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Christmas! What a glorious awesome season! A day full of dedication and glorying in the Christ-child of Bethlehem! To this Child we render prayers of thanksgiving for that salvation which is ours. We, His people, do this — for the world can never really praise the Holy One. They are separated from Him, from the love of God and from that wonderful salvation which is for only His elect. And yet, of all the seasons, this one ironically, is filled with the trite sayings and mottos of “brotherhood of man,” “peace for all,” and “goodwill towards men.” For does not everyone know about Christmas and its general celebration? Even if the Christ IS omitted (and then there is only X-mas!) isn’t there still a time of gaiety, rejoicing and merriment? Witness not only the brightly colored stores, counters and advertisements, the gaily decorated homes and lawns, but listen also to the oft repeated, time-worn, soon wearying phrase, “Merry Christmas!” On everyone’s lips, the message soon loses its significance, ceases to inspire spiritual response, and becomes a cold, formal verbalism — expressing nothing regarding the true meaning of Christmas. Whether written or spoken, the Christmas greeting is rarely given or received in the spirit of Christ.

Soon the mail carriers will be working overtime. A special crew will be recruited to make two or three deliveries of mail a day — mostly seasonal greetings. Some will be sent across the entire continent, others from state to state, from city to city and some pass from neighbor to neighbor.

Taking as an approximate figure for the total population of the United States 130 million, we can safely estimate on the average of three per family, that there are some 43 million families in the U. S. Each family receives at least ten cards, making a total of at least 430 million cards. At five cents a card and two cents for postage, we arrive at the staggering sum of thirty million, one hundred thousand dollars, spent annually to send the season’s greetings from house to house.

And that figure is conservative.

What is the prompting behind such an influx of well-wishing? Certainly the whole movement would mean nothing unless the purpose were true, the motive sincere and the
outcome would warrant such an outlay! Just what ARE some of the motives which prompt this activity?

Many people send greetings only out of custom. It has been done year after year — it is almost expected of one. Too, it is the accepted thing to do; the approach is one of social obligation which must be fulfilled: since the Jones family remembered the Browns last year, it is only proper that the Browns remember the Jones this year. Mailing lists grow over a period of years, often to people from whom nothing has been heard or seen for several years. Some will send cards to friends to inform them that they still are in existence, a sort of “Hello, I’m still here” — without feeling the obligation to write a long letter: the Christmas card takes care of that neatly. And then there are many cards sent to those whom one meets frequently: members of the immediate family, relatives, church members, classmates, friends, bus drivers, milk men, grocery men, garbage collectors, ad infinitum. No matter if this person is given a verbal greeting a day or two before Christmas, a written one is often necessary to complete the list. Lastly are the many greetings which are made in the form of advertisements: calendars, newspaper “ads,” specially printed company cards, etc. And thus the list grows.

Should one not be happy that Christmas is so well-known, appreciated and celebrated? Is this matter of Christmas greetings, either by card or verbally so very serious? No, this would not be serious — if it were not for the fact that Christ’s Name and the commemoration of His Holy birth are associated with all of the above motives. One thinks of the third commandment: “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” You realize that the Name of Jesus, the Son of God, is included in that Holy Name of our God; that as part of that perfect, Holy Trinity, He is one with God the Father. Consider the wonder of all ages, the incarnation of the Holy One as the lowly Babe of Bethlehem. Listen to the heavenly choir as their voices echo and re-echo through the ages, “Glory to GOD in the highest and on earth peace to the men of His goodwill.” Then compare, if you will, the greetings sent out far and wide, in His name, in the so-called “Spirit of Christmas.” What a mockery it becomes! The Perfect One is brought down to the level of common use, is become a trade name, a lure for advertising, an excuse to persuade men to join into the spirit for “peace for the world.” See then the silly, meaningless cards and greetings on display — sparkling scenes and brightly colored figures, all in some way connecting their message with that Holy Name and Event! How obvious it then becomes that a wicked work desecrates every sacred thing with which it comes in contact! Twisting the Scriptures, desecrating the Sabbath, they now dishonor the very name of Christ with their seasonal greetings. It apparently matters not if the holy and profane are indiscriminately mixed — Santa Claus on the cover and the words of Scripture within. One cannot help but paraphrase the third commandment as: Thou shalt not take the Name of Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, and the wonder of His incarnation, in vain.

And God will not hold him guiltless who does.

Because of the abuse by the world, must we find seasonal greetings therefore wrong? If not, how then should they be used?

First of all, we must take the stand that any greeting can only rightly be made by a Chris-
tian, because it is in any form, really invoking God's blessing on the object. This is so much so, that a greeting, by kiss in oriental fashion, is, in Scripture, referred to as “an holy kiss.” A Christmas greeting then, can only be made by the children of God, because it is set in direct connection with Christ. None but the righteous understand the joy of His coming, the happiness it brings, the praise it evokes. Only they can express the wonder in a true “Blessed Christmas” greeting — to those of the same household of faith. Thus full of praises and thanksgiving for the wonder of Bethlehem, can His own look forward with gladsome mind to the yearly celebration of His birth.

It is almost CHRISTmas! Keep it CHRIST centered, a living dedication and a hope for the future — a future which sees Him coming from heaven as He was seen going to heaven: on the very clouds — to call His elect home. Then and then only, may we confidently sing, paraphrasing the angels' song: Glory to God in the highest and on earth there is peace for the men of His goodwill.

Hulda Kuiper

MERRY CHRISTMAS
AND
A HAPPY NEW YEAR
In place of the regular editorial, we are printing an essay prepared especially for Beacon Lights by Rev. J. McCallam upon the request of the Theological School Committee.

