Easter Greetings
from the Staff of BEACON LIGHTS

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Man has a sense of values. His sense of values differs in kind from the sense of values, which is proper to the irrational creature, the animals. The natural man too has a sense of values which differs from both that of the animals and that of spiritual man. The natural man can only mind that which is earthly, sensual, devilish. The latter is not possible for an animal, and from this "diabolical," which characterizes the "natural" man, the spiritual man has been redeemed.

Hence, the spiritual man has a new sense of values. He deems all the works of law, and all his fleshly religiosity to be so much loss and dung for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, his Lord!

Wonderful sense of values. He has found the pearl of great price; riches untold is his singular and rare portion. It consists of all the spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.

Now we wish to call attention to these riches in Christ. In doing so, we wish to note that there is a difference between the riches, the pearls of the Kingdom, as revealed and experienced in the Old Testament when compared with the New Testament. The New Testament affords "better things" than does the Old Testament.

That is the subject of this essay.

Such is the "Keynote" of the entire epistle to the Hebrews!

Listen to the joyful, jubilant and exalted language of the writer from the very outset of the letter, in which we hear the clarion sound of "better things": "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past to the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds (ages)!

Hebrews 1:1, 2.

There you have it in a nutshell.

And what is here stated in one compact, central, all-embracing statement is further shown in its proper particulars in this entire epistle. Although we do not have a well-developed, detailed account of the typical, symbolical meaning of the Old Testament apparatus of the revelation of grace, we do have a very clear and succinct portrayal of the salient points in which the New Testament dispensation of grace is "better" than the Old Testament dispensation of the grace of God.
And the reason for this all is that the New Testament is the fulfilment of the Old Testament! The Glad-tidings of the gospel was first of all revealed by God Himself in paradise, afterwards proclaimed through patriarchs and prophets, portrayed by sacrifices and other ceremonies of the law, and lastly fulfilled in his well-beloved Son! See Question 19, Heid. Catechism.

First of all this Son is exceedingly exalted above all the angels of God. The latter never are called by the name of a "son." They are "ministering spirits," who must administer to the sons. And they must all worship the Son, as it is written, "And let all the angels of God worship him." Psalm 97:7, Hebrews 1:6.

He is the firstborn of all creatures, Col. 1:15, "and by him were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him." Col. 1:16. There is none as great as he He is the very brightness of the glory of God, the Father, the expressed image of his person, upholding all things by the word of his power, and who, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high! Heb. 1:3.

Secondly, this Son brings us into the "better country." Hebrews 11:16. This better country is the heavenly, which the patriarchs saw from afar and rejoiced in hope. Into this better country, Joshua the son of Nun, the Ephraimite, could not possibly bring Israel. Wherefore David spoke of a rest to come. Ps. 95:11.

Thirdly, Christ is the giver of "better" things than Moses. Moses was faithful in all the house of God. But he is not the Son. He is but a servant. The Son is the builder of the house of the Father, He prepares for us a place.

Fourthly, the Son is greater than Aaron. Aaron is a priest. However, his priesthood is not an abiding one. Personally Aaron perfected nothing. He did not bring Israel into the rest. Facts, he died on mount Hor without entering the promised, typical land. But Christ's priesthood is better. It does not depend on a birth from a priestly father, from the tribe of Levi, the house of Aaron, but is simply a priesthood by God's sovereign Decree. In the eternal Counsel and Decree of God the Son was appointed heir of all things, and this was his as the King-Priest after the order of Melchisedec. Psalm 110:4; Gen. 14:18 and Hebrews 7. He is a Lion of Judah's tribe, the preeminent Firstborn Son of God in the world!

Fifthly, he brings about a salvation as the "heir" in a "better" tabernacle. He did not labor in the tabernacle made with hands, the "worldly" sanctuary. He went with his blood into heaven itself. And this tabernacle is the real presence of God, seeing Him face to face, and knowing him as we are known! Hebrews 8.

Sixthly, he also brings a "better" sacrifice. He does not bear simply the bloods of goats and bulls, of oxen and sheep. He brings into the sanctuary the blood of the Son of God in our flesh, the perfect obedience, fulfilling all righteousness, so that now many too may receive for Christ's sake the forgiveness of sins, everlasting righteousness and eternal life! Hebrews 9.

And, lastly, he brings about and realizes a "better" covenant. It is not merely a covenant, written upon tables of stone. Such a covenant is the letter, which kills. It cannot give life. If there were a law given that could make alive, then the old covenant would need no improvement. It was only "good" in-as-far as it was a school-master to Christ. It did not of itself expiate sin on a lower level, and then point to a greater redemption to come. Such is not the nature of the "types and shadows." Nay it all wait.
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G. Lubbers.

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us:

Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8

for the "better covenant," written in the heart, where God would remember the sins no more! Hebrews 10.

Of these "better things" our pulpits always resound. However, especially during "Lent" this truth of "better things" is held before the eye of faith, strengthening us in the knowledge of the only foundation of our salvation.

