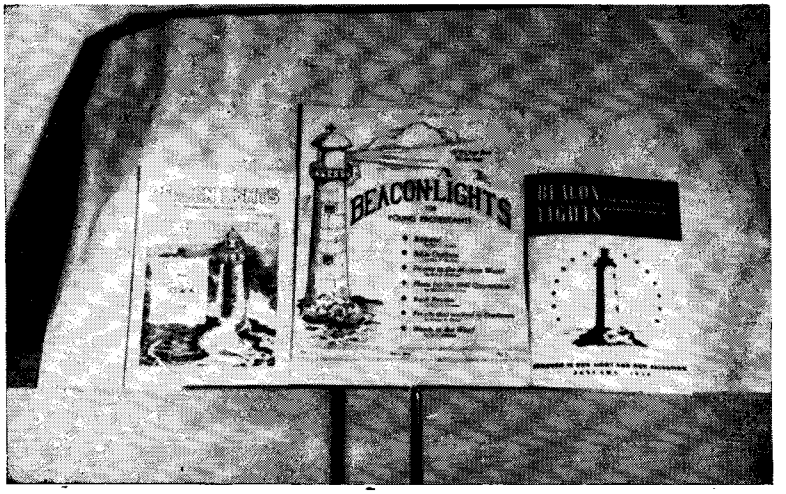
TIME

The moving finger writes; and having
  writ,
Moves on; nor all thy piety nor wit
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,
Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

All we be frail but thou shalt hold no man frailer than thyself.

Thomas A Kempi-

"BEACON LIGHTS" ON REVIEW



Here follows excerpts and summaries taken from various issues of "Beacon Lights" of the past fifteen years. Much has happened in that time, both in our personal lives as well as in the history of our churches. You may have grown up with "Beacon Lights," or you may have been one of the "young people" who helped to bring it into being. Whether that may be true of you or not, take out now a few moments and think of those fifteen years gone by — the fifteen years in which "Beacon Lights" has been in existance. Use that which follows to refresh your memory. And pray God that even as He has guided "Beacon Lights" in the past, so too He will keep it faithful and pure in the years which lie ahead.

1941

BEACON LIGHTS is here to stay. It has made its first appearance and has met with a hearty reception, far above our fondest expectation. By this time it has gained for itself a definite place in the society life of our Protestant Reformed youth, besides supplying them with edifying reading material. Yet, as was said at the outset, these first five issues were merely an experiment from every point of view.

May, Editorial

BEACON LIGHTS appears in a new garb. The name, as you will have noticed, has undergone no radical change, due to the fact that the 1941 Convention expressed itself as being in favor of adopting this name. But the appearance has undergone a change. For practical reasons the size was reduced and the number of pages increased. We hope that our readers will find the magazine, in its present form, more convenient to carry about with them. The cover is also somewhat changed. Each month will present a new and appropriate scene for the cover.

October, Editorial

1942

A new year which finds both hemis-

pheres engaged in the bloody business of warfare; hearts of parents bleeding at the departure of their sons, sturdy young men in the prime of their lives called to hold a rendezvous with death while they manipulate their death-dealing instruments of modern warfare; men, women, and children of every land, their very lives threatened, losing or fearing the loss of all that they have; haggard faces, bleeding hearts, anxious waiting and watching, wondering what the morrow may bring.

January, Editorial

BEACON LIGHTS has crossed the boundary lines of ten states in the Union: Michigan, Illinois, Montana, Indiana, Washington, Massachusetts, Washington, D. C., Iowa, and California. Besides this we have twenty-nine soldiers on our mailing list, who are stationed in all parts of the country.

May, News Flashes

Who would have thought it possible just one year ago, as our annual young people's convention disbanded in Oak Lawn, that that would be the last convention for some time to come?

Who would have dreamed that so many of our boys would be called into service, would have left the states and even be on foreign soil, even before another convention could be called?

To whom had it occurred that there might be a rubber shortage and that tire rationing would reduce travelling to a minimum?

In one word, who could have imagined that it would be possible for the war to so soon make such inroads into our lives that the Federation Board would deem it advisable to call off the 1942 meeting, even while the plans were in the making?

But nothing is so uncertain as life itself.

October, "No Convention?"

1943

"I received my copy of BEACON LIGHTS today. I have read part of it and its contents surely are a comfort to me. It, besides my Bible, is so far my only reading material pertaining to our truth."

(Rev.) George Lanting

In the same issue, another soldier, John Wigger, writes the following from Gulfport, Miss.: "In closing I want to repeat — keep sending BEACON LIGHTS to us fellows. It helps more than words can express."