The Importance of the Ministry

At present, there is one student in our Theological School. When there is such a small student body, then we have the unusual situation that follows, of having more professors and instructors, than we have students. Add to this number of teachers, the eight members of the Theological School committee, and we have a total force of eleven men whose care is our one theological student. On this basis, it may be argued that this student will be the best trained student for the ministry that we have had, in years. How can it be otherwise?

It must not be thought that our school will come to an end, when this student graduates, for the want of any future students for the theological school. There are four men, at present, either at high school or at college, who plan to enter the theological school when they have completed their preparatory studies. One man will enter the school, the Lord willing, in September, 1957. These student prospects, though few in number, indicate two facts:

1. that the Lord will ever provide His church with a ministry; and
2. that our student body will continue to be small, for several years to come.

In all this, let us not forget the prayer, that the Lord establish His Word.

With a glance at the present situation that involves our school, and its student body, this article is written. It seeks to encourage young men to study for the sacred ministry. There should be many more men who desire to study for the ministry, and plan to enter our school in order to prepare for future usefulness in the Lord’s vineyard. How great a cause for rejoicing, is the fact that God leads a young man to study for the ministry. It is really the crowning result in lives that have enjoyed parental care, catechism instruction, Sunday School, and steady tuition from the pulpit.

The Bible reveals that God chooses His people to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth. The truth then must be taught, in order to arouse the conscience, enlighten the understanding, and subdue the will. Through a gradual process of the pouring of the truth into the mind and heart of those who hear the Word proclaimed, souls are renewed and made new creations in Christ Jesus. From this number, God calls a young man to proclaim the truth, as it is in Jesus, to others. He, who is called, cannot but proclaim the things that he has both seen and heard. Perhaps, amongst the young men who read this article, there is one whom God calls through His Word and Spirit, to proclaim the riches of Christ, to poor lost sinners. It is only to these — not to the proud and haughty, and the self-satisfied — that the Gospel of salvation is preached. Not the haughty long for the word of reconciliation, but the humble. Will you be one who will bring this message of life to meek and hungry souls?

It is clear, then, how wise is the appointment of pastors, as a means to the conversion of sinners. The faithful pastor preaches the truth with all the variety and skillful adaptation which the different needs and varying conditions of his hearers require. He unfolds the claims of the Law; he describes the ruined state of the soul; he dwells on the beauty and the loveliness of God; he announces the wrath of God against sin. Above all else, he exalts the unutterable love of God, which speaks of the sufferings and death of the Son of God, in behalf of guilty sinners. Will you be one of these?

Nor is this all. He tries every argument that

(Continued on page 18)
In the last issue of the "Beacon Lights" we discussed the possibility of organizations that can be called "neutral". And we concluded that this was altogether impossible for the reason that man himself can never be "neutral" in life. Therefore it goes without saying that the reason of "neutrality" can never serve to condone membership in the labor unions.

There is another aspect to the question which we are discussing, and that is the matter of what has been called corporate or communal responsibility. This subject I would like to discuss in this article. That this is a basic question will not be gainsaid, for all our objections against unions which we hope to raise hinge on the fact of corporate responsibility. Because such a responsibility exists, membership in labor organizations can never be tolerated by those who are interested in walking as saints in Jesus Christ.

What is corporate or communal responsibility?

The human race as it lives in various relationships in life is never to be considered as an aggregate of individuals. God never created mankind in such a way that each individual lives by himself in this world without relations to other individuals in every sphere of his life. This was already true in the creation of man in Paradise. It is the error of all Pelagianism and Arminianism to consider mankind as nothing more than a congregate of individual men. But God created the entire human race in Adam as one organic unity. Adam was the organic head, the root of the tree of the entire human race. Even as organically, an entire tree may be found in a single seed, so the entire tree of the human race may be found in Adam by virtue of his creation. All mankind is one in him. Thus also the corruption of Adam's sin is the corruption of every individual that is born of man.

Rooted in this organic relationship of the whole human race to itself in Adam, is the fact that the human race was a legal corporation united in federal solidarity in Adam. Without the fact of the organic unity, the legal unity would have been impossible. And so it is that the guilt of Adam's sin is imputed to the whole human race. All men become guilty in Adam and incur the wrath of God because of Adam's sin.

There is another corporation of the elect in Christ. For the elect are organically in Christ by faith and legally in Christ as He is their representative Head. Christ is the organic and legal Head of all the elect as they were given to Christ before the foundations of the world. Thus also His suffering and death are the basis for all the salvation of those that belong to Him. This is fundamental to all of doctrine.

But there is in every sphere of life these corporations existing. And it is undoubtedly correct to say that except it were true that the human race was one organically in that every nation of the earth was created from one blood, these legal corporations would be impossible. In other words, the fact that there is corporate responsibility is rooted in the fact that there is an organic unity between the peoples of the earth.

There is the corporation of the family, and that also in the line of generations. Therefore God visits the iniquity of the father upon the children even unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him. Therefore the family of Eli is punished for the father's negligence of this priest. And therefore the family of Gehazi shall bear the curse of his
sin forever according to the word of Elisha.

There is the corporation of government and individual nations. The citizens of a particular nation are part of the corporation of the government to which they belong. Thus, for example, even in our own country, the citizenry of America are responsible for the actions of the government which functions in Washington. And they are not always asked whether or not they have objections to what the government contemplates doing. If the powers that be decide to enter into war with another nation, the people are responsible whether war is to their personal liking or not. They are considered by the enemy to be responsible for the decisions of the government, and they are also obligated to support the cause of the government with sacrifices of their young men and of luxuries which must be foregone in order to aid the war effort.

There is the corporation of the church. The individual members are responsible and held accountable for the actions and decisions of the church with which they affiliate. They are members of a particular denomination and are obligated to defend and support the principles and the decisions of the body to which they belong.