Hence, this is not a time of penance, keeping of days, years, sabbaths. It is a time to see what God hath wrought on the Cross for us, according to His sovereign good pleasure, and what He also certainly will perform in and through us.

We are living in the dispensation of "better things."

Let us properly evaluate by the power of faith through the Holy Spirit.

G. Lubbers.
Billy was a little tot of 4 years old. His mother was busily working in the kitchen as he contentedly sat in his favorite chair in the den. He sat very still for he knew mother would chase him out if she discovered his presence. As he sat there, his eyes lit upon the cigarette stand. There were all the cigarettes in neat file arrangement, and behold, a box of matches. What an idea! Carefully he reached over the arm of the big chair and settled down to a new adventure. How strange the smell, what a smooth feeling. Billy struck the match, and put the cigarette in his mouth. He blew and blew, but it wouldn't light. Before long the fire reached over the arm of the big chair and jumped from the chair. Screaming he ran to mama and quickly she tore to the scene. The fire was small, but nevertheless it ruined the chair. In dismay she asked Billy, "Why did you do this?" Billy still whimpering from fright replied, "Daddy does."

Children are not the only ones who imitate. Young people, adults, and the aged as well act as others do. No one wants to be unique in his action. We all find it easiest to go along with the crowd and act like the rest of the gang. Rugged individualism was alright for the pioneers, but we young people of the twentieth century don't care to be a "wall flower."

What does it mean to imitate? To imitate means to act like someone else. The Greek verb from which our English verb "mimic" is derived portrays to us the idea of imitation. Greek drama is notorious for its productions of skill and accuracy. The actors would entail great pains in producing the effect of a living resemblance of those whom they acted. From this setting we can conclude that imitation consists of doing one's all to appear like the one we imitate. It consists of sincerity and diligence, of constant association with those whom we imitate, and a willingness to deny oneself in the stead of the one imitated.

You may well ask, what has this to do with me? We are all imitators, so what? Permit me to quote from Scripture, Ephesians 5:1, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." This imitation, as the highest calling of every child of God, should stimulate our thoughts and cause every one of us to shudder. Imitation of God? How is it possible?

But there is more. I Corinthians 11:1, "Be ye imitators of me even as I also am of Christ." Here we have a two-fold imitation revealed, first of Christ, second of Paul. We are exhorted further in I Peter 3:13, "Who is he that will harm you if you be imitators of that which is good?" Therefore we are commanded in Scripture to be imitators of God, of Christ, of the saints, of that which is good. Negatively, it excludes all which would hinder us from the fullest imitation of that which is good. It includes the truth that God has revealed unto us. It includes walking according to the new man which is after Christ Jesus. This walk is comprised of a sincere and diligent desire to walk according to the precepts of God, the example of Christ our Savior, and the struggle of every born again saint throughout the ages. It includes an earnest attempt to

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The methods which the labor unions of America have used in order to accomplish their aims are in direct violation of the fifth commandment. This commandment speaks of obedience of children to father and mother. "Honor thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." And it is interpreted by the Heidelberg Catechism as teaching that we must have respect for all those who are in authority over us.

All authority is from God. He alone has all authority in His hands because He has created all things and continues to uphold and guide them in such a way that they must be infallibly led to achieve His purpose. He has created various relationships of life in which the relation of authority and obedience are present. And the right to rule which those in authority possess is given them alone from God. The basic relationship is the family. God has so instituted the family so that in the bringing forth of the people of this earth there will be parent-children relations. And the parents are given authority by God while children are commanded to obey their parents as those in authority for God's sake. Children obey their parents, and in this way obey their God and Creator. To disobey parents is to disobey God. Parents rule their children in the consciousness that they rule for God's sake, and that the authority which they possess is from their Creator. From the institution of the family, all the other relationships of life arise. The government is an outgrowth of the family, because families expanded into clans, then tribes, then nations. And the father was head, chieftain and ruler. But the ruler-citizen relation is rooted in the parent-children relation. And the former is a relation of authority and obedience because the latter is. So also in the school which is and should be an extension of the home. The teacher-pupil relation is present because parents have committed the training of their children to teachers in organized schools. And the employer-employee relationship is a development of the relation between the father of the family, who was master, and the servants, who were subjects. When economics were comparatively simple, and families were not dependent on others for the necessities of life, this was all that existed. But when this relationship no longer was sufficient to live in a complex and modern economy, and when the various families were dependent upon each other, then fathers started hiring others to work for them, and the result was that the relation between employer and employee came about.

But because the relation between the boss and his help is an outgrowth and development of the fundamental relation of the family, so also God has invested the employer with authority and commands the employee to obey and respect his employer for God's sake. Always this relation exists, and it remains the calling of those who work for others to recognize this authority and not to take it as their own. Or, as the Catechism expresses
it: the requirement of the fifth commandment is "that I show all honor, love and fidelity to my father and mother, and all in authority over me, and submit myself to their good instruction and correction, with due obedience; and also patiently bear with their weaknesses and infirmities, since it pleases God to govern us by their hand."

