"He commandeth and raiseth the stormy wind..." — Psalm 107:25.
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A WORD OF INTRODUCTION

BEACON LIGHTS comes to you again as a friend and companion, an invaluable guide throughout the new season of society activities. It purposes to once more spread its rays along your course, pivoted securely in the unfailing word of God. Once more it takes upon itself to maintain that only in God's Light do we see the light. And once more it imposes itself upon your hospitality. fully confident that you will hold your course in the light that it spreads.

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

Even greater changes will meet your eyes as you scan these pages. The subject chosen for the Bible Study Outlines for this year is, the Parables. The Rev. P. De Boer of Holland, Michigan, has once more graciously consented to prepare these outlines for the societies. As he himself can assure you, he enjoys this type of work, and has
also proven his ability for it in the past. Your diligent and faithful use of them will be the best token of appreciation.

On page 9 the Rev. G. Lubbers, serving our Church in Pella, Iowa, favors us with an article. Readers of BEACON LIGHTS have read another product from his hand in the previous issue, so that no introduction is necessary.

But I spoke of radical changes; and they are evident. The Federation Board has decided to enlist the services of some of the younger element in our Churches, particularly from those not wearing the "long-coat". There is much to be said in favor of this move. We do have individuals in our Churches whose training and experience make them peculiarly fitted to serve our Protestant Reformed youth. Mr. Clarence De Boer, now serving as instructor in Kalamazoo, Michigan, is particularly qualified to write a series of articles on "Nature Study". It might even be added that he has made a special study of some branches of this subject in the past. The first of his articles will appear in this issue. Also Mrs. Rev. L. Doezema of Bellflower, California, has consented to write on the subject, "Selecting Proper Literature". Her past training and experience will be at our service.

Besides all this you will find that space has been allotted for the expression of the young people themselves. Each time an article will appear from the hand of some young man or young woman of our Churches. Nothing can have more appeal to youth than that youth speaks its own mind. Added to this is the "Open Forum", which has an introduction of its own in the following pages.

We hope that you will give this magazine the warm reception that it merits. It is your magazine: you are responsible for its welfare. You can do your share by reading it yourself and urging others to read it.

But in all our efforts we are dependent upon the blessing and guidance of our Covenant God. May His divine approval and blessing rest upon this paper, its contributors and its readers, also throughout the coming season.

Rev. C. Hanko.

GREAT PEACE HAVE THEY WHICH LOVE THY LAW

"Great peace have they which love thy law,
And nothing shall offend them":
Thy goodness and Thy mercy, too,
Shall constantly attend them.
They have no fear when swelling tides
Of evil rage around them;
They know in whom they have believed,
And nothing shall confound them.
BEACON LIGHTS is YOUR paper. You say, it belongs to the Federation? True! But that Federation is the sum total of all its members. And that includes you.

BEACON LIGHTS needs you.

This magazine can have no future unless you, too, put your shoulder to the wheel and push. If you do your share there will be a double benefit. The paper itself will benefit by it, and you yourself will appreciate the paper as never before. We always appreciate most those things that we expend some effort on.

You can do this in many ways.

One way is, that you subscribe for the magazine and also urge others to do so. There are still some young men and women who for some reason or other do not attend society. Some of them would if they were able, others probably have not yet learned to appreciate the value of society activities. Get them to subscribe. There are, likewise, many young married people who do not want to grow old too fast, but are still interested in youth's activities and can profit by getting this paper. They will be more than willing to subscribe if you but make it a point to see them. And there are also older people, who may not have young people of their own, but are, none-theless, interested in what our young people are doing. They, too, want to subscribe, but are waiting for you to call on them.

Another way in which you can help is by faithfully reading each issue and speaking with others about it. The power of suggestion goes far toward creating interest. "By the way, did you read Mr. So-and-so's article in the October issue?" "What do you think of Miss E's piece in the Open Forum?" Especially the Bible study outlines should be carefully studied before each meeting. It is even advisable to read them a few days before the time of meeting in order to have ample time to digest them and think into the subject under discussion. It is a patent fact that you never derive any more out of a thing than you put into it. Even a meat grinder can prove that. Nor do you get any more out of your society discussion than you put into it yourself. So give it your best, and reap the harvest for yourself and others.

But there is still another way.

That way is open to all of our readers through a new department, the OPEN FORUM. This department will give every reader an opportunity to express himself on any subject or question of the day. If you wish you can express your appreciation of or dissatisfaction with BEACON LIGHTS. We do

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not object to a word of appreciation, nor do we hesitate to publish any criticism if it can serve for the welfare of the paper. You are welcome to express your frank and candid opinion on any matter pertaining to our societies or the Federation. By the same sign you can discuss any problem of interest and importance to our Protestant Reformed youth. Naturally, there will be certain restrictions to debate, governed by the editor-in-chief, who has charge of this department.

But this department belongs directly to you. Will you supply us with material at once, so that it can make its first appearance in the very next issue? Will you do your share to make this department interesting, thought-provoking, profitable? We are depending on YOU!

All material must be in the hands of the editor-in-chief before the second week of each month if it is to appear in the next issue. Do not delay.

Your paper is to a great extent what you make it.

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AUTUMN

Yesterday I was inclined to be sad. Threatening clouds hung low overhead, while the north-wind, raw and cold, sent its penetrating blasts far into the southlands. I knew full well that Indian summer is still to come with its warm and pleasant days before the full blast of winter is upon us. But it is equally certain that every march of the north-wind will be another triumph, gaining more ground each time it comes, and each time bringing colder weather with it.

Cold rains lashing the trees and beating down the tender plants; crisp, cold nights that make the fireplace inviting; hoar-frost on the fields, sleet, ice and snow; harbingers of winter, grasping every living thing in their icy hand of death. The wilted flower, black, lifeless plants, the yellow cornstalk, all so many mute testimonies of the power of death. The glory of spring and summer has faded, life has succumbed before an irresistible power. Soon fields and trees will stand naked and stiff as symbols of that power. Who but poets speak of the beauties of autumn?

Not long hence, and “time” shall be no more!

Last night the harvest moon drove the clouds away and shone in a golden brightness that faded out the stars. There was that familiar, crisp feeling of frost in the air. This morning I noticed as never before that the trees were donning a multi-colored cloak. Every leaf a beauty of its own, adorned with the richest hues that no artist’s brush can duplicate. Autumn’s splendor has spread itself profusely over the fields. And
the farmer is out early to gather his abundant harvest.

Can this be death? Can such glory spell defeat, a hopeless succumbing before a power too strong to resist? Can this serve as token merely of sin and curse and judgment?

I took the reprimand. Fool that I am, and slow of heart to understand. Must not all these things be? All flesh is as grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the fields; the grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of God bloweth upon it.