All of life consists in corporations.

And this need not surprise us, for God so created mankind in His own wisdom, that man never lives an isolated life and cannot if he will. He is a member of the human race and thus has a definite and particular place in the race into which he was born a member.

There are several points which we should notice in this connection.

In the first place, corporate or communal responsibility means therefore, that all the members of a particular corporation or commune are held responsible and accountable for the principles of the organization of which they are a member. This is implied in the solidarity of the corporation of the human race as it was created in Adam.

In the second place, nothing else but mere membership makes such a one responsible. Not the fact that he was not present when decisions were reached; nor the fact that he had nothing to say in the decision; not the fact that he was opposed to the decision, will ever change in one respect his accountability for the actions of the group to which he belongs.

In the third place, if his group is represented by an individual or a group of individuals, as long as that individual or group of individuals functions as representative of the organization, each member is responsible for what that representative does.

In the fourth place, this responsibility extends to three types of action of the group of which he is a member: a) actions done in accord with the principles of the organization; b) actions not in conflict with the principles of the organization; c) actions in conflict with the principles of an organization but approved even after protest.

In the fifth place, this responsibility can only be abrogated for an individual member by way of protest against the actions of the group to which he belongs. If he protests, he is free from responsibility. But then it must be remembered that, if his protest fails, as long as he remains a member after the failure of his protest, he continues responsible again. If after protest, the actions of a group are still approved, the only alternatives for an individual are to assume responsibility or to sever his relations with that particular group.

This is the meaning of corporate responsibility in general. On this basis membership in labor unions is absolutely impossible.

H. Hanko

**DONATIONS FOR BEACON LIGHTS**

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In our last essay we were busy watching David Turnabout as he was engaged in the dutiful task of preparing an essay explaining the Fifth Article of the Confession of Faith. In the present essay we shall bring this subject to a conclusion by briefly outlining the salient points of David's finished product.

The subject concerning which he wrote, we recall, dealt with the dignity and authority of the Holy Scriptures. Under this heading the material of David's essay was divided into two major sub-divisions. In the first of these he elaborated upon the "Idea" of Scripture's authority and in the second section he explained, on the basis of this article of faith, he reasons we, the church, receive the books of the Holy Bible as authoritative. We shall now bring out some of the things David wrote in his essay.

By "the authority of the Holy Scriptures", David rightly understood that the Word of God is the Truth; the Truth as God Himself, Who cannot lie, speaks it. However men may distort and twist the Word of God to fit their own preconceived notions and satisfy their carnal fancy, the fact remains that the Bible is the objective truth. God speaks through all the secondary authors of Holy Writ, and this Word of God is one throughout the Bible, forming a perfect unity of truth without contradiction. The truth is always authoritative, that is, it has the sovereign right to impose itself upon all men and demands of them perfect subjection and obedience. This is the authority of God's Word, notwithstanding the fact that many live in defiance of that authority and express in their whole walk preference to serve the lie which has no authority at all. We are not obligated, David went on to point out to the members of the Young People's Society, to serve the lie (error) but we are duty bound to serve God according to His Word of Truth. This makes it very important that we affiliate with the church that confesses, preaches and lives in the closest harmony with that Word and we must separate ourselves from all that is contrary to this Divine authority.

Since we have mentioned the church here, David brought out further, we consider it important also to point out that our confession here is opposed to that of the Roman Catholic Church. What the latter teach we may learn from these three quotations from Roman Catholic writings:

1. "The plain truth which every sincere person must eventually face is the fact that you can accept the Bible only upon the word of the Catholic Church. The Bible truly is a Catholic Book, and it would not be in our possession today but for the Catholic Church."
2. "On the authority of the Catholic Church alone can one be assured that the Bible contains the word of God; and without any warrant from the book itself, one assumes that the Bible only decides and contains what he is to believe."
3. In regard to the question whether the Romish Bible and the Protestant Bible are in all respects the same, the Catholic book states: "The New Testament is usually quite the same, but ours contains seven more books in the Old Testament (Apocrypha)."

Thus we see that the Roman Catholics elevate the authority of the church above that of Scripture; maintain that the Bible contains the Word of God; and, add to the canonical books those of the apocrypha which, they claim, are also inspired.

Overagainst this our Reformed fathers declare that the Word of God stands by itself and is its own authority. The Bible does not merely contain God's Word but it is the Word
of God and for this reason we do not approach the Scriptures critically to pick out parts of it to which we subject ourselves and to discard the rest but we approach the Bible confessing that the whole Word of God is the truth; the authority to which both we individually and the church institutionally are to be subject. Believers accept all things contained in the Scriptures without any doubt.

Only where the Word of God is so respected can it be, as we also confess, "the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith." Elaborating upon this part of the article, David pointed out in his essay that faith is regulated by God's Word because the latter is always the sole criterion by which the truth and the lie are distinguished and, therefore, the guide for our practical life and walk in the midst of the world. Living by faith is the same as walking according to the truth.

That the Word of God is the foundation of our faith means that the only ground upon which faith can rest is the Scripture and that because it is the Word of GOD. And that the same Word is for the confirmation of faith means that faith is nourished and strengthened through the means of the Word. Even as our physical bodies cannot grow on stones but need bread, so faith cannot flourish on human error and diabolic philosophy which is the lie but it needs the living Word of God.