March, Letters from Our Boys

A recent editorial stated that BEACON LIGHTS has gone to war," and that it is serving a double purpose, one for those at home and the other for our boys the armed forces. The Editor also wrote that we cannot render a better service to our boys than to supply them with a paper that particularly fits their needs. How very true!

April, Editor's Desk

COMPARE — In May, 1942—BEACON LIGHTS was mailed out to 29 men in the service. In May, 1943—BEACON LIGHTS has on its mailing list 180 servicemen.

May, Editor's Desk

We now have 212 Servicemen receiving BEACON LIGHTS each month. This is almost twice as many as we had on our mailing list in January of this year. 116 of these men are from our Fuller Ave. Church. BEACON LIGHTS are also mailed to boys overseas. 63 young men have postoffice addresses.

August, Editor's Desk

What a grim thing war is!

Terrible if we think of all the fury and madness it represents, of all the destruction and sorrow, suffering, and agony it causes. But more dreadful still it becomes, if we contemplate that even upon the scenes of destruction God does not cease to cause His sun to shine upon the righteous and the unrighteous, and supplies men with the means and power to make and to use their instruments of destruction! Must not an ungodly world tremble at the thought of the mysterious, silent, invisible God, Who fulfills His counsel even through the ungodliness of the Wicked?

October, Letters To Our Boys in Service

1944 - 1946

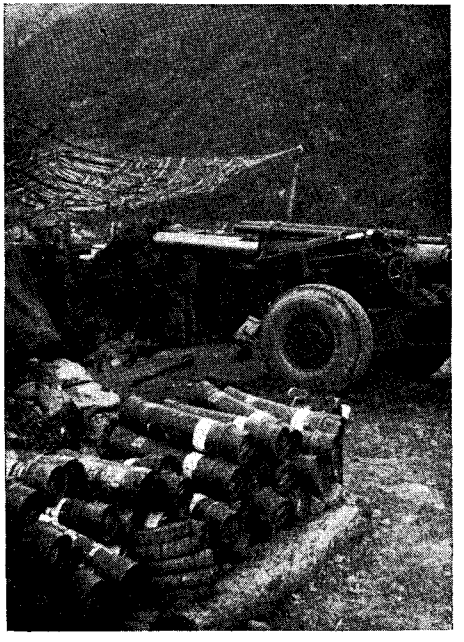
In the January issue of BEACON LIGHTS 1944 we find an interesting note from the Editor's Desk regarding our Service men. It is as follows:

"Just a year ago we reported 111 boys from our Protestant Reformed churches in the Service of our Country. To the best of our knowledge we now have 230 young men in the Service and over 100 of these boys are overseas, or at least have postoffice addresses. BEACON LIGHTS is mailed to all these boys and although it takes a little while before our magazine reaches them, it is being received in Australia, Africa, England and perhaps other part of the world. The 140 boys who are still in the United States are stationed in camps in 26 different States."

"We are very glad and thankful that we can furnish all these Sons of the Church with BEACON LIGHTS. And we are confident that they are glad and thankful with us!"

We also find in the June issue of 1945 a very fine poem written by the late Mr. D. Jonker of our First Church. This poem is still very appropriate for our boys in service today:

"To our boys in camps near home,
And to our boys where'ere they roam;
On sea or land or in the air,
So to our boys no matter where
We wish to send a word or two;
A message that will say to you,
To all our boys where'ere you are,
That you are ever in our thought;
We pray that His abundant grace
May follow you from place to place."
"We'd like to have you all relate,
Not only what has been your fate
In fighting Germans and the Japs;
But may we know if you perhaps
In higher warfare did contend;
And fought the fight unto the end.
If you this warfare have begun,
Then, when your earthly course is run,
You'll bask forever in the love
Of Him Who died on Calvary,
That You from death might be set free."



Rev. G. M. Ophoff writes an inspiring letter to our boys of which we quote just a small part: "There is one need common to you all, your need of the grace of Christ. It is the one indispensible thing and is sufficient to God's people in all circumstances. You know this from the Scriptures as corroborated by your own experience. With Christ's grace in your hearts and brought to rich fruition in your lives, you are spiritual. Being spiritual, you take to yourselves the whole armor of God and are able to withstand in the evil day. And the day is evil for all God's people and especially for you. Being spiritual, you are assured in your hearts that God loves you and in His love cares and blesses you, saves and preserves you, through the blood of His Son, Who loves us unto death, us His people, who believe in His name by His mercy."