There is triumph for us even in the march of death, victory even in the passing of the summer. For we are saved in hope, and the whole creation is busily laboring to share that hope with us. Creation, too, must be delivered from this bondage of corruption and share in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

Old things must pass away. All must be made new. Already we see from afar a new heaven and a new earth, where sin shall dwell no more, nor death, nor curse, but righteousness shall abound forever.

Day unto day uttereth speech. Night unto night showeth wisdom.

Let the winds blow. The frosts of winter come. Let the snow spread its pure white garment over the fields. Summer and winter, spring-time and harvest will come and go, onward on their steady, unaltering march toward the ever-certain goal.

Eternity!
Editors Desk... by Homer G. Kuiper

Do you have a question in your mind which you would like to have answered? Would you like to discuss some phases of the Reformed world and life view? If so, we will introduce an Open Forum section in our "Beacon Lights". Send your communications to Rev. C. Hanko, 9900 Kostner Ave., Oak Lawn, Illinois.

* * *

We are pleased to announce that "Beacon Lights" will regularly feature the nature study articles of Mr. C. De Boer, who is very well qualified for this work, having devoted the major portion of his education to the field of biology.

* * *

Watch the November issue for the first of a series of four articles by Mrs. L. Doezemana on the appreciation of literature and other related topics.

* * *

The cover etching is by the courtesy of the Christian Reformed Publishing House.

* * *

Did you ever have the desire to know what other publications are saying about important questions of the day? In this and future issues Mr. John Piersma will present us with digests of pertinent articles appearing in current publications.

We wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the Standard Press, publishers of the Intelligencer-Leader, in the preparation of this issue of "Beacon Lights".

* * *

The pace of events moves swiftly in this modern world. The Christian can never be satisfied with the interpretation of these times by worldly men. Therefore we have secured the services of Mr. P. Zuidema whose comments on world events will have a regular place in each issue of our paper.

* * *

Don't miss the Thanksgiving issue of "Beacon Lights".

* * *

With this issue, Rev. P. De Boer begins his second year as Bible-study author for "Beacon Lights". His excellent work and faithfulness certainly demands our deepest appreciation.

* * *

Under the caption, "Fireside Chats", we present from time to time the opinions and comments of the Executive Board of the PRYPF on Federation affairs and activities.

* * *

Extra copies of this and future issues are available from Miss Alice Reitsma, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Friendship...

by the Rev. Geo. C. Lubbers

Its Emphasis in Youth

Our youthful years are the springtime of life. They are formative in character, and to a great extent determine the future course of our life. What we sow in the days of our youth, we reap in our advanced years. This is a truth so universal in scope, that educators from time immemorial have recognized it.

Gradually we take our places amongst the ranks of men, and there we are to live according to God's ordinances and precepts in the battle-field of life.

One of the great factors in our life is our friendship. Youth is the bloom, the springtime in which friendships are made. The old man has long and tried friends. The ties of mutual friendships have become strong and lasting. New contacts and friendships are for him a matter of the past. Living in the evening of his life, the shadows growing long, he lives in the sweet memories of his past friendships.

But not so with youth! Here the question is one of the present, it is actual, concrete. It is a burning question, ever and anew calling for the proper answer, so that it may be led to a happy conclusion.

Much guidance is necessary. And blessed is the young man who walks in the way of wisdom, the fear of the Lord. He that findeth it has found life.

A Fundamental Need in Man

That we have friends, and seek these is not something incidental. It is not so that friendship could be taken out of our life, and that its orb would be full and complete. Fact is life would not be life without our friend. That we cling to our friends is because we thirst for life. It is natural for man to seek friends, as it is for the plants to seek the sunlight.

Pray, what may be the reason for this longing in man, and particularly in youth?

Man is a Covenant creature. As such he is adapted to the life of fellowship with God. Scripture emphasizes this fact. The Bible speaks of God's children as being His friends. We read in James 2:23 that Abraham believed God.
and it was accounted to him for righteousness, and he was called a friend of God. Now God tells His Covenant secrets to His friends, (Ps. 25:14) who fear His name. So does God tell Abraham of His purpose to destroy Sodom. We read in Gen. 19:17. 18: "And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I shall do, seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him. . . ."

Very similar we read of Jesus calling His disciples His friends in John 15:15. "Henceforth I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth, but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you".

Friendship with God is also called enmity of the world, and to be an enemy of the world is to be a friend of God.

On the basis of the quoted passages we can state, that friendship presupposes likeness, the greatest possible affinity. There must be a common meeting ground with similar problems and tastes. This affinity between Abraham and God is the righteousness of God in Christ. The righteous God loves righteous men. And so God tells them His plans, purposes and the secret mysteries of His eternal kingdom. To them it is given to know these mysteries by faith, and from others they are hid.

Thus also friendships among men are constituted. Two persons who are to be friends must have common problems, backgrounds, experiences. They have similar tastes. And they confide in one another in the same measure that their friendship is true and tried.

It is also a known fact that due to the change of tastes of youth, friendships are often not lasting. Today a friend, tomorrow a stranger! Many are the friendships that suffer shipwreck in the days of our youth! But ever and anon other friendships are made, because man is image-bearer of God.

A COMMENTARY ON OUR TASTE

Our friends are a matter, to a large degree of free choice. Forsooth, the place of our birth, the school we attend, the church where we worship are factors largely beyond our control. The day of our birth and the birthdays of others also are no matter of free choice. Yet, our friends are within the named limitations and set boundaries a matter of choice.

Thus our choice of friends speaks volumes. We have heard the proverb: "Tell me who your friends are, and I will tell you who you are". This is true in a twofold sense.

Firstly, this is psychologically true. Likes attract likes. One would not expect persons of widely different years to be friends. Nei-
ther would we expect a great lover of music to be a great friend of one who has no taste what-so-ever for this art. Secondly, this is also spiritually true. According to Holy Scripture and history there are a twofold people in this world, to wit, the sons of God and the sons of Belial. If one chooses his friends from the latter, and can sit in the seat of the scornful—pray, does this not reflect the desire of a depraved heart and reprobate mind? Moreover if one chooses his friends from those who fear God, does this not show spiritual taste and affinity.

This is a matter not to be deemed lightly. For the Bible teaches that we shall not be unequally yoked with unbelievers; that he who would be a friend of this world will be accounted an enemy of God.

The choosing of wicked friends is a great evil in our day. Who are your friends?

FOR AFTER-RECESS DISCUSSION

1. Do you think we could have a Christian Government?
2. A Christian Culture?
3. Resolved: We should re-unite with the Christian Reformed Church.
4. Is the U. S. justified in sending aid to the Soviets?
5. Is Hitler the champion of Christianity in his fight against Russia?
6. The America First Committee expresses the sentiments of the majority of our citizens.
GREETINGS

Greetings to all and especially to the Young People of The Protestant Reformed Churches of America. As this is our first appearance in your newly established publication we heartily wish you God's blessing upon your paper and also in your activities during the coming Society Season. We hope that through the Grace of God we may be a help to one another during the coming year.