In the second part of his essay David devoted attention to the reasons why we receive the books of the Bible as holy and canonical for the regulation, foundation and confirmation of our faith. These reasons are expressed in our Confession. The principal reason is to be found in the two-fold testimony of the Holy Spirit. The secondary reason lies in the fact that the church receives and approves of these books. This must be taken in connection with and as related to the first or principal reason since the guidance of the Holy Spirit is promised to the church and under that guidance the church receives and approves these books. This is recognized by the believer who also accepts them as holy and canonical for the same Spirit that is given to the church dwells in the believer. Further, it may be said that through the fellowship of the church the individual believer is indicted into the knowledge of faith of the content of Holy Writ and as this knowledge of faith increases, the believer becomes more and more assured that the Scriptures are indeed the Word of God. It was in this connection that David inserted the practical point that societies in the church such as his own Young People's group, when properly regulated, faithfully attended and diligently occupied with the study of the Word of God, fill an important need in the church. No one who is sincerely desirous to have their life and faith regulated by the Word of God will lightly neglect them.

But we must return for a moment yet to that other reason, the two-fold testimony of the Holy Spirit by which we are assured that the Scriptures are the Word of God. Of course, the unregenerate person cares nothing for this reason because he does not have this Spirit. He does not know what this testimony is. To him the things of God (His Word) are always foolishness. He cannot know them, nor discern them for they are spiritually discerned. (I Cor. 2:14) But when God opens the heart as He did in the case of Lydia (Acts 16:14), we attend unto the things that are spoken and then we notice, firstly, that there is a testimony of the Spirit of God in the Scriptures themselves. If we may compare for a moment the Scriptures with all other books in the world, we instantly see that there is nothing like them. All that is foretold in the Scriptures comes to pass and this is so evident that even the blind are able to perceive it. This stems from the fact that they are the Word of Him Whose counsel stands and Who does all His good pleasure.

In the second place, there is the testimony of the Spirit in our hearts, the subjective "Testimonium Spiritus Sancti." This testimony in the believer joins itself to the testimony of the Spirit in the Scriptures for it is one Spirit and by that Spirit the believer acknowl-
Chapter 11:19-30

Introduction:

It is quite evident that here we have a new section, even though the beginning of this section falls in the middle of the chapter we are studying. This is plain from the fact that the 19th verse takes us back in time to the important occasion of the martyrdom of Stephen and the persecution which arose in connection with it. We now follow another thread in the weaving of the tapestry which portrays the "things which Jesus continued to do and to teach." It must also be evident in this connection that some of the events related in this section took place simultaneously with the events related in the preceding section.

While this is a new section of the narrative, we must not overlook its relation to all the events which took place after the death of Stephen, and which are recorded from chapter 8 forward. In a way you find in this section concerning the evangelization-work at Antioch, the piecing together of the various events recorded before this. The tapestry, or at least a complete section of the tapestry, is finished here. In it you may distinguish various threads. There is the thread of the persecution under the leadership of Saul. There is the thread of the scattering of the church throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria. There is the thread of Philip's labors at Samaria, as well as his preaching to the Ethiopian eunuch, and his mission journey from the Gaza desert to Caesarea. There is the thread of the amazing conversion of the persecuting Saul, and the after-events of that conversion, viz., his visit to Jerusalem, the lying in wait of the Grecians to destroy him, and his ultimate departure for his native city of Tarsus. There is the thread of the mission journey and church visitation of the apostle Peter in Judea during the period when the churches had rest. This thread ended at Joppa, from whence a new and shining thread had its beginning, the thread of the conversion of Cornelius, the Gentile centurion. And finally there is the thread of the conviction of the Jerusalem church, through Peter's report, of the propriety and necessity of this Gentile evangelization. I say: all these threads are brought together and tied off in this record concerning the work at Antioch. When we consider this passage we can behold the rhyme and reason, or rather, the marvelous divine wisdom displayed in the building of and gathering of the church in the new dispensation.

In the third place, this present section records events that must not be divorced from that which takes place in the future and which is related in the following chapters. For do not forget: 1) From now on Antioch begins to displace Jerusalem as the mother church, and becomes for a time the center of the church's activities. 2) The work at Antioch is preparatory for the tremendous labor of the evangelization of the Gentile world, even as it is eventually from Antioch that Paul and Barnabas are sent on the first missionary journey. 3) It is also
from this work at Antioch that the first great dispute arises in the new dispensational church — the dispute that is to an extent settled at the council of Jerusalem.

We deal here, therefore, with a very important piece of sacred church history.

And, if I may refer to the figure employed above once more, it is surely of the utmost importance that we behold in this tapestry the artistry of the Divine Weaver, and try to understand something of His revelation to us concerning His gathering of the church.

I. The Beginning of the Work at Antioch:

   A. The Occasion and Location:

      1. Where did some of those who were persecuted scatter? v. 19
      2. How is to be explained that they were scattered so widely, and even left the land of Canaan?
      3. Especially what kind of Jewish Christians were the object of the persecution that arose about Stephen? Does this also have something to do with their scattering outside of Canaan? Does it have anything to do with the eventual evangelization of Gentiles?
      4. What is the significance of the fact that Phenice, Cyprus, and Antioch are mentioned in this connection?
         a. What is characteristic of all three places? Were they in any peculiar way adapted to the Lord's purpose of the spread of the gospel to the Gentile world?
         b. Does Cyprus occur again in the narrative of Acts? Where?
         c. Describe Antioch. Tell its significance as to the spread of the gospel. Were the inhabitants of Antioch especially fitted from a spiritual and moral point of view to be evangelized? Were they in some way worthy of the gospel?

