“So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.”

—Psalm 90:12
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New Year - 1942

The last stroke still hangs on the air as the clock in the distant steeple finishes its burdensome task of tolling out another year.

Twelve long, melancholy strokes sent out into a dismal night. Maybe the clock has grown weary of marking time; maybe it is reluctant to usher in a new year.

A new year; yes, but a new year which defies anyone to foster new hopes or linger over vain dreams.

A new year in a world of unrest and turmoil, of bloodshed and destruction, groaning under the burden of war machinery, cowering under the drone of oncoming bombers, shivering amid the shriek of warning sirens, with dangers all around and new dangers threatening.

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

Others may lay the blame for all these painful conditions at