In our present age the unfolding of God's plan in the history of His Created World is rapidly taking place before our very eyes. This has been going on since the beginning of time but at present it has attained a greater speed than ever before. The guidance of Almighty God is strikingly revealed to us by developments in the gigantic struggle that rages on the Eastern Hemisphere. Mighty forces are allowed to progress to certain limits in various plans but are then caused to take up the struggle elsewhere so that at present we find two of the most ungodly powers of the world pitted against each other in deadly conflict. Many predictions and warnings about the approach of the end of time are emphatically called to mind by the rapid changes that take place in this struggle.

Changes are the word of the hour. So it seems at least if we scan the events of time since the Congress of the United States extended the time of service for our conscripted men.

Alliance With Britain

Although passage was only by a very slight margin it seems to have given President Roosevelt the assurance that he could enter into a closer and more active alliance with Britain. His meeting at sea with Winston Churchill soon followed. What actually was discussed and decided by these allied leaders will only be revealed by events that happened immediately after and which will happen in the future. One thing is certain even now that our policy in the Pacific was changed immediately. Our outward attitude was changed so much that Japan found it expedient to change her front completely. Instead of continuing her pro-axis front she about faced and desired to mediate the Pacific troubles with President Roosevelt. She has carefully avoided the possibility of a dispute with the United States by allowing ships carrying cargoes of oil, which has been forbidden her, to pass peacefully through her waters to her age-old enemy, Russia.

Alliance With Russia

Here again we find a difficult
situation for many people to understand and which many do not favor at all. Our so called Christian nation allies herself with the ungodly Stalin Regime of Russia. When God so guides all things that two professing ungodly nations are pitted against each other to destroy one another, we align ourselves with one who has been trying to destroy religion and our democratic form of government, not only in Russia but also in our own country. This has been done especially by literary propaganda during the past decade. The outcome of such an alliance God alone knows.

The Greer Incident

During the past week changes have also rushed upon us in our position in the Atlantic. The Greer incident gave the opportunity long awaited by the warmongers in our country as an excuse for actual warfare. Most naturally, of course, each accuses the other of firing the first shot. How true of our own childhood differences. When asked how the fight was started the answer was always given, "He hit me first."

Roosevelt's Speech

President Roosevelt's speech in which he made known that as Commander in Chief of the Navy he had ordered our forces to shoot first at any raider or submarine considered to be in defense waters gives us an active part in the hostilities. Who is to determine how far these defense waters extend? Some have already placed them in the Red Sea zone because our ships are carrying the so-called necessary supplies to Britain and Russia. It seems we are following some of the tactics of other countries of the world which we condemned severely in the past. We are starting a fight without officially declaring war against the country or countries we plan to attack. The outcome God alone knows. Let us trust in Him and continually seek His grace and Favor that He may lead us through these troublesome times. We also are by nature in the same condemnation as the rest of the world for we have forsaken God, as a country, in all our works and are worthy of the same punishments He has inflicted on the countries of Europe and Asia.

WALK QUIETLY

Walk quietly
And know that He is God;
Let your life be governed by His guiding hand,
E'en though it varies from the way you planned.
Bow your head in sweet submission, and
Walk quietly.

By VIRGINIA BEACH BALLOU.
Potpourri... by John H. Piersma

The STANDARD BEARER on LIFE's Report on Army Morale...

Much space has been devoted in various publications of late concerning the problem of the morale of our armed forces. All of us realize the importance of this factor in an organization like our Army. Courage, enthusiasm, and zeal are extremely necessary to military success.

In the issue of August 18th, last, "Life", famous pictorial weekly, published an article entitled: "This is What the Soldiers Complain About". In it are recorded the findings of a staff reporter, after his investigation of conditions in a sample Army division. Based upon interviews with some four hundred privates from five different regiments, this staff member concluded that due to dissatisfaction with officers, lack of equipment, and a shortage of proper recreational facilities, the average soldier in the Army was not enjoying himself at all.

Perhaps these things are true. It remains a question of course, whether this survey of one division can serve as a proper basis for an opinion concerning the morale of the entire Army. "Life" admits this in its editorial comment, when it says: "Whether the morale situation "Life's" reporter found is typical of all the new soldiers, "Life" does not attempt to say."

Personally, we agree with the editor of the "Standard Bearer" that if the situation is as described, it is "perfectly understandable".

However, it is not in the fact as such that we find so much interest as far as "Beacon Lights" is concerned. Here we would rather be informed as to the attitude Christian Youth must assume toward the situation. May we be discouraged and disheartened by the seeming futility of things, whether military or otherwise? To this question the Reverend H. Hoeksema replies as follows in the "Standard Bearer", issue of September 1st, 1941:

"However I do not write this to justify the attitude of the men in the camps as expressed in the report of "Life's" staff member.

Certainly it may not be the attitude of the Christian.

He may be depressed and discouraged, especially with a view to the prospect of spending two and a half years of his young life in the army. He, too, may lack enthusiasm for our part in the present war. He may long for the day that he will be discharged and may return home. He may hate the idea of an alliance with Russia. We can understand this. We feel for him and pray for him.

But he does not rebel, nor talk
in a spirit of rebellion, nor suggest that he will "go over the hill". His morale may be affected by circumstances. It cannot be destroyed by them.

It is rooted in principle. Therefore, it is fundamentally steadfast. And the principle is that he must be and is willing to be in subjection to authority, to the powers that are placed over him, for they are of God. And for God's sake he respects authority and obeys.

The responsibility he leaves to the government. He cannot be held accountable before God for whatever part our government may take in the war. They, too, are accountable before God.

But he may look upon his place in the army as assigned to him by his God. And in that position he is called to serve his God by being in subjection to the higher powers.

He walks in faith, even in the army.

And the morale of faith is always good."

* * *

God forbid that we try to solace our brethren in the service with any other message!

Editor De Jong on State Support for Our Christian Schools... In the September, 1941 issue of the "Christian Home and School Magazine", Editor A. S. De Jong presents an editorial under the title, "Sphere Sovereignty — or State Support". The editorial pertains to the subject of the support of our Christian day schools, with a view to the present system of public, state supported schools of our land. It seems that a certain Mr. Alger Pauuw in a recent issue of this magazine championed the idea that our schools should also share in the funds collected by our government for the education of children. According to Mr. Pauuw "the present situation is unfair, un-American, since 'all citizens are not equal beneficiaries of the public funds collected under compulsion'."

Mr. Harold Tilma, a Grand Rapids merchant, makes an objection to this stand. His claim is that any "system of state aid for our Christian schools violates the principle that parents are responsible for the education of their children". He advocates the separation of all schools from the government, and would "allow our citizens to support the school in which they desire to have their children educated or with whose ideals they are in accord."