   B. The Work as Such:

      1. To whom did these dispersed believers first preach exclusively? Why?
      2. Who began to preach to the Grecians? What is the significance of this? How is it to be explained that the apostles themselves were not at first used by the Lord for this work? Would it not have been much more authoritative if they had preached rather than these Cypriots and Cyrenians? Why did the Lord use the latter?
      3. Who were these Grecians? Were they the so-called Hellenists, Jews of a Grecian civilization and culture and speech? Proof.
      4. Nothing is said here of a connection between this approach to the Greeks and the contact of Peter with Cornelius.
         a. Is there a connection between the two events?
         b. Were the Cypriot and Cyrenian preachers aware of Peter's work?
         c. Even if they were not aware, was there a connection as far as the Lord's purpose was concerned? If Peter's experience with Cornelius had not taken place, what do you think would have been the reaction of the apostles and the church at Jerusalem to the work at Antioch?
      5. Is the work at Antioch in any way an advance over the work of Peter in connection with Cornelius? Note some differences between these labors, as to:
         a. Laborers.
         b. Scope of work.
c. Objects of the work. (Cornelius was a god-fearing man. Is any such thing noted concerning these Grecians?)

d. Occasion of labor. (Peter had a direct injunction from the Lord to have dealings with the "common and unclean." Is there any such factor here?)

6. The preaching:

a. What, or rather, Whom, did they preach? What is the significance of the names "Lord Jesus" in this connection? Is there any significance in the fact that the name "Christ" is not mentioned here?

b. Was the preaching blessed? What is meant by "the hand of the Lord was with them?"

c. What was the fruit upon this preaching?

1) Does this refer only to the Grecians, or to both Jews and Greeks?

2) What is the relation between the first and second parts of verse 21?

3) Is it rather usual that mission labors produce great numbers of converts? Was this the case later on with Paul's labors? Can you conceive of any reason why the Lord should grant such a remarkable fruit upon these first labors?

4) How was the faith of these converts manifest? What is meant by "and turned unto the Lord?"

5) What kind of church was established in Antioch as respects the nationality of its members?

H.C.H.

(Continued from page 8)

edges and bows before the authority of God's Word, singing and praying:

"Teach me O Lord Thy Way of Truth,
And from it I will not depart
That I may steadfastly obey
Give me an understanding heart."

G. Vanden Berg

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A MERRY CHRISTMAS
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A HAPPY NEW YEAR
Spiders

We stated in last month's article that we planned to resume the study of the spider. We also said that we would discuss the spider group from the aspect of the general characteristics by which spiders are distinguished from other animal groups and by discussing the various spider groups. This we will do to a certain extent. We will discuss the spider groups, however, in a still later issue.

First let us consider the general characteristics that distinguish spiders from other animal groups. It is of interest to note in the first place that spiders belong to a group of animals known to biologists as the Phylum Arthropoda. The word Arthropoda is derived from the Greek arthrion, which means joint, and from the Greek poous, which means foot. Therefore the word Arthropoda means jointed foot and therefore refers to a class of animals which have jointed legs. The Phylum Arthropoda is then again divided into 4 main Classes. The Class of the spider is Arachnida. Also included in this Class are the daddy-long-legs, horseshoe crabs, mites, ticks, and scorpions. The specific order of the spider group is the order Araneida. The Class name Arachnida comes from the Greek term arachne which means "spider" and of the Greek eidos meaning "shape," although some definitely connect it with Arachne the mythical "spinning goddess." The important identifying characteristics of the Class Arachnida is the fact that all animals in this class have bodies which are composed of two segments with the head a part of the anterior or front segment and the fact that there are 4 pairs of legs which are appended to the anterior segment of the body.

The spiders of creation display a variable number of eyes, some of them lacking, two, four, or six of the usual number. However, most of our native spiders have eight simple eyes located on the forepart of the front segment, the cephalothorax, and are so distributed over its curved surface that they are directed in several ways so as to increase the scope of vision. It is interesting to note, in this connection, that the arrangement of the eyes, or eye pattern is of value in determining the species, since the pattern for each species is characteristic.

The posterior segment, abdomen, or opisthosoma, whichever term you prefer and therefore wish to use, is joined to the cephalothorax by a slender waist or pedicule which is hidden in most spiders by the overhanging abdomen. Some spiders resemble the ant and in these the pedicule is quite predominant. The opisthosoma or abdomen is a more or less elongated, cylindrical sac in which there is considerable diversity of form and color pattern. On the underside of the abdomen are the reproductive orifices (apertures).

On the abdomen, at some distance from its tip, are located the spinning organs, or spinnerets, usually six in number. The individual spinneret is a finger-like organ with a number of microscopic tubes at the end, through which the thread is drawn out. The thread is composed of a great number of minute threads which pass from the body through separate tubes and unite into one before they have time to dry.

The spider breathes through openings in the abdomen which are called trachea or air tubes. In this way the spider resembles the insect even though it is not an insect.

There are no antennae or feelers on spiders but the mandibles or jaws (food crushers) are very prevalent along with the hollow, hypodermic-needle-like fangs, by which the poison, discussed in the previous article, is injected into the victims. A second pair of leg-like ap-
pendages near the mandibles, which are as a rule very prominent on mature males, are used in courtship.

The legs, always eight in number, are seven jointed. The legs are variable in length, and the length modifications in the different species cause them to walk in different ways.

Up to the final molt, spiders are able to practice autonomy or self-mutilation, and they can regenerate lost limbs. When a spider is caught by a leg, it can shed the leg automatically in order to escape; and, as has been indicated, a new leg will be regenerated in place of the lost one, if the spider is not mature.

The body of the spider is usually quite hairy and the hairs serve either a sensory or protective purpose or both.

As in other Arthropoda, the body of the spider is covered with a lifeless, chemically complex exoskeleton of chitin. The spider must shed this skin from time to time in order to allow for growth.

All female spiders lay eggs which are encased in a cocoon. Sometimes the cocoon is carried about with a lifeless, chemically complex exoskeleton of chitin. The spider must shed this skin from time to time in order to allow for growth.