This authority with which the employer is vested extends only to the sphere of labor. He may not exercise his authority in the home, in the state or in the church. His authority is given him by God to use only in relation to those whom God has placed under him as his help. But this authority is nevertheless very real. To disobey one's boss is to disobey God, for an employee refuses to recognize authority which God has given.

For this principle of authority, the unions have no use whatsoever. They refuse to acknowledge the fact that God has placed the employer over them and vested him with authority from heaven whether or not he abuses that authority in any way. They openly flaunt the right to rule with which management is vested.

The main weapon which is used in the battle of the freedom of labor is the strike. The strike is a unified effort on the part of labor in a particular factory or industry according to which all the workers refuse to work on their jobs while still retaining the right to hold them. When they begin work in a particular factory or for a particular boss, they agree to a contract that they will use their effort and strength to do what the boss wishes for a stipulated wage. But when they strike then they refuse to do the work for which they have hired themselves, but refuse also to allow anyone else to do the work. They claim a right to their place in the factory but refuse to fill their place at the bench or press. And thus they prevent the owner from performing the work he has contracted to do, so that he is helpless to fulfill his obligations and make the money he needs. And in the highly competitive system of capitalism, a prolonged strike can do irreparable damage.

Closely connected with the strike is the boycott by which a certain union may prevent supplies from being shipped to a factory, or the finished product from being shipped away. The Teamsters, who control much of the transportation in America can thus succeed in shutting down an industry at will. For a factory can not continue to operate without the materials to do its work; nor is it possible to continue production if the manufactured goods cannot be shipped to market. In the interrelated system of capitalism, each industry is dependent upon others, and the unions use this to their own advantage. To enforce their strikes and boycotts, they throw up picket lines the members of which often resort to violence and malicious destruction of property to protect their jobs or to prevent the industry from working without them. And so, by mass protest, they succeed in gaining their objectives.

The union without the strike is impotent. The organization without the boycott is helpless. And so these two potent weapons become the core and heart of the principles and actions of the labor unions. By means of them they succeed in forcing their demands upon their employer, and they flaunt the authority which is invested by God in their bosses. They use violence and coercion to accomplish their ends, and they set themselves up as authorities repudiating all right of anyone to rule over them.

Any man has the right to quit his job if he feels that he is treated unjustly. But ho has not the right to refrain from working and still claim his place at the bench or lathe. On all these counts the union stands condemned. Its structure, its principles, its motives, its actions all stand

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TRUTH VS. ERROR

FELLOWSHIP IN CONTRARY DOCTRINES

(Continued)

Last month we raised three questions in connection with our attempt to determine the truth and error of II John 10. You will recall that this passage reads as follows:

“If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed; for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

The three questions we raised were:
1. What is meant by “this doctrine?”
2. What does the phrase, “to receive one into your house” imply?
3. What is the connection or relation between this and “bidding one God speed?” Let us consider this passage further in the present essay.

For a correct understanding of this passage we must first remember that the apostle is here warning the elect lady and her children, whom he loves in the truth, to beware of false teachers. In verse 7 he warns that “many deceivers are entered into the world” and further that “they confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh.” Now Scripture in general is very emphatic in its condemnation of these deceiving antichrists and solemnly warns the church to be on her guard against them. It speaks of them as “men of cunning craftiness who lie in wait to deceive” (Eph. 4:14), “those that trouble you” (Gal. 5:12), “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ” (II Cor. 11:13), “wolves in sheep’s clothes” (Matt. 7:15), “false prophets and teachers who privily bring in damnable heresies” (II Pet. 2:1), etc. Beware of them for “they are deceivers and antichrists” (II John 7) who seek the destruction of the soul even though outwardly one would be inclined to judge them as pious, friendly and real nice people.

In connection, therefore, with the “doctrine” of which John speaks, it may be observed in general that he speaks of the “truth” as opposed to the “lying deception” and “error” of these deceivers. More specifically, however, John speaks in verse 9 of “the doctrine of Christ.” Two interpretations of this phrase are possible. It may denote the doctrine concerning Christ, the truth regarding Christ as revealed in His Names, Natures, Offices and States. Dogmatically speaking this is denoted as “Christ-ology.” The expression, “doctrine of Christ,” however, may also mean the doctrine that is received from Christ and then it denotes all the truth in distinction from the lie that has its origin in the father of the lie, the Devil himself. Essentially it makes little difference which of these two we adopt although the latter has preference because of what follows in verse 9. John also writes: “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.” (vs. 9)

Consequently, young people, let us especially be impressed with the seriousness of this matter. It is not a question of church-affiliation, of belonging to this or that church, of minor or irrelevant differences, of theological opinion, etc. Those who speak of these things in those
tones have the real earmark of deceivers. Rather notice that according to this passage this matter concerns our "having or not having GOD," that is, it concerns the true knowledge of God which according to John 17:3 is "life eternal." It is a matter of "walking in the truth" (II John 4). If we receive those into our houses who bring not this doctrine, we lose God. If we wish them God-speed, which means that we extend to them the blessing of God in their evil way, we become partakers of their evil deeds and the same judgment of God befalls both of us.