The editorial in question is a commentary on these conflicting theories. In reality, Mr. De Jong takes up the cudgel for the latter idea, which he labels "sphere sovereignty". This is evident from the following excerpts:

"That the parents are respon-
possible to God for the training of their children may be taken for granted by us, since this is taught by God's general and special revelation in unmistakeable terms. To the fathers as heads of the family, the Lord gives command to train the children in the fear of the Lord: to the government He gives command to execute justice and equity. The Lord does not empower the government with totalitarian authority over the lives of those over whom they rule.

To the government God gave charge to see to it that within the nation all the variegated spheres of life, operating by means of the indispensable authority required for the unmolested performance of their God-given functions, shall be protected against obstructive interference on the part of antagonistic forces. To preserve equity in the functioning of the principle of sphere sovereignty so that each sphere may work unmolested, and at the same time respect the sovereignty of all those that function in other fields of activity after the ordinance of God, the Ruler of all—that is the divinely ordained business of the state.

This fundamental idea being accepted, it follows that a government which takes charge of the school-education of the children of the nation, thereby oversteps its own God-given boundary of authority. Only in case parents prove to be wilfully neglectful, when they refuse to provide for their children the required school-education, has the state authority to compel these children to a state school.

Since in our country the state has taken it upon itself to provide public education for all children, leaving room for education by means of private schools, and does demand that all citizens pay tax to cover the expense involved, it appears that our government violates the principle of democratic equality:—of equal rights to all and special privileges to none. The citizens who desire for their children an education different from that provided by the so-called "neutral" school, and who take the trouble, and go to the expense of building and maintaining private schools for their children, have a perfect right to ask that the state allocate from the public school fund, in the name of democracy, a proportionate share of them. Or...they may insist that the state cease to operate public schools, and instead of that, demand that parents themselves must provide schools for own ideals and principles. In this their children in accord with their case the state would be obliged to provide public education only to such children whose parents, for one reason or another, failed to comply with the state's command in this respect.

From a practical standpoint, the first course might prove to be more expedient. But would this course
not favor the tendency to leave things pertaining to the character of the work of the subsidized schools: their courses of study, administration, discipline, etc., into the hands of a government whose ever increasing tendency to regulate all their business after the current political instinct of totalitarian uniformity, would frustrate the thorough application of the very principles which prompted the establishment of our Christian schools?

* * *

The second proposed plan to correct the present unjust policy of forcing citizens that feel duty-bound to provide Christian schools for their children to pay also for the public schools, is that the state demands of its citizens to teach their children on their own private initiative, in schools that must meet general standards set by the government. This plan appears to be in accord with the Biblical principle that requires respect for the sphere sovereignty of the parents in regard to the education of their children, on the part of the government.

Will it not be advisable to strive for this ideal, even though the first-mentioned method appears to be more practical, i.e., more likely to obtain the consent of a majority to our people?"

* * *

This column reserves further comment, in the hope that our societies will consider this a good topic for an "after-recess" discussion. It is imperative that we interest ourselves in the problems of Christian education. May we look for further comment?

"American Council of Christian Churches" Organized. . . .

With large headlines the "Christian Beacon", fundamentalist weekly, announces the organization of a new church federation. No doubt you are aware of the fact that an organization of this type has been in existence for some time. It is known as the Federal Council of Churches, and is composed of the larger "Protestant" bodies in this country. Needless to say, the emphasis has been along the lines of the "New Theology", or Modernism.

Wednesday, September 17, 1941 saw the formation of a new group under the name of the American Council of Christian Churches. As a protest against the Federal Council, its desire is to rally all those believing in the Gospel of redemption in the blood of Jesus Christ under a common banner. The new council was formed by concurrent action of the Bible Protestant and Bible Presbyterian denominations.

The opening paragraph of the statement issued by the Council at the time of its formation is indicative of its true character. It reads:
“We are thankful that we live in free America. Too long the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America has assumed to speak for all Protestants. It has, in fact, been a general instrument of soul-destroying Modernism. Its ‘social gospel’ is actually ‘another gospel’, sometimes hardly to be distinguished from outright communistic propaganda. It has gone far afield into political and economic activity. America needs spiritual leadership. She needs Jesus Christ as never before, not theories of social welfare. The shed blood of Jesus Christ alone can wash away sin. We need a revival desperately, but it can never come until men confess their sins, repent, and put their trust in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son. The Holy Spirit, speaking through the Scriptures, can give the blessing, security, and comfort for which men’s souls cry.”

We wonder if this new council will presume to speak for all “Protestants” outside of the fold of the Federal Council of Churches. Certainly we can not be presented as in any way sympathetic with its desire to present “Jesus Christ” to the nation as the panacea for her ills.

This would also make an interesting discussion for some societies. Further analysis of the Constitution of this organization reveals even more interesting things. If anyone desires this document for further study, he can obtain the same by addressing his request to the Managing Editor of “Beacon Lights”.

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**BEACON LIGHTS is a Good CHRISTMAS PRESENT**

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Miss Alice Reitsma.
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Grand Rapids, Michigan.
Autumnal Coloration.

by Clarence De Boer

"The October leaf-fading is a festival, a triumphal pageant, rather than a funeral."
—L. Larcom.

Who of you readers have not been stirred by the mysterious transformation of the forest foliage each year? The majestic and sturdy oak, the wild and elusive sumac, the graceful and lovely elm, the dense and symmetrical maple, clad in their autumn cloaks thrill the observer with the greatness of their creator.

Of all nature's changes in preparation for winter, perhaps, the most distinctive and beautiful is the colorful alteration from the summer green to the varied and vivid hues of autumn.

Can you distinguish a tree in a forest by the color of its leaves in the fall? What is the prevailing color of the maple? Oak? Sumac? Did you know that there is a very definite order determining a specific color for each species of trees? Upon close observation you will notice every species has its own color, which will vary within certain limits, depending upon the temperature and sugar content of the leaf. Thus, the white oak will not turn red but always brown, while the sumac is characteristically scarlet; and the cut-leaf maple becomes yellow, while the hard maple is crimson.

Has the question, "Why do leaves change their color?" ever arisen in your mind?

Small green bodies called chlorophyll, which give the characteristic green to the leaf, are the little food factories for the tree. These bodies are constantly decomposed by sunlight, and must be replaced to maintain a green color. As autumn commences, the leaf ceases to renew the green pigment; consequently, the color fades. While this green disappears, the yellow pigment, ever present in the leaf but masked until now by the green, becomes visible. transform-
ing the leaf to various shades of yellow.

The red hues are produced by a red pigment which is formed in large quantities as the green disappears. Thus the yellow pigments are always present but veiled, while the red are produced in the fall as the green disappear.