The web is a complex structure, as variable as spiders themselves. It is composed of almost microscopic thread-like strands made from a liquid that exudes through the numerous tubes on the spinnerets. Upon coming into contact with the air, the liquid hardens into the strongest and most delicate thread known. The thread can be manipulated and spun in the same manner as silk. While it is still used for determining the focus of lenses on optical instruments and microscopes, it is too difficult to obtain in sufficient quantities for other commercial purposes.

The uses of the thread are many and diverse. One of the most interesting of its uses is its adaptations for aerial transportation. The "ballooning spiders" are those which climb upon fence posts, or out to the end of a branch where there is a current of air. When located, the spider turns its head toward the breeze and emits a droplet of liquid which is drawn into a thread by the current of air. When the thread is sufficiently long and the wind resistance against it is greater than the weight of the spider, the creature is lifted up and goes ballooning through the air, sometimes for hundreds of miles. Sometimes the smaller species may run quickly up a stem and rise immediately into the air as though they are winged. The familiar strands of gossamer also mentioned in the poem of the previous article which cling to ones face in summer and which may be seen floating through the air on sunny days are really the discarded "balloons" of some little spiders which have felt the urge of the wanderlust; and being unable to migrate over land because of the distance and dangers, they have taken to the air. These migrations may be observed especially in late summer and early fall.

If one of these spiders is placed on a stick and surrounded by water so that it cannot escape, its activity may be observed. At first it will run up and down the stick and investigate every possible means of escape. If the observer uses a fan and gently forces a draft of air on the stick the spider will run quickly to the top, poise there, and proceed immediately to spin a thread which will serve either
as a balloon by which it will be lifted into the air or the sticky thread will become attached to a nearby object and serve as a bridge over which the prisoner may escape.

Not infrequently the spider anchors itself with a thread before leaping so that it will not fall in much the same manner as a tinsmith ties a rope around his waist when he is repairing a steep sloping roof.

A group of spiders known as the Argiopeidae build their webs close to the ground. It often happens that nocturnal moths get caught momentarily in these webs. Finally the weight and struggles of the moth cause the web to fall to the ground. Undaunted the spider lowers himself on a strand and proceeds to swathe the moth in silken thread. The spider then ascends and reinforces its web and proceeds to raise the moth to its nest where it persistently binds the moth in the center of its web. Such feats of engineering skill may be observed by any persistent and interested observer or student.

Because our allotted space is more than filled we will complete next time, D.V., our discussion of the spider. We will discuss the interesting courtship of spiders and some of the important spider groups and their habits. A. Lubbers

The Impact of Christ's Coming

"Watchman, what of the night?"
". . . the morning cometh . . ."

And the coming of this Morning produced a strong impact upon the people of Christ's time. In fact, there were two exactly opposed results: one of great rejoicing and the other of intense fear.

The rejoicing began even before Christ's birth. At Mary's visit to Elizabeth, they both became prophetic and spoke of their great joy in anticipation of the birth of Christ, in anticipation of the deliverance of Israel. When Elizabeth heard Mary's salutation the babe John had leaped in her womb for joy.

On the very night of the birth, the angels were filled with joy. They came down to earth to sing the praises of God before the shepherds and tell them what had occurred. The shepherds hastened to see it and seeing, they believed, and believing they worshipped, rejoiced and testified to all the world, though they were representatives of men who were dead in the darkness of their sins, until the glory of the Lord shines round about them and they can see their sin and their need of a Saviour.

The wise men also felt the work of the Holy Spirit. They laid everything aside and undertook the hard, two-year journey only because they had seen a star and had been convinced that a King had been born. This Child caused worship and rejoicing in men who were perhaps totally unfamiliar with the Jews' expectation of the Messiah.

And in Israel herself, there was still an elect remnant which was looking forward to the Messiah's coming. Simeon was one of the few who was still "waiting for the consolation of Israel." When he saw the child it brough prophecy to his lips and he rejoiced that he should be allowed to see the salvation of the Lord. And there was Anna, the old prophetess, who also worshipped immediately when she saw Christ. She recognized Him, worshipped Him, and then went and testified of Him to all those who still were looking for "redemption in Jerusalem."

But on the other hand, the child Jesus was set for a sign that should be spoken against; that the thought of many hearts might be revealed.

And He was spoken against. That wicked Herod, when he heard about the birth of the Messiah, immediately set about to kill Him. He tried to make a situation so he would only have to kill the Christ child. But since the wise men didn't come back, Rachel was heard weeping in Ramah. He slaughtered the children of Bethlehem in a vain attempt to kill the Christ child. The wicked king was filled with intense fear because David's righteous Branch, who was to execute judgment and justice in the earth had become incarnate. And
not only was Herod troubled, but all Jerusalem with him.

There was no room for this Baby in the inn. To be sure, the people of Bethlehem didn’t know that Mary was coming, or that the Messiah was going to be born there. But do not rob it of its symbolism. They had no room for Jesus in the inn. Neither does anyone of us have room for Jesus in our hearts until He comes with his Holy Spirit and makes room for Himself.

Here we see the two opposing impacts: on the one hand were the elect remnant of God’s people, those who were waiting in eager anticipation of the day; on the other hand were the wicked, who were waiting in dread anticipation.

The attitude of the people of God in their eagerness can be seen in the song of Zacharias. They were looking for a Messiah who would deliver them from the hand of their enemies, fulfill the oath spoken to Abraham, and redeem them from their sins “through the tender mercy of our God.”