To teach and advocate the way of error is a very evil thing. The lie is of the devil and to promote it or to render assistance in any way to those who maintain the lie is to put one's self into the service of the Evil One. We are to have no fellowship with them who are engaged in the unfruitful works of darkness. To do so is to alienate ourselves from God and make ourselves friends of Satan. Our calling to maintain the truth in Christ necessitates that we admonish and rebuke those who bring other doctrines and refuse to walk with them in the way of error.

The question arises as to what extent this is to be carried? Those there are who take a very broad view of this matter. To them it means that as long as one maintains the so-called "fundamentals" of the christian faith, we can and should have fellowship together. Thus, for example, those who deny the Trinity, the atonement of Christ, the resurrection, etc. cannot be our friends but we can have fellowship with those who believe these "fundamental truths" even though they do not agree with us on such things as Election and Reprobation, the Gospel, Total Depravity, the Doctrine of Grace and Preservation, etc. It is frequently argued that no church has all the truth but that many churches have parts (remnants, elements) of the truth and therefore, room must be left for interfellowship among the fundamentalists. In fact, it is claimed that by taking some good out of all the various churches one arrives at the whole truth.

This is more of the same subtle deception that always characterizes the preachers of lies. It is certainly not according to Scripture and by it we must not be deceived. Scripture shows that Christ reveals to us the full counsel of God in His Word and not simply certain "fundamentals." To remain in the doctrine of Christ (and thus to have God) means that this revelation must be maintained in its entirety and, in the words of our Confession: "It doth thereby evidently appear that the doctrine thereof (of the Word of God) is most perfect and complete in all respects," (Art. 7). Further, the doctrine of Christ is One,—a perfect Unity. We cannot maintain part of it and deny other parts thereof. We can't take what we like of it and discard the rest. We may not impose our own interpretation upon parts of it, contradicting, denying and distorting other parts of it. That won't do.

All this brings us before the serious fact that is borne out by all of history that, namely, when one element of falsehood is injected into the doctrine of Christ (truth), we have the beginning of the ultimate denial of the whole system of truth. Error is not something dormant. It eats as a cancer till the live tissue is destroyed. Just as there is a positive line of the development of the truth in God's church, so there is a negative line of development of error in apostasy that culminates in the formation of the false church. Don't be oblivious of all this. Beware of all error! Fight it! Stand firmly in defense of the Truth and have no fellowship with error! Refuse compromise! You may lose friends on account of it but what of it? Didn't Christ
tell you it would be so? Rebuке all error sharply! Admonish severely those who perpetrate it! Such is your calling! Yes, your privilege!

And finally, we should also see that any departure from the truth is in essence, fundamentally a denial of the whole truth. Space forbids elaborate comment on this but we will cite 1924. Young people, how many of you understand that “a well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God to all men without distinction” is in essence a denial of:

Total Depravity
Unconditional Predestination
Limited atonement
Irresistible grace
Preservation of the saints.

Discuss this question sometime in your Society! It’s necessary and will be beneficial, I’m sure. We must, however, stop here now but next time we wish to draw some practical conclusions about his whole matter!

G. Vanden Berg

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 4)

know the ones whom we imitate. We need but look into our own sinful self to see how worthless we are to try to imitate. We cannot imitate of ourselves, for of ourselves we are one with the world and imitate mammon. But God sent His Son to die for us that through the power of His atonement we might have salvation, through His resurrection we are justified, and ascending into heaven he sent forth His Spirit so that we might have the greatest power of all times: the power of God Himself. With His Spirit we are more than conquerors. We now have the power to imitate and reflect the good which is in us. We have the power to walk as Christ has walked. Oh, not perfectly, for we still are in our body of this death, but in principle. With this power of God unto salvation, we can with sincere desire seek to follow Christ and His church. This means that we are different from all those who walk according to the flesh. Since we do not imitate the world, but Christ, we can’t possibly act like them. Both the world and Christ cannot be served for it is written in Luke 16:13, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon.” Our imitation is unique. Many of our neighbors do not have this power, hence they walk after the imitation of mammon. We need but bring to mind the influence of Hollywood on our own culture; style of clothes, manners of wearing hair, immoralities, and base deceits. Not only Hollywood, but also our neighbors, friends, and associates, all influence our culture. Every day we live in this culture which is a composite of motives which seek to annul the very possibility of the existence of God. Men seek to boast of their ability to prove that the Bible is foolishness. In this milieu it is significant for us to stand guard against these devilish philosophies and by God’s grace stand firm on the Revelation of God and thus be faithful imitators of Him.

This consecrated life of the antithesis demands a life of prayer. How important it is for us to live in close communion with Him whom we imitate. While daily talking with Him, we receive strength to continue in this battle. With this strength we may have the assurance that our imitation is a fruit of the work that He has wrought in us, and with His grace we also bring a testimony to the world that we have been with Jesus. You cannot have that inner work of the Spirit without the external evidence of imitation. “Faith without works is dead.”

J. K.
Forsaking his tent in the sky,
Arrayed as a bridegroom, the sun
Comes joying in his glorious strength
Rejoicing his circuit to run.

He tells through the length of the heavens
His Maker's great wisdom and might,
And nothing in all of the earth
Is hid from his heat and his light.

The sun is appropriately described by one author as the Powerhouse of the Solar System. It is also appropriately described in the above verses quoted from the versification of the 19th Psalm. How true it is that he, the sun, tells his maker's great wisdom and might through the length of the heavens and that nothing is hid from the heat and light just as nothing is hid from the light of God's face.

It is interesting to note that the sun which is the center of the great solar system of which each of us is so dependently a part, has several interesting and important characteristics.

As to its composition, it is believed by most students of the sky to be a huge ball of incandescent gas. The diameter or distance through the sun is about 865,000 miles. This is 109 times the diameter of the earth and 400 times the diameter of the moon. The reason the sun and moon appear to be about equal in size is because the moon is so much nearer to the earth. The sun is 93,000,000 miles from the earth while the moon is only some 240,000 terrestrial miles from the earth.

When we look at the sun through dark or colored glass we will sometimes see dark patches on the surface of the sun. These dark patches on the sun are known as sunspots. The enormous spots on the sun are reallystorms which resemble enormous tornadoes. They look much like a tornado would to a man flying in an airplane above a tornado. These storms or sunspots are believed to send out electrified particles which cause the northern lights and magnetic storms which generally affect radio and television reception.

The earth receives a very small part of the energy of the sun which is radiated out into space. It is estimated in fact that the earth receives only one two-billionth part of the heat given off by the sun. It is this so-called little trickle of solar energy that is responsible for all the activity of the earth. Without this energy precipitation should cease. Without this energy the process of photosynthesis (process by which green plants make food) would come to an end. Without the energy radiated out by the sun, radio and television would become impossible. In short the truth of the matter is that without the energy which the sun creates all life would become impossible. It should be noticed in this connection that our God who created all things did so very wisely and discreetly. It should not escape our attention that his first creature of the creation week was light. After he had created this light he then proceeded to create those other creatures which were so dependent on the light which he had originally created.

Every year the sun's heat evaporates 480,000,000 tons of water from the oceans and streams. It lifts the vapor up into clouds a mile or so high where it con...
denses in the form of rain, snow, hail, or sleet. This moisture then falls making all vegetation possible and releasing millions of horsepower from flowing streams and waterfalls.

Furthermore the ultraviolet rays falling on the top of the atmosphere highly electrify, or ionize (i.e. render or become conducting) the atmospheric molecules. In doing this they provide an electrical ceiling from which long distance radio waves are reflected to the earth. This makes radio communication a very real possibility.

Magnetic changes take place in the earth when spots break out on the sun. Compass needles become unsteady and sometimes wander a degree or more from their normal position during one of these magnetic storms.

It is interesting to notice in this connection that most of the ultraviolet from the sun is absorbed by a layer of ozone in the atmosphere about twenty-five miles high. If this did not happen we should all be fatally sunburned. On the other hand, the ozone layer is just thick enough so that a small amount of ultraviolet sunshine comes through to the earth. This ultraviolet light gives us the vitamin D in our foods and bodies which is so necessary for health. If the ozone layer were a little thicker, these health giving rays of the sun would be shut off the earth. We should all die of rickets unless Vitamin D were supplied artificially.

The sun is important to the earth and has resulted in many superstitions for pagans and unbelievers. Primitive pagans regarded the sun as a god which was worshipped with a great deal of show and ceremony. To the pagan Greeks the sun was a fiery chariot which Apollo drove across the sky each day. Relics of sun temples can be found in most of the Oriental countries, and in South America. These all indicate that the pagans ascribe great significance to the movements of the sun.

But we believe in God and we ascribe to him all glory and honor for having in this way blessed and provided for us. We confess again with the psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork."

Besides the earth there are the eight other planets, the asteroids, a number of comets and numberless meteoroids. The nine planets were so-called by the Greeks because they were "stars" that wandered and changed their position in the heavens with relation to the stars. The Greeks did not realize that the planets were not stars at all but were merely nonluminous bodies which were satellites of the sun.

The planets were given the names of the Greek gods and their names follow in the order of their distance from the sun. Mercury, Venus, The Earth, Mars, The Asteroids, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.

We will discuss each of the preceding very briefly and thus conclude our study of the Solar System.

Mercury is the smallest of the planets and is closest to the sun. It is very seldom seen as a "star" and then only for a brief interval before sunrise or just after sunset. Its orbit seems very eccentric and irregular and revolves around the sun once in 88 days.

Venus is the brightest of all the planets. When the planet Venus is visible it appears as the morning or evening star and is the most brilliant and beautiful of stars. It makes one revolution around the sun in 225 days or 7½ months. The orbits of Venus and Mercury lie between the earth and the sun; therefore they pass through phases like the moon and when passing between the earth and the sun, they appear to be going backward or retrograding in the heavens. Neither planet has satellites.

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The Necessity of Home Missions in Our Day

In writing about a subject like this, it seems proper and fitting that before we discuss the subject itself, we should first have in mind some of the fundamental teachings of Scripture, and our Confessions that may apply here.

First, let us remember that which we believe concerning the holy catholic church of Christ, namely “That the Son of God, from the beginning to the end of the world, gathers, defends and preserves to himself by his spirit and word out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life.” Let us note that it is not the missionary that does the gathering, be he ever so diligent in his work. Secondly, we are to also notice what we learn from our Heidelberg Catechism, that the Holy Ghost works faith in our hearts by the preaching of the gospel. Here too, the preacher is the servant and administers means by which God works the faith, and God remains the only giver.

We may not conclude from the above, however, that missionaries and preachers are not necessary in our churches for Paul explains this mystery in Romans 10:14, 15 and 17, “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach except they be sent? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” Also, II Cor. 5, “We are ambassadors, therefore, in behalf of Christ, as though God were entreating by us; we beseech you on behalf of Christ, be ye reconciled to God.”

With these fundamental principles in mind we may discuss further why it is necessary that the church of Jesus Christ have home missions in our present modern world.

The origin and purpose of such missions date back to the days of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he commanded his apostles, and in them all lawful ministers of the word: “Go ye unto all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” With this command in mind, we notice how Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, went out to all corners of the earth to preach the glad tidings. After he had laid the foundations, he had helpers, ministers and teachers that nourished the congregations the Lord had given him.

In the more recent history of the Church, in the days of the reformation, mission work by the church became an extreme necessity. The task also was very difficult because of the political upheaval that resulted from the reformation. We know that western Europe was divided into many political units whose rulers often denied the reformers a place in their domain. The church was persecuted and often the sheep were dispersed. Our fathers saw the need for missionaries, and the church provided for this need. However, the church insisted that to keep the doctrine pure and keep the false prophets from destroying the flock, that the ministers who went out to preach be sent and duly called by the church. A study of the Protestant Reformed Church Order will show that several articles therein became a part thereof for the very reason that many were preaching to dispersed Christians who had no church affiliation.

We may all agree that the necessity of mission work in the early days of the Church, and in the days of the reformation is quite obvious; however, times have changed. In this modern day and age everyone hears the gospel proclaimed. There certainly is no place in our land where Christians are persecuted and dispersed. Surely the devil and all his hosts...
have not become tired and finally given up the struggle! Have the forces of the evil one not become more cunning? Have they not devised new methods to catch, with the same result, to lead to destruction? Hardly a day goes by but we hear of a merger being proposed for two separate church denominations. This amalgamation of churches usually destroys the confessions of either one or both; at the most, confessions become a common thing. If the confessions are not destroyed, they are abbreviated under the name of revision. Some may even keep the confession, but by wisdom of words and cunning distortion, they teach contrary thereto and become false prophets who rob the people of God of their comfort.

In all this the people of God are being persecuted and dispersed. They cannot like this denial of the truth. They seek to escape from it, and often find no place to go. Some in their desperation, fall to the fundamentalists, and become lost to the eye and ear of the church. Did not Elias make intercession to God against Israel saying: "Lord they have killed thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith God to him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace."

May we not conclude that mission work is a necessity in our day? We may be sure that because of all the efforts to confuse the people of God, it is not an easy task to be home missionary and gather the sheep under these circumstances. Here lies one of the difficulties; that those who have been dispersed, are not always sure of what the Reformed truth is. This writer can testify to this, because on numerous occasions while visiting with the missionary at the home of these dispersed people, it has been necessary for the missionary to show that their present minister, whom they thought to be orthodox, is really a fundamentalist and arminian. Further, such peoples do no longer know what the old confessions taught since they were sure that their present minister was honestly expounding them. After digging them out of the old trunk in the basement and reading them again for the first time in years, it brings to memory what they had learned in Catechism years before. This all demonstrates the pressing need for home missionary labors, though they be ever so difficult.

May what we have here tried to write serve to inform our covenant youth of the necessity of prayer and pray the Lord of seed-time as well as harvest for his blessing.

He alone is able.

Reuben Schwarz

NATURE STUDY

(Continued from page 11)

The Earth, our planet, is the third from the sun, and is the "grand stand" from which we view the stars, its bulk conveniently cutting off the strong light of the sun at night and thus permitting us to see the light of stars. Its daily rotation on its axis causes the apparent daily motion of stars through the heavens from east to west, and the phenomena of day and night. It makes one revolution around the sun in 365 ⁷⁄₄ days or one year. This yearly journey combined with the 23 ⁷⁄₈ degree tilt of its axis toward the North Star, Polaris, or as it is known to astronomers, Alpha Ursae Minoris, causes the changes in the seasons and the varying length of day and night.

We here pause our discussion of the Solar System, and, if the Lord will, we will continue our discussion in the next issue.

A. Lubbers
The word, Easter, is only mentioned once in the King James Version of our Bible, (in Acts 12:4) and this is an incorrect translation of the original Greek. In the Revised Version and also in the new Revised Standard Version the word, "Passover," is used instead of Easter, which is the correct rendering of the text. Also in the Holland translation the word, Pascha, meaning passover, is used. There is a significant link between the Jewish Passover and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus because our Saviour did actually die and rise again during the days of the Passover feast. It is also symbolic because the lamb that had to be sacrificed for the deliverance of Israel is considered as prophetic of Him who is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world (John 1:29). Thus the name and meaning of the Hebrew Pesach was devoutly accepted into the Christian liturgy by the early Church, which considered the annual celebration of Christ’s death and resurrection as the greatest and most important festive days of the whole year. According to the historians of the second century, A.D., the Pasch holiday was celebrated around March 23 and was not preceded by the forty days of Lent. Even today the annual celebration of Christ’s resurrection is called Pasch by most nations: Greeks and Romanians (Pascha), Italians (Pasqua), Spaniards and Portuguese (Pascua), French (Paque), Norwegians (Paskir), Danes (Paaske), Gaels (casc), and the Dutch (Paschen). This word is taken from the Greek (and Latin) word “pascha” which comes from the Hebrew word “pesach,” meaning Passover.

The English term, “Easter” and the German word “Ostern” have a pagan origin and meaning. It comes from Eostre, an ancient Anglo Saxon goddess who represented light or spring. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honor, to the Norsemen, Easter meant the season of the rising (growing) sun. Also the ancient Assyrians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans held annual feasts, preceded by six weeks of fasting in the spring season, to their respective pagan sun gods and their idols of fertility. Hence the prefix of the word, EAST-ER, refers to the rising sun in the east and to the sun gods of the eastern countries. The Romish Church, already deeply apostatizing in the tenth century A.D., transferred the pagan meaning of Easter to the new life of the Risen Christ, the eternal and uncreated light, and fixed the date of Easter on the first Sunday after the first full moon on or after the vernal equinox, March 21, the exact date of many of the above mentioned pagan feasts, preceded by the six weeks of Lent or fasting, in order to persuade the Pagans to nominal Christianity, thus making the Church a big and powerful organization on this earth. Thus again we see the apostatizing church amalgamating with the world and making its people do something of themselves for their salvation, in order to make the Church big and strong in this world.

Virtually all of the present day customs observed at Easter are of pagan origin. The false church simply makes the rising sun a symbol for the Risen Lord. Easter eggs and bunnies and chicks are supposed to represent new life, fertility, and abundance. In many heathen lands, in ancient times as well as the present, people dyed eggs in various colors and ate them at their feasts to honor their pagan idols. The Romish Church adopted the Easter egg and consecrated it as a symbol of Christ’s resurrection. A form of prayer...
was even appointed to be used in connection with it. Pope Paul V even taught his subjects to pray, "Bless O Lord, we beseech Thee, this Thy creature of eggs, that it may become a wholesome sustenance unto Thy servants, eating it in remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ."
The role of the Easter bunny, as the producer of Easter eggs for the children, is purely legendary. Also the pig, of which the traditional Easter ham is a part, was and is always considered a symbol of good luck and prosperity. This is also the reason why people sometimes wear little figures of pigs as good luck charms and why children put their pennies, nickels, and dimes into piggy banks.

As the earth is renewed with a new garb of vegetation in the springtime, so also the displaying of Easter lilies, and the wearing and showing off of new Easter clothing was made to symbolize the new life that the Lord through His resurrection bestowed upon all believers. This custom became widespread during medieval times; in many places a popular superstition threatened with ill luck all those who could afford to buy new clothes for Easter Sunday, but refused to do so. Even today this custom is faithfully practiced. Why is it that almost everybody attends a sunrise service or attends some church service on Easter morning? Is this done to glorify the Risen Lord or to show off and gossip about one another's new Easter bonnet?

To my mind the latter is true because so-called Christians always need something more than the simple preaching of the Word in order to attract them to attend a church service. In fact many of these same people (even some of the ministers themselves) deny Christ's bodily resurrection as did the unbelieving Jews of old (Matthew 27:62-66; 28:2-4, 11-15). It would be far better if they would join New York's Easter Parade on Fifth Ave., than to crowd out the Risen Christ by converting God's house into a style show.

Yes indeed, in the Old Dispensation, carnal Israel changed the glory of God into an image of a golden calf. (Exodus 32:1-4; 1 Kings 12:26-33). In the New Dispensation, the very term Easter and its pagan customs loudly proclaim that the false; apostate, anti-christian modernistic churches change the glory of the incorruptible Risen Lord to an image like unto the rising EASTER(N) sun that eventually sets again in the west; to corruptible images like unto perishable eggs, from which issue forth living creatures of all kinds which must die again; to corruptible images of flowers, herbs, grass, and trees of the springtime which soon, wither away under the blazing heat of the summer sun and the biting frosts and winds of the autumn and winter seasons which surely follow in their respective order; to corruptible images of new clothing which soon wear out, fade become moth eaten and out of style. (Romans 1:23, 25). And let us as Protestant Reformed Young People be not conformed to these pagan anti-christian Easter customs, but rather detest the same as the very works of the devil and his servants, who always seek ways and means to destroy the Church of Christ, and proclaim the following to a dying church in a wicked world.

He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me Along life's narrow way.

He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives? You live within my heart.

Seymour Beiboer
Thomas à Kempis was born in Kempen (40 miles northwest of Cologne) in 1380 and died near Zwolle (52 miles east northeast of Amsterdam in 1471). His paternal name was Hemerken or Hammerlein, "little hammer" (name given to him as a church father who rules and instructs others under paternal rule). Thomas was sent to school at Deventer conducted by the Brethren of the Common Life. He became skillful as a copyist and was thus able to support himself. Later he was admitted to the Augustinan convent of Mount Saint Agnes near Zwolle, where his brother John had been before him and had risen to the dignity of prior. Thomas received priest's orders in 1413 and was made subprior in 1429. According to the writings he spent his life in quietness, except for a time when the house was disturbed in consequence of the pope's rejection of the bishop-elect of Utrecht, Rudolph of Duphalt. Here we can see that there are always some disturbers and their number will increase till the end of time. The time that Thomas spent was divided between devotional exercise and composition copying. He copied the Bible no less than four times, one of the copies is preserved at Darmstadt in five volumes. His teachings were widely read and his works abound in Biblical quotations, especially from the New Testament.

Thomas à Kempis was a German mystic and author of Imitation of Christ. His life was characterized as a man who sought quiet in all things and found it only in books. Thomas à Kempis belonged to the school of mystics who were scattered along the Rhine from Switzerland to Strassburg, Cologne and in the Netherlands. He was a follower of Geert Groote and Florentine Rodewijns, the founders of the Brethren of Common Life. His writings are all of devotional character and include tracts, meditations, letters, sermons, a life of St. Lydefigis, (the story of a christian woman who remains steadfast under a great stress of afflications), and biographies of Groote, Rodewijns and nine of their companions. Works similar in content to the Imitation of Christ and pervaded by the same spirit are his prolonged meditations on the life and blessings of the Savior and another on the Incarnation. Both of these works overflow with adoration of Christ.

The book, Imitation of Christ was the work which has given Thomas à Kempis universal fame in the western churches. It is the pearl of all the writings of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and with the Confessions of Augustine and Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress it occupies a front rank among useful manuals of devotion, after the Bible. Protestants and Roman Catholics alike join in giving it praise. The Jesuits give it an official place among their "exercises." Some men put it among the work that influenced them at their conversions. General Gordon carried it with him to the battlefield. The number of counted editions exceeds 2000, and 1000 different editions are preserved in the British Museum. The work of this book is a manual of devotion intended to help in communion with God and the pursuit of holiness. Its sentences are statements, not arguments, and are pitched in the highest key of Christian experience. It was meant for monastics and recluses. Behind and within runs all its reflections the council of self-renunciation. The book gives counsel to read the Scriptures. The life of Christ is presented as the highest study possible to a mortal. They have statements about warnings and agains'
temptation and how to resist it, reflections about death and the judgment, meditation upon the oblation of Christ, and admonitions to flee the vanities of the world. Christ himself is more than all the wisdom of the schools and lifts the mind to perceive more of eternal truth in a moment of time than a student might learn in the schools in ten years. Excellent as these counsels are, especially adapted for souls burdened with care, sorrow, and sitting in darkness; they present only one side of the Christian life, and in order to compass the whole of it they must be supplemented by counsels of integrity. The charge has been made that the piety commanded by the imitation is of a selfish monkish type. It was written by a monk and intended for the convent; it lays stress on the passive qualities and does not touch with firmness the string of active service in the world. That which makes it acceptable to all Christians is the supreme stress it lays upon Christ and the immediate communion with Him and God. Thomas a Kempis exalts Mary as the queen of heaven, the efficient mediatress of sinners, and advises that all should flee to her as to a mother. He also gives prayers to Mary.

There has been much dispute about the authorship The Imitation of Christ. Some say that not Thomas a Kempis wrote this book but that the possibility could be that others wrote this book. Several names are mentioned. To some extent, national sentiments have entered into this controversy which has been waged for 300 years. Some claim that Gerson was the author; they based their claims upon editions and manuscripts made before 1500 bearing his name and also of Gerson's style and mystical temper of thought. But after close examination they claim Gerson in his judgment would have required the endowment of a wholly new tongue to write the book and the author of his own statement was a monk and Gerson was not a monk, and after further examination, they have come to the decision that Thomas à Kempis was the author. This agrees with the time, style, and content of his writings. Also Jan Busch in his Chronicon Windishemense written 1464, seven years before the death of Thomas à Kempis, expressly states that he wrote the imitation.

We see all kinds of belief and doctrine and most certainly Scripture does not teach us to pray to Mary, the mother of Jesus, but Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Our Father Which Art in Heaven," etc. No wonder that Paul writes in Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness whereby they lie in wait to deceive: Let therefore the word of God speak only."

Henrietta Brands

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CHRISTIAN LIVING

(Continued from page 6)

quite contrary to the fifth commandment. And underlying it all is a refusal on the part of wicked man to recognize that the Lord is Sovereign over all things,

H. Hanko
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