Perhaps, some of you are aware that the combination of low temperature and abundance of sunshine determine and influence the brilliance of color. In addition, the presence of certain sugars in the leaf stimulate the formation of colored pigments.

The result of this is pictured in the words of the poet, J. Burroughs. "Then, when the maples have burst out into color, showing like great bonfires along the hills, there is, indeed a feast for the eye."

This is just a glimpse of the beauty which follows death. How much more beautifully will our Father clothe us!

The Studying of the Word
by the Rev. Herman Veldman

Our Protestant Reformed young people will presently inaugurate another season of society activity. "Beacon Lights" will again lead the way. Having been asked to contribute the feature article to its first issue of October 1, I could not think of a more appropriate subject than the study of the Word of God. It is possible, of course, to write on one of several phases of society activity. Such an article would also be appropriate at this time. One could write, for example, on the subject of Christian fellowship, emphasizing the Scriptural truth relative to the communion of saints as applied to the society life of our young men and women. However, all these subjects are secondary to the study of the Word of God. The Word of God is not only most important in our society life—it controls and determines every phase and aspect of it. God's Word is a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. That light must illumine our every walk of life. Our relation to it determines our growth and fellowship. Also our relation to and position in the midst of the world. Hence I would call attention in this
article to the study of the Word of God.

THE WORD OF GOD

It is, of course, of paramount significance that we ask ourselves the question: What is the Word of God? The answer to this question will determine our study of the Bible. Naturally, the first answer which presents itself to us is: The Bible is the Word of God because God spoke it. Notice: because God spoke it. And this is true. We believe in the Divine inspiration of the Scriptures. This means that God moved, illumined, directed holy men so that they wrote infallibly, unerringly what God would have them write. Inspiration is both, plenary and organic. We believe in plenary (full, complete) inspiration, and declare thereby firstly, that all of Scripture is inspired of God, and, secondly, that Scripture is a complete revelation of the God of our salvation in Christ Jesus our Lord. We believe in organic inspiration because the Scriptures are a beautiful unity, having one thought, in which scheme of Divine thought each holy writer occupies his own place, not only through Divine preparedness and inspiration but also as according to the Lord's sovereign counsel with respect to the revelation of His truth. And although it is true that we no longer possess this original document of God given us through holy men, this tends to substantiate rather than weaken the truth that our Bible is literally the inspired Word of God. It is an amazing fact, to be ascribed only to Jehovah's own jealous safekeeping of His truth, that we, notwithstanding the thousands of translations of this Word of God, still retain in essence the same inspired truth.

It is well that we maintain this principle with all our heart and soul. It establishes the unique authority of the Bible as the sole rule for our conduct and life. God did not merely acquaint His holy writers in general with His revelation, leaving the actual writing of this truth in the hands of these men. This would be "risky" to say the least. God surely could not entrust to sinful men the writing of His will. Besides, man is conceived and born dead in sin. All men are liars, haters of the truth, and lovers of darkness and the lie. The truth could never originate within the heart and mind of man, must come to us from the living God Himself. And God alone can reveal to us His own will. Hence, Divine inspiration teaches us that, in this world of sin and lie and darkness, Jehovah infallibly wrote His truth, through holy writers, because only when the Lord speaks to us in our language are we able to receive it. But we must remember that God used our language as the vehicle of His own Divine thought.
However, the Bible is more than merely the Word of God in the above mentioned sense of the Word. It is not merely the Word of God because God spoke it. But the Lord also speaks it. Particularly this truth we must ever bear in mind. There is a word of God which the Lord alone can speak, and which He as God always speaks. When God speaks it is, when He commands it stands. It is this word which never returns void unto Him but accomplishes all His good pleasure. God speaks creatively, irresistibly. Thus God spoke at the beginning of time and the heavens and the earth received being. Thus God speaks also in the hearts of His people, calling them irresistibly out of darkness into His marvelous light.

The Bible is that Word of God. This must be understood not merely in the sense that it is the Lord's infallible record of that word. It is that, too. The Scriptures indeed speak to us of the Lord's development of His own covenant. They tell us of Jehovah's irresistible operations not only within the hearts of His people but also within the lives of all men. God realizes all His good pleasures, fulfills His own counsel, carries out His own will of predestination, reprobation as well as election. The Bible is indeed Jehovah's infallible revelation of this antithetic development of His covenant. But the Lord still speaks His own word.

The Scriptures are not merely a record of past events. Jehovah has not merely spoken. He still speaks. And He still speaks that Word in connection with the Divine Scriptures. God always maintains His own revelation and truth. This truth, briefly expressed, is that God is God. He alone is eternal life within Himself and also for His people in Christ Jesus. Man's happiness and peace can be experienced only in fellowship with the living God. Moreover, this eternal life can be experienced only through Jesus Christ, Whose Name is the only Name by which man can be saved. By nature we are conceived and born dead in sin, are objects of Divine wrath, and deserving of eternal wrath. Christ however, is God's appointed Mediator of salvation. He bore the wrath of God for the sins of the elect. And by faith we are grafted into Christ, learn to know ourselves as hopelessly condemned before God, and receive from God the blessed assurance that we are righteous before Him and heirs of life eternal. And this everlasting life we shall receive in perfection in the heavenly renewal of all things in glory. Hence, the service of God, because of and through Jesus Christ, is life eternal. The hatred of God and the pursuit of things below is the way of death and eternal misery.

This truth Jehovah maintains and ever realizes in the lives of
men. No man can read the Word of God without being vitally affected. He will either bow before the Scriptures or oppose them. He will either love the truth or despise and hate it. He will either embrace the truth that God is God, confess his sin and have fellowship with the Lord, or he will reject that truth, maintain our sin, but also experience that the wicked have no peace. For God speaks. And He speaks irresistibly in connection with the Bible. He fulfills His counsel, operates within men according to His sovereign will. In the one He work as a savor of life unto life, causing the truth of His Scriptures to live within his heart and life; in the other He operates equally irresistibly, also causing him to experience that same truth, only in the antithetic way of sin and death. The Bible does not leave us neutral. We must give an answer to the message contained therein. God wills this and also realizes it. He reveals Himself in order that man may reveal himself over against this revelation. And whatever our answer may be, either the answer of grace or that of sin, God will maintain His Name and glorify Himself.

**Our Study of This Word of God**

How, then, must we study this Word of God? Of course, we shall study the Scriptures. I will assume this, although it is well to emphasize even this assumption. We must not be lax in our Bible study. "Beacon Lights" should not cause us to become indifferent or neglectful as far as our personal study of the Scriptures is concerned. I am afraid that we are not immune to this danger. "Beacon Lights, then, has the "last word". Its explanation of the Scriptural lesson wholly sufficeth us. Perhaps we feel that it would be useless to add our own findings to the lesson as already explained. Our monthly magazines ceases thereby to be a guide. It is no longer "Beacon Lights". It does not open to us new avenues of thought and study. We have become stagnant in our Bible discussion at our society meetings. This is not as it should be. We must and shall use our paper as a handbook to guide us in our study. We must all study the Scriptures, each one for himself or her-self. We must “take time” to meditate on the Word of God. It is well to set an evening aside, wholly for this purpose. This, however, I assume. I am principally concerned with this question: How must we study the Word of God?