The wicked, in their dread, were expecting a warlike king who would begin a revolution and throw them from their power, and, much worse than that, put a stop to all their wickedness by destroying them. King Herod was scared to death because of this potential king, whom, he knew, the prophets had promised would scatter the enemy. Surely anyone, you might say, would at least have let the baby grow up and manifest himself before taking action, but so sure was Herod that this child was the Messiah and so evil was his conscience that he would kill all the children of Bethlehem rather than let the Christ grow up and become dangerous.

But Christ is dealt with in the same manner even today. The people of God experience great joy “by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of God.” But the wicked see in Christ the person who represents—no, who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” They will have none of Him because they are steeped in darkness, the lie, and death. They do not wish to be removed from it. Nor will they. But we have been. To be sure, we didn’t wish to be removed any more than those wicked but God in His compassion chose us, and sent His Son into the world, to die for us! And there is always this impact, either one way or the other. For God’s Word never returns to Him void!

Surely, these are “good tidings of great joy.”

**Jewish Rejection of Christ**

**Has Our Savior Come?**

During this Christmas season, our minds and hearts are filled with the joy that Christ our Savior has come in the flesh to redeem us from the curse of sin. However, with equal grief we hear the echoes of men, “Christ the Savior was never born.”

It is well known that Judaism denies the birth of our Savior. In view of this we were delegated to interview Rabbi Oscar Fleishaker, a Conservative, Orthodox Jew, to ascertain a personal approach to the beliefs of the Jews. To this end we visited the Rabbi and discussed with him his views concerning Jesus and Christmas.

Judaism is based on the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. They do not believe that the New Testament is divinely inspired. Their customs and mode of living stem back to the Old Testament for the most part.

We asked Rabbi Fleishaker whether or not the Jewish people celebrate Christmas. His answer was distinctly, “No.” They do not celebrate Christmas in any manner. When asked what he believed concerning Jesus of the Gospels, he explained that Jesus was a good teacher, a moral leader if you will, who more than likely spoke Hebrew and lived in the customs of all Judaism. He explained that Jesus was a son of God just as we are all sons of God. We placed before him Jesus’ miracles as a sign of His divinity. He explained that all miracles are merely a natural phenomena of nature. All what Christ did can be explained in terms of natural laws of
cause and effect. He further elucidated that the Old Testament miracles also fit under the above description. Jesus was not a Savior, for the Jews do not believe in the need of a Savior. Israel of the Old Testament was not a chosen people, but a choosing people who chose what they felt was best. They do not believe in a personal or individual Savior whatsoever. They believe that if a man performs good deeds, tries to live a good life with his neighbor, lives in accord with the Old Testament laws, he will fare well in the hereafter. The Jews do not speak of conversion, because there is nothing to be converted from, nor anyone who needs to be converted. They speak only of a rational being, choosing what he feels is right and in accord with the Old Testament and the will of God. He stated concisely, “God helps those who help themselves.” In this connection he pointed out that if a person lives in a serious life, no matter what religious conviction he may have, and tries to perform the requirements of that faith, he also does not have to fear the hereafter. Therefore the Jews do not believe in mission work.

The significance of Christ for Christianity is salvation and eternal life for His chosen people. Rabbi Fleishaker answered the question, “Do you believe that the Messiah predicted in the Old Testament will ever come?”, by saying that messiah is not a person, but a condition of the world. Messiah is a situation of world development when all men will love one another as brothers, no hatred will exist, no murder will endanger the lives of men, but all men will live as stipulated according to the will of God in the Old Testament. When this happens the Messiah will have come.

We asked Rabbi Fleishaker what happened to the souls of men after death. He replied, “I don’t know. Even as God takes care in putting them into the body so also he will care for them when they leave the body. The soul, even as the mind retains thoughts, continues to exist and live on forever.” Questioning further we asked whether he believed in a heaven or hell? His reply was that God’s mercy would never punish a person. He didn’t state what heaven would be like, but merely said that the souls of all men would continue after death. “We don’t have to worry about a heaven or hell for God will provide the place of eternal happiness.” He very really denied hell.

In the light of this interview, we may indeed give thanks to our covenant God who has put us in Christian homes and thus taught us the true Gospel of salvation. We have a hope, a sure hope, and that hope is eternal life of bliss, not of works lest any man should boast, but only in the blood of our faithful Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In Him alone we are heirs to a sure and promised hope of eternal bliss forever. May God hasten the day when all “nations, tribes, and tongues” will recognize Him as he has revealed Himself through his Son, Jesus Christ.

Dave Engelsma
Jay Kortering

News from Northwest Iowa and Minnesota

September 14 we held our first Choral society meeting of the new season. We are preparing for a Christmas program.

October 11, the Rev. G. Van Baren was ordained to the ministry at our Doon Church. Our Doon Young People’s society has again resumed meetings with their new pastor.

On the evening of October 31, the Prot. Ref. Young People’s societies of Doon and Hull sponsored a well attended Reformation Day Program. After an organ prelude by Iona Mantel, the Rev. J. A. Heys read Psalm 46 and opened with prayer. The audience then sang Psalter number 266 and “Faith of Our Fathers.” Then we were favored by a vocal solo by Sidney Stellinga. He sang “Into Thy Hands.”

The main number on the program was a Reformation speech by the Rev. G. Van Baren. Here is a short synopsis.
On October 31, 1517, one of the most significant events of the history of the world took place in Wittenberg, Germany, when an Augustinian monk nailed ninety-five theses on the door of the Cathedral, condemning the use of indulgences. This event marked the beginning of a revolution and reformation in which God delivered His people from the corruption of the church of that day. He called them out of the Romish Church that they might proclaim the pure word of God again.

This Reformation proceeds from two principles. The first: Justification by faith. Luther maintained that God alone saves His people through Jesus Christ, over against the Romish Church who maintained that one could be holy and upright by paying into the church treasury and by many other means and manners to have sin removed. The second: The authority of the Word of God. Scripture interprets itself.