From various issues of 1944 and 1945 we find that six of our boys lost their lives in the service of our country. They are: John M. Swart from First Church, Bernard Holstege from our Hudsonville Church, Howard Van Solkema from our Second Church, Maurice Herrick also from Second, Gerrit Vis from our Hull Church, and Bernard Miedema from First Church. There was a poem written in dedication to those who had lost dear ones in the war. It is as follows:

Beneath the crosses, row on row, He, too, has found a place
And He shall nevermore return to fill that empty space.
He was too young to die, they said, when the sad news was told.
Too young to die? Did you then think death's only for the old?
Beneath the crosses, row on row, His cheerful voice is stilled;
And vacant seat at home and church by him shall not be filled.
And say not that 'tis war's cruel jest which takes him from you now;
For when our Father calls us home, we all to Him must bow.
Beneath the crosses, row on row, He lies, but liveth still;
For 'neath The Cross he had a place — the Cross on Calvary's hill!

G.T.E.

1947

. . . TRUST — that is the password each New Year morning. And how secure and blessed are they who know, spiritually and experientially, what this means.

January, Christian Living

Can we really make friends with a person who doesn't love God, or who claims to be a Christian and lives like the world? . . . The apostle warns us against being 'Unequally yoked together with unbelievers.' . . . 'Make friends of God's children,' then. We will find ourselves living a healthier, happier spiritual life. And the church will be stronger for it.

March, Feature Article

"Fellowship in Christ" . . . this is the theme of this year's Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention.

August, Feature Article

We had the distinction of being involved in the founding and organization of BEACON LIGHTS . . . It was not an easy task . . . Of course mistakes were made. It was soon recognized that the size of the first issues was not too good . . . As time went by, other improvements were made . . . and the result is that we now have a neat little magazine designed to meet the needs of all our young people.

October, Editorial

1948

How is it that many men who are characterized by great intellectual ability fail to understand the plain language of the Scripture? We are reminded of what Isaiah said of such men in his day: "It is because there is no light in them . . . " Isaiah 8:20.

February, Editorial

. . . a new feature of your BEACON LIGHTS . . . "Truth and Error" written by Rev. J. Howerzyl.

March, Editorial

Hudsonville Mass Meeting Huge Success . . . The number which occupied the largest share of the time, was a debate on the subject: Resolved: that women should have equal rights with the men in determining church policies.

March, Feature Article

March 5 marked the date of the Mass-meeting of the Western League of Young People's Societies held in Hull, Iowa. Topic of the debate for the evening was: Resolved, that we should have a Youth Recreation Center of our own.

May, Society Activties

MISSIONS AND MISSIONARY ISSUE. The result of the missionary endeavor is plainly beyond human control . . . Our zeal should be concerned therefore, with maintaining the purity of the Gospel. In this manner only can we witness to the power of God.

August, Editorial

Theme of 1948 Convention: "Faith of our Fathers" and held in Holland, Michigan . . . Convention Impressions by Fran Dykstra (Doezema): "Rev. Hoeksema focused our attention on the Reformed Faith as only we Protestant Reformed Churches have it. He pointed out our distinct calling to preserve and develop this great heritage through Protestant Reformed Schools and reading Protestant Reformed literature."

October, Convention News

1949

Also as young people we must learn to give for Kingdom causes. I am afraid that some young people know how to "throw away" money but they don't know how to give for Kingdom causes. And don't be afraid to give special gifts for special kingdom causes.

January, Schuiler

The announcement comes into Beacon Lights that the 1949 Y. P. Covention will not be held in Montana as was anticipated by so many, but due to cost, Pella and Oskaloosa will be hosts.

May, Announcement

1950

The past twenty-five years really is a significant period for our churches. Known to all of us is the fact that during this period all of our Protestant Reformed churches were called into being. During this period our parents were given the responsibility to support and reaffirm their confession of the Reformed faith.

Much has been said and much has been writen about the development of the Protestant Reformed Churches during the last twenty-five years.

The present generation of young people is placed in a peculiar position. The struggle of our parents to witness a good confession is ours only in as far as we are acquainted with it by instruction and study. In a sense, we experience the struggle vicariously, and for that reason I want to cast your thoughts into the future.

What shall this generation of Protes-

tant Reformed young people say twenty-five years hence? Shall we be able to say what our parents say today, that God has purged His church, that He is still using us as His witnesses? Shall we also experience a struggle even as our parents have in the past?

May, Editorial

The situation in the world has become very tense again because of fighting between north and south Korea. The northern part of Korea is under control of the Soviets, while the southern part was given the freedom to vote its democratic government under protection of the United Nations and especially the United States. The northern forces crossed the line and attacked the southern part of Korea, and the U. S. intervened and is now committed to the defense of southern Korea, regardless whether the whole might of the Russian army is entered into the defense of the northern Koreans.

August, Current Comments

1951

The future is dark. Especially is it dark if we notice the comments of commentators and leaders. One narrator remarks that it is the darkest hour in our history. That we have suffered the worst military defeat in our history. General Marshall warns that we must prepare for a life of tension and that the situation now is much more serious than in the early days of World War II.

January, Current Comments

In the year 1944 the building site on Adams Street was purchased and, on the suggestion of our architect, much of the work of the building was done by our own people. The school building has eight rooms and will accommodate three hundred pupils. Bus service is arranged for those pupils who live too far away to walk to school. There are classes from the kindergarten through the ninth grade.

May, Anniversity Story

The feeling of unity pervades the school and it brings teachers and pupils to a closer understanding. We're fighting for the same cause, aren't we? Why, walking through these walls are our future ministers, teachers, consistory members, and homemakers.

April, Feature Article

1952

The 12th annual convention of our Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation has drawn to a close. The young men and women, delegates, and friends have all departed and gone to their respective homes. What a great means for the upbuilding and strengthening in the faith this convention can be for each individual attending, but great still is that influence upon our churches as a whole, when these young people return to their respective communities and churches inspired and strengthened to resume the work in their societies for the coming season.

October, Editorial

During these months of electioneering, this fervent spirit to show the voters that a certain individual and party is the only one to vote for and expect better times, the Christian cannot help but ask himself about his calling to vote in the coming election in November.

We must understand that in the will of God's providence, it is not always the better that gains office. He puts in office to accomplish His will.

October, Current Comments

1953

We are followers. Let us be proud of

that fact. Let us accept the challenge which it brings. Are we faithful followers? Then let us develop in faith. We must explore the meaning and significance of the committment we have made; we must read and study, and listen to the voices of our leaders, **intelligently.** Let us labor in that most sublime of all callings, the work of being followers of Christ. We believe in order that we may understand. Let us therefore understand.

April, Editorial

. . . I have been in Korea for six months The Lord willing, I will be discharged the 26th of November.

My job here is very easy. I'm working on the gate entrance to our compound . . .

So far I haven't found Korea very interesting and I guess I never will. The Koreans don't have anything. What little hey did have was destroyed. They still do their work with oxen or else by hand.

The weather is getting pretty hot. It's been as high as 106 already this month (May). But the heat goes down with the sun, so that is one good thing. Thanks again for sending me the B.L.

Sincerely yours,

Cpl. John Hoekstra

August, Military Mailbag

1954

We admit that we are creationists by faith and that this is also a wonder of God. Creation is the only answer to the wonder of existence because even life is a great unexplainable mystery to the unbeliever. We can answer many of the arguments of the scientist since we get our knowledge from scripture. For instance: similarity of the animals is evidence of only one thing to us, namely that one mighty Creator planned and executed the formation of all things and used a similar pattern for all living things.

Thus we return again to the reason for our thoughts on this matter. We stand in an antithetical relation to the ungodly even in our study of natural phenomena around us. With scripture as our light, we shall never fall into the error of evolution which has no room for God.

February, Nature Study

In the early days of the church, Christians used to keep a night-long vigil on the Saturday night before Easter. At cock-crowing the stillness of the early morning was shattered by the joyful shout, "The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!" So let us celebrate Easter. May we be knit together even more closely as the body of Christ, and let heart answer to heart, "The Lord is risen indeed!"

April, Feautre Article

The Young People of our churches in Grand Rapids, Hudsonville, Holland, and Grand Haven enjoyed their annual Spring Banquet, May 11, in our Fourth Church. We had a Beef Roast supper with all the trimmings. Couples from the Mr. and Mrs. Society of our First church served and various mothers cooked the meal. The theme chosen for the occasion was: "The Love of God" based on Rom. 8:38 and 39.

After supper there was a short recess with program in the auditorium afterwards . . . Rev. H. Hoeksema gave us an inspirational speech on "The Inseparable Tie of the Love of God."

June, Young People's News

You go to Bethlehem on Christmas. This thought . . . 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.

December, Christian Living

1955

Consider that the Lord requires of us that we serve Him perfectly with all things. Every moment of every day of every year we owe to Him. Every gift and talent and power He has endowed us with must be put into His service. Every penny of every dollar in our accounts belongs to Him. All that we possess, or call our own, we are to have, only that with it, we may be better equipped to serve Him. And whatever cannot be utilized in His service, we should not have in our custody. "It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." (I Cor. 4:2) That is what GOD demands!

April, Truth vs. Error

Hudsonville is the host; they have worked hard and will work hard; those who contribute in the way of speeches and other parts of the entire program will contribute their best; Go then under God's blessing and in prayer, and you will be richly satisfied.

August-September, Christian Living

Steering a right hand drive car on the left side of the road along the busier roads was simple — one has only to follow the preceding vehicles. However, driving along a country lane was another matter; one soon became forgetful while admiring the view and before long came face to face with another startled motorest.

November, "A Glimpse of England"

Santa Claus is a German corruption of the name St. Nicholas — who lived in the fourth century A.D. St. Nicholas learned that three young women had no suitors, as their father was too poor to provide them with a dowry. So one night he filled three bags with gold and threw them into the windows of the rooms occupied by the girls, and they were soon happily married . . .

December, "Christmas Traditions"

Stock-Car Racing

The purpose of this Essay is not to point out the evil or sinfulness of stock-car racing as much as it is to point out the foolishness of this so-called sport. As we all know the reason why these goofs, knot-heads, racers, or what-ever you want to call them, crawl, and I mean crawl, into their souped-up, shining and gloriously "new" chariots, skid, and that word is also non-exaggerated, around in a filthy, dusty circle for a few minutes is because they have no other way to express themselves. O, they say they're after that pot of gold that sits at the end of their whirl—our gold, that is if we attend — but I'll come back to this in a minute.

What a thrill! — and it ought to be for one dollar or more. **And the noise!** I don't think I have ever heard more racket in my whole 19 years of frail existance, except maybe when it's Christmas Time at Wurzburg, especially on 6th floor. The crowd goes wild when one car, if we may call it that, gets in the way of another, goes crazy if another unavoidably joins them, and stark-raving mad if another adds the cherry to the

sundae by comfortably locating itself atop the whole mess. But, if it isn't the crowd it's the crates they tear around in. I, personally, don't know what they put into those motors — it sounds like the same stuff they put in jets. They putt around the track once, I guess to make sure their cars will run, then just as soon as they get to the place where we're sitting, they all, simultanteously put the accelerator all the way down to the floor and they're gone — physically and mentally.

At one time I had the disadvantage of talking to one of these, shall we say, drivers. He was a long, scrawny, stretched-out looking character with a couple chipped and rotten teeth protruding out of his upper jaw and three or four more pushed every which way on his lower jaw, which isn't so odd, I suppose he looks like any other abnormal typical all-around stock car driver. He told me that that track was the most safest place to be — and perhaps it was — at that time for when he told me, there wasn't a race going on.

But really, what draws us to these places, what makes us scream with excitement and I might add with joy, when these drivers take such foolish measures to almost tempt death? For instance, a driver gets into his car and rides through a so-called wall of fire just to get a lot of "Oh's," "Ah's," and "Oh Man's" out of the crowd, and of course, money. I think we all know why we attend these things. Because God has created us perfect, giving us the will to do all things without error; and when man fell he turned his back completely around to look instead at destruction, for he knows he can do nothing to perfection, so he wants to see how much he can destroy. But let this not be an excuse for us. It is not for us to see the world fight outwardly this inward struggle for due to our sinful nature we also have this struggle. But we have the new man in us, we need not become puzzled and confused and resign to methods such as this to comfort ourselves. The world cannot comfort themselves either by these means as hard as they may try. Now can't you see the foolishness of the world? Throwing themselves into their cars, half-killing themselves and sometimes whole-killing themselves to try to win a victory to their inward struggle? O, no, they won't admit it, they might say — "We do it for the money, or the praise the public gives us or we want to watch them because it's exciting." They're fooling no one but themselves.

In conclusion, young people, let's think twice before running off to the races next time. Are we fighting the same battle as the world?

Virginia Griffioen

SO BE IT

So be it; 'tis Thy plan not mine,
And being Thine is good;
My God, my will shall yield to Thee
Ere it is understood.

So be it; I a child of dust
Will not oppose Thy way,
Move on, mysterious Will, I trust
I love, and will obey.

So be it; and do Thou, my heart,
No childish questions ask,
Thou in God's counsels hast no part,
Crave not so hard a task.

So be it; yes, so be it, Lord,
No word have I to say —
O be Thy gracious Name adored —
I love and will obey.

MR. STUART J. BYLSMA
[illegible] PARIS, S.E.
CITY

WAIT . . . don't destroy those old copies of Beacon Lights. The Federation Board of the Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies is beginning a library to which all our people will have access in the not too distant future. Our library SHOULD OWN a complete set of Beacon Lights. You can help us by donating old issues of Beacon Lights. Please send or deliver them to: Miss Jeannette Faber, 929 Worden St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan. If you would like us to pick them up, just call CH 5-0023.

Thank you from the Federation Board