Firstly, we must study the Word of God thoroughly. I mean that we must study the whole Word of God. The Bible does not consist of a body of isolated passages. The present dispensationalist does not understand this principle. He cuts the Word of God into irrelated
parts. God's Word, however, is a unity. It consists throughout of parts which are marvellously related. Thus the Old Testament can be understood only in the light of the New. It is, therefore, imperative, that we study the Scriptures thoroughly, not haphazardly. We must read and compare. And, in this connection, the Bible must be for us the authoritative Word of God. It has and must have the "final word". Consequently, when we study our lesson this coming season, let us not be satisfied merely with a hasty perusal of the explanation in "Beacon Lights", but study this lesson diligently and painstakingly in the light of its corresponding passages.

Secondly, and primarily, we must study the Word of God prayerfully. This is a primary requisite, firstly, because we cannot of ourselves receive and appropriate the truth of God. The Bible, we must remember, is the Word of God. As such it revolves wholly about God. It is wholly spiritual. God speaks in the Scriptures concerning Himself. In them we are commanded by Jehovah to love Him with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, to serve Him with all that we are and have. We are commanded, moreover, to hate sin and darkness, to confess that we are wholly perverse and utterly condemnable, that we cannot obtain salvation in our own strength. Consequently, the Bible does not adapt itself to natural man. Man, by nature, opposes its truth, cannot receive it. We stand directly opposed to all the teachings of Holy Write. Neither are we able of ourselves to effect any change within us. We cannot learn to love the truth. Diligent and careful study of the Word of God cannot open our hearts to its teachings. Indeed we are able to read the Scriptures. We can also understand them as far as our intellectual ability is concerned. But except we be born again and led by the Spirit of God into the mysteries of His covenant, we cannot see the Kingdom of God. Moreover, this remains true throughout our life, even after we have received enlightening grace. The Lord must continually deliver us from our sinful, carnal flesh and induct us into the beauties of His covenant. Hence, we must study the Word of God prayerfully. We must at all times be conscious of the fact that God's Word is spiritual and I am carnal. It must therefore be my prayer continuously that He may open my eyes that I may see, that He may grant me an understanding heart, in order that I may be fed spiritually with that Bread of Life.

Moreover, this receives added emphasis when we remember that the Word of God is sharper than any sharp, two-edged sword. God's Word cuts, cuts deeply. It will, it must evoke from us an answer.
We cannot read the Scriptures as we would read any other book. We cannot read it and forget what we have read. We shall acquiesce and bow before it, or reject and trample it under feet. Our heart will give an answer to God's revelation of Himself. For God speaks and His Word never returns void unto Him. Therefore we may well open the Word of God with fear and with trembling, with the prayer in our hearts and on our lips: "Lord, I fear Thy Word, but I also love Thy truth. It is in principle my meditation, day and night. Open Thou therefore my heart and sanctify Thy Word unto my life.

ITS FRUIT

How rich will be our society life if we thus study the Word of God. Firstly, we will grow in the knowledge of the Scriptures. The Bible alone can be a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path in the midst of the darkness of this world. And how dark is this world wherein we have a name and a place! Particularly in our present age! The times are ominous, especially for the covenant young man and woman. It is becoming increasingly difficult to manifest ourselves as the party of the living God. The calling to separate ourselves from the world and remain steadfast, to walk with head uplifted as having the victory and therefore certain of its ultimate manifestation, is becoming apparently more and more hopeless. How necessary that we know the will of God, know what our calling is! And how necessary that we, understanding that calling, may realize that our hope maketh not ashamed!

And, secondly, we shall hear and receive the Word of God. We will then grow not merely in our intellectual knowledge of the Scriptures. But God's own Word will be received in our heart and soul. The Lord will speak by His Spirit within our souls and cause the truth of His testimony to become a living reality within our lives. Thus our society life will become instrumental in our spiritual up-building and growth in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible will more and more become a lamp before our feet and a light upon our path. As covenant young men and women we, by the grace of God, will increase in knowledge and grace and be able to stand in the evil day. May God unto that end bless our Protestant Reformed young men and women in the season which lies ahead.

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BEACON LIGHTS

— 23 —
Bible Study...

by the Rev. Peter De Boer

Outline I
INTRODUCTION
First Week of October

Read Matt. 13:1-17:

The subject material of the present season’s Outlines is the Parables of our Lord. We may say at the very outset that the subject is not an easy one, but very worthwhile. You will need to put forth some extra effort in your study and discussion, but it will be well repaid. If your society succeeds in carrying on a good discussion without too much difficulty, you may rest assured you have a very good society.

PARABLES: WHAT ARE THEY?

Parables may briefly be defined as: earthly stories teaching spiritual truths. Parables are imaginary stories, which in their details could very actually transpire, the purpose of the stories being to inculcate and illustrate spiritual truths. The word “parable” signifies a placing of two or more objects together, usually for the purpose of comparison. According to Mk. 4:11 Jesus said that the things of the kingdom “are done” (i.e. take place, happen) in parables. In other words Jesus means to say that these spiritual truths are actually happening day by day before our eyes (as e.g. in the parable of the sower). Christ merely points out the preaching, which although hidden from the foundation of the earth, was there nevertheless. God made the world and its fulness an image of the heavenly and eternal things, and therefore they point upward. Consequently parables are not fortunate comparisons, products of human ingenuity, but divinely ordained testimonies present since the foundation of the world in which God ever preaches of heavenly things.

QUESTIONS: Besides the revelation in Scripture, where else has God revealed himself? Prove that the present world is a picture and image of the world to come. What difference is there between a parable and a fable? Are there any fables in the Bible? Are there other parables in the Bible apart from those of the Lord Himself?
BEACON LIGHTS

PARABLES,
A NEW METHOD OF TEACHING.

Before the particular time to which vs. 1 refers, Jesus had never used parables. According to the best chronology of events the Lord had been actively engaged in his Public Ministry for more than a year and a half, but he had never yet spoken in parables. It was thus toward him was crystallizing and of ministry, when the opposition toward him was crystalizing and taking on a very definite form, that Jesus adopted this new form of teaching. From that time on he frequently spoke in parables. Hence, you can understand the but natural and pertinent question of the disciples. "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?"

QUESTIONS: What method of teaching did Jesus employ prior to the time that he began to use parables? Was the parabolic method of teaching something wholly new, or did other teachers in Jesus' day use it also? How long was Jesus' public ministry? According to Matt. 12 what took place on the same day that Jesus began to speak in parables?

WHY THIS NEW METHOD OF TEACHING?

Why did Jesus adopt this new form of teaching? From the question: "Why speakest thou unto them in parables?" it is evident that the disciples felt that this change had something to do with the multitude that was now more and more taking a stand against him. Hence, according to Mk. 4:10 they asked Jesus this question in private, that is, when the multitude was absent. In Christ's answer as we have it in Matthew 13:11-17 and in Mark 4:11, 12 we have:

a. In verse 11 a division of his hearers into two groups: them to whom it is given to know the things of the kingdom (the believers) and them to whom it is not given (the unbelievers). b. In vs. 12 the general rule of the purpose and affect of the preaching: that he that hath shall receive more, while he that hath not from him shall be taken away what he hath (what he seemeth to have, Lk. 8:18). c. Therefore Christ speaks in parables, vs. 13ff. The spirits have been revealed in the past, they must still more clearly be revealed. They must clearly, emphatically and continually see the things of God's kingdom. The preaching must never be able to be said to have gone over their heads. The wicked must understand with their natural minds, very, very, clearly so that they can never say that they did not understand. It must be evident that although they naturally understood, it was their spiritual and ethical attitude of unbelief that became evident. The wicked must be wholly without excuse. Therefore Christ speaks in parables, pointed lessons which they could not fail to understand. And the wicked did understand, as is evident from Matt. 22:45, but
did not believe. Thus the actual effect as well as the divine purpose of the parable in respect to the reprobate is their hardening. This hardening takes place in a manner compatible with human responsibility. But parables also have a positive purpose and effect in them to whom it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom. They can understand the things of God's kingdom still better and are drawn closer thereby. Hence, vss. 16, 17. (For a further study of the purpose of parables, consult by Rev. H. Hoeksema, The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches.)

QUESTIONS: What is a mystery? Which are the mysteries of the kingdom Christ has in mind in vs. 11? Is the Christian Reformed position of two conflicting wills in God—one according to which he wills the salvation of the elect only, and one according to which he wills the salvation of every man—a mystery? How is it possible to take away from a man that hath not, even that which he hath? Did Jesus intend parables to be a well-meaning offer of salvation on the part of God? How is the doctrine of reprobation and election clearly taught in this portion of Scripture?

CLASSIFICATION OF THE PARABLES.

For your information we wish to give a brief sketch of the arrangement and classification of parables we will follow. There are, properly speaking, twenty seven parables. They may be divided into three groups:

GROUP I — The Seven Parables of Matt. 13. They were the first parables spoken, and treat seven aspects of the growth and development of the kingdom. These are:
1. The Parable of the Sower.
2. The Tares.
3. The Mustard Seed.
4. The Leaven.
5. The Hid Treasure.
6. The Pearl of Great Price.
7. The Dragnet.

GROUP II — This group comprises Thirteen Parables. They were spoken during the last year of Jesus' public ministry and shortly before his last journey to Jerusalem. This group treats of moral-ethical relationships as evaluated in the light of the kingdom. Included in this list are:

GROUP III — This group also consists of Seven Parables. They were spoken during the Saviour's final stay in Jerusalem, and belong to Good Friday week. They may be called the parables of judg-
ment, since they speak of the judgment of the kingdom, both as it pertained to the Jewish nation and as it will be finally. Here belong the following:
7. The Talents. Matt. 25:

Outline II
THE PARABLE OF THE SOWER
Second Week of October
Read Matt. 13:3-9; 18-23:—

IN GENERAL.

The things of God's Kingdom are done, they happen before our very eyes in parables. How evidently true that is from this very first parable; how world-wide common that a sower goes forth to sow and that the seed falls on different grounds and does not grow alike! Good seed is not enough, it needs good earth. Christ interpreted the first two parables for us, and thereby also taught us the method of interpreting all parables. Note that the Saviour does not interpret every detail (e.g. that there are only four kinds of earth mentioned and no more), emphasizing thereby that we must never try to interpret every detail of the parable.

In general every parable has one main lesson, and it is this main lesson that is the all important matter. The lesson of this parable may be briefly summarized in the words of Luke 8:18, "Take heed therefore how ye hear". It is not so much what we hear, but how we hear that is the point of this parable.

THE SEED SOWN.

The seed sown is the Word of God (Lk. 8:11), also called the Word of the kingdom (Matt. 13:19), or simply the Word (Mk. 4:14). The sower is the preacher, in the last instance the Christ (Matt. 13:37). Apostles, prophets, ministers are his messengers, Matt. 10:20, 40.

QUESTIONS: What is meant by promiscuous preaching of the Word? How does the parable imply that the gospel must be preached promiscuously? Does the minister who fails to preach God's Word sow seed? Does the sowing of the parable refer to the external or to the internal calling?

THE WAYSIDE.

The preaching of the Word does not bear fruit in all that hear; not because the Word itself is different, but because of the inner spiritual condition of the hearers. The four soils represent four ways of hearing. Those by the wayside are those so engrossed in things natural that the preaching makes—
no impression upon them at all. There is hardly any impact. They hardly remember the sermon or even the text as they leave the church.

QUESTIONS: Who is the wicked one of vs. 19 that catches away that which was sown? Cf. Mk. 4:15. Can a true Christian ever be in the spiritual condition of the soil by the wayside? What does vs. 19 mean by "understandeth it not"; is this said in reference to spiritual discernment or in reference to natural understanding also?

THE STONY PLACES.

The stony places. From Ps. 5 it is evident that the soil intended is not ground full of stones, but soil that consists of a thin layer of earth over rock, i.e. hard-pan. These receive the Word with joy at once; they shout hallelujah’s and amen’s. But, note, vs. 21 says they have no root in themselves. Hence, when tribulation (suffering for Christ’s sake in the more general form) or persecution (suffering for Christ’s sake in the more special manifestation) arise they are offended. They are as immediately offended as they believed, Mk. 4:17. The real hearer can weather the storms of opposition; temporary faith cannot because it has no root in itself. It is merely a matter of superficial feeling, not of the heart.

QUESTIONS: What four kinds of faith does Reformed doctrine distinguish?

Does temporary faith differ from saving faith only in duration? Cf. Canons of Dort, V, Rejection 7. Can one know for himself whether his faith is only temporary faith or true faith? Can others judge this before the temporary faith reveals itself by turning away? Is there a real falling away from grace?

The societies will undoubtedly find enough material in the above for one evening's discussion, and therefore the thorns and the good soil can be reserved for next week's discussion.

Outline III

THE SOWER (cont.)

Third Week of October

Read Matt. 13:7-9:22, 23:—

THE THORNS.

The Thorns. Although in this case also the heart remained untouched it appeared for a time that the seed was growing well, thriving and coming to fruit-bearing. Yet it became unfruitful. The heart was a bed of thorn seeds. The cares of this world, whose reverse side is the deceitfulness of riches, and the pleasures of this life (as Lk. adds) are the weeds that choked the seed. By the cares of this world are to be understood the everyday cares of eating and drinking, clothing and shelter; by the deceitfulness of riches, the temptations of prosperity, the goods of this world that easily turn man's
head away from God: by the pleasure of this life, amusements, etc.

QUESTIONS: Why does Scripture speak of the deceitfulness of riches? Which of the three things mentioned is most likely to turn the heart of men in the days of their youth? Do you think that a mother's responsibility to prepare the Sunday dinner can help to rob her of the full benefit of the preaching? Does the fault lie with the cares of this world, with riches or with the pleasures of this life in themselves? Is the seed ever choked by thorns in the case of a true believer?

THE GOOD SOIL.

The good soil. The good soil represents those hearers that receive the Word "in an honest and good heart" (Lk.), i.e. with a regenerated, believing heart. Such a heart is the gift of grace, Matt. 13:11. In this case there is fruit-bearing: repentance, faith, sanctification. Lk. 8:15 adds that the fruit-bearing is "with patience", undoubtedly implying perseverance in the face of tribulations and persecutions. Perseverance is characteristic of all true faith, Matt. 24:13. Note that the fruit-bearing differs in degree: hundredfold, sixtyfold, thirtyfold. One hundredfold does not imply that a Christian can attain perfection here below: hundred, sixty, thirty here emphasize that all true faith does not bear the same number of fruits.

All are not Jobs, Pauls, etc. Yet all are true believers.

QUESTIONS: Wherein does fruit-bearing consist? Prove from Scripture that no Christian can attain absolute perfection in this life. Is the difference in fruit-bearing to be explained from the measure of grace bestowed upon each? If so, does this exclude that a Christian should strive toward the one hundredfold? Can the preaching produce a good heart, or is a good heart the immediate gift of God in regeneration?

Who hath ears to hear, let him hear. There are people that are naturally deaf, but there are also those that are spiritually deaf. Jesus addresses those whose ears are opened, who are capable of spiritually hearing. They alone will profit from this parable and its lesson.

QUESTIONS: What is the one main lesson of this parable? Cf. Lk. 8:18a. If the preacher must prepare to speak the Word, do you think the hearers ought to prepare to hear it? Is the fact that some people profit more than others due to the preacher or to the receptivity of the hearers? In this parable Jesus does not teach us to ask, How well did the preacher preach? but, How did I hear? Prove that there is room for this exhortation.

Outline IV

THE TARES

Fourth Week of October
The material of this outline can be arranged under the three headings: present admixture, patient waiting, final separation.

TARES IN THE WORLD.

The parable teaches, first of all: present admixture. The good seed in this parable is not the Word preached but the true children of God in whom that Word is implanted. This good seed is said to be sown by the Son of Man. The tares are the children of the Wicked One. Tares, according to The International Bible Encyclopedia, are a wild-wheat closely resembling wheat, so closely that it cannot be clearly distinguished until it is in the ear. The tares are the children of the Devil, who although in the midst of the church institute are not truly of her. Although "the field is the world" could mean the world in general, we take it to mean the visible church institute throughout the length and the breadth of the world. If you take the word "world" in the general sense, then Christ here teaches that there will be wicked people on earth to the end. That does not imply, of course, that they are in the midst of the church institute. If you take the word "world" in the limited sense of "ecclesiastical world" (church institute in the broadest sense), then the parable means there will be children of the Devil in the church institute unto the end of the world. We leave the question for your discussion. But remember: (1) This is a parable of the kingdom, a term which is nearly equivalent at times to the term church (Matt. 16:18, 19). The word "world" usually must be understood in a limited sense, as determined by the context and Scripture in general. (3) Would Jesus devote a parable to teach that there always will be wicked men on earth?

WHENCE THE TARES?

Vs. 27 asks, "Sir didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?" Naturally, either the good seed contained tares and then it is the master's own fault, or the tares came from elsewhere and do not belong there. The answer is, An enemy has done this. It is said that expelled renters would deliberately sow tares in the landlord's field. The enemy here is Satan, the Devil. Indeed, God has a purpose with the presence of tares in the church: but their spiritual-ethical origin is not from Christ but from the Devil. Christ does not bear tares, only wheat; his Spirit never works unbelief, only faith. He does this secretly, at night, under cover of darkness, "while men slept".

QUESTIONS: Prove that Jesus believed in a personal Devil? Does our modern world believe in a Devil? Is the church of our day enough aware of his existence and wicked work? Mention various ways
by which Satan sows tares in the church? Why do you believe that the word "field" must be understood in the limited sense of the church institute? Prove that although the tares are spiritually the work of the Devil, God has a purpose in their presence in the church. Does "while men slept" imply that the servants were lax and thus to blame for the planting of the tares? Do the servants appear lax in the parable, vs. 27, 28?

**Patient Waiting.**

The parable teaches, secondly, patient waiting. The question, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? was but natural. The servants were good servants. servants who sought their lord's welfare. Which Christian delights in tares in the church? Some have attempted to create a pure church by rejecting infant baptism, by setting up strict tests for confession, etc. All these attempts are doomed to fail. Christ simply says, "Let both grow together until harvest". That does not, of course, imply that there is to be no exercise of Christian discipline in the church. There must be, cf. Matt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5:5, 13. The parable does mean, however, that final separation cannot be made here and now. Discipline can only be over the walk, not over the heart. To attempt establishing a church free from tares always results in pulling out the wheat with the tares.

**QUESTIONS:** Prove from Scripture that Christian discipline must be exercised in the church institute? Why is it impossible that this parable teaches no discipline? Is it wrong to desire a church free from tares? May we try to weed out tares? Why does Christ allow the tares to remain: Is it in love to the tares?

**Final Separation.**

This parable teaches, thirdly, final separation. The time of harvest is the end of the world: then the separation takes place. The angels are the reapers, cf. Matt. 16:27; Matt. 24:31; I Thess. 1:7. Notice, they will take the tares out of the wheat, not vice-versa. The church is saved, but the hypocrites are taken out of it. They shall be cast into hell. The positive result for the church will be that "then the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father".

**QUESTIONS:** Is hell really a place? Why is it figuratively called a "furnace of fire" and a place of "wailing an gnashing of teeth"? Can you show from Scripture in general that the angels are very much interested in the salvation of the church? In what sense is it meant when the saved are called "the righteous"? What hides the glory of the church in this dispensation?

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Sunday, October 12, 1941 at 4:15 O'clock

- W - L - A - V -
1340 ON YOUR DIAL

Sponsored by the Young Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church