The speaker called our attention to the latter. We maintain and believe that the word of God has authority to dictate. It has the legal right to dictate our conduct morally and spiritually. It has complete authority. God alone rules. His law is law over all the world. It is for us to listen only to God’s word. There is nothing above it.

From His Word proceeds the authorities of family, church, and government. None of these have authority of themselves. If they demand us to oppose Scripture, we must not obey them, but the word of God. It is an all comprehensive power. We must hear the word of God in all work, recreation, and choice of entertainment and friends. The basis of this authority of Scripture is that it is the Word of God. God directed and inspired the Bible, the written record. God is God. He has the authority and power. He alone speaks. We must recognize it upon hearing it.

The Romish church attempted to prevent its members to read the word of God, because they were afraid of it. Their excuse was that it was harmful and of no aid.

It also placed the authority of the Pope and church council above the word of God, and claimed that theirs was the word of God. If the people didn’t obey, they were put to death. Luther maintained the word of God. He found that the authority of the Pope and church council contradicted Scripture. Scripture agrees with and always interprets itself.

Luther emphasized that the Word of God was for the whole body of Christ and not only the Priest or Bishop. We are Prophets, Priests, and Kings, said Luther. It is not only profitable for us to read and study the word of God, but it is a necessity for us to do so.

We live in an age that is entirely ignorant of the Word of God. Even in our own midst, we do not look upon Scripture as valuable as it really is. We think we have too many other things to do.

In Luther’s day there were those who were willing to suffer and die in order to read the Word of God. Today we can freely do so. In the days of the Antichrist we will no longer be able to read and study it. This is all the more reason that we should do it now. Today it is evident that men would rather follow man’s word than God’s Word. They think their ministers know everything. We must see and faithfully study these things so we know for ourselves and recognize its authority.

God speaks and we must hear it. He reveals to us the truth over against the lie. He reveals the only way of salvation through Jesus Christ alone. There is nothing more precious and valuable to study. God speaks and we hear His Word through His grace, even in the face of all opposition.

After the speech, Harriet Hoksbergen played a piano solo entitled “The Holy City.” Then the congregation sang “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God” while an offering was received. The Rev. H. Veldman closed with prayer.

After the program, refreshments were served by the young people. The evening was well spent and enjoyed by young and old.

—Beverly Hoekstra, Reporter
he can use, and makes his touching appeals to the heart and the conscience of his auditors. Further, he recalls fugitive attention to neglected truths, and renews and deepens spiritual impressions by repetition of line upon line and precept upon precept. He reproves, rebukes, and exhorts, with all long-suffering and doctrine. Such methods as these, that the preacher uses in the service of the Gospel means that he who so serves must be well trained. Hence our Seminary has its proper place in the preparation of preachers. It is both a necessity, and a blessing. Will you plan to train at our school, if you want to study for the ministry?

The effect of regular and well-adapted instruction is great and beneficial to our churches, for him who is to prepare for the ministry, as well as for him who takes his place in the pew, from Sabbath to Sabbath. In this way, the Lord gathers His church, by the agency, in great part, of the pastoral office in its regular and quiet action. This is the Saviour’s plan. He hath instituted the office of pastor and teacher for the gathering of His Church. This Church is over the whole face of the globe, wherever He has provided a faithful preacher of Christ crucified — a preacher who is a vigilant pastor of the flock of God. Will you enlist in His service, under the banner of the Cross of Christ? May God so guide you and lead you into His service, if that be His will, and if you desire to be a minister of the Gospel.

James A. McCollam

GOD OUR ADVOCATE AND JUDGE

(Continued from page 4)

Be Thou my helper in the strife,
O Lord, my strong defender be;
Thy mighty shield protect my life,
Thy spear confront the enemy,
Amid the conflict, O my Lord,
Thy precious promise let me hear,
The faithful, reassuring word:
I am thy Saviour, do not fear.
Ashamed, confounded let them be
Who seek my ruin and disgrace;
O let Thy angel fight for me,
And drive my foes before his face.
Without a cause my life they sought,
Without a cause their plots they laid;
Themselves within their snares be caught,
And be my crafty foes dismayed.
My soul is joyful in the Lord,
In His salvation I rejoice;
To Him my heart will praise accord
And bless His Name with thankful voice.
For who, O Lord, is like to Thee,
Defender of the poor and meek?
The needy Thy salvation see
When mighty foes their ruin seek.
Unrighteous witnesses have stood
And told of crimes beyond belief;
Returning evil for my good,
They overwhelm my soul with grief.
When in affliction they were sad,
I wept and made their grief my own;
But in my trouble they are glad
And strive that I may be o’erthrown.
O Lord, how long wilt Thou delay?
My soul for Thy salvation waits;
And told of crimes beyond belief;
Returning evil for my good,
They overwhelm my soul with grief.
When in affliction they were sad,
I wept and made their grief my own;
But in my trouble they are glad
And strive that I may be o’erthrown.
O Lord, how long wilt Thou delay?
My soul for Thy salvation waits;
Amid the crowds that throng Thy gates.
Let not my enemies rejoice
And wrongfully exult o’er me;
They speak not peace, but lift their voice
To trouble those that peaceful be.

Psalm 35:1-7
NOTICE

To all secretaries of member Societies of the Federation:

Please send the name and address of the treasurer of your society along with your own name and address to the secretary of the Federation Board: Miss Ruth Dykstra, 439 Barth St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Please do not delay.

The Board needs this information now.
God's Way Out

A program based on the three divisions of the HEIDELBERG CATECHISM
to be given by the HOPE PROTESTANT REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

on

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

at

EIGHT P.M.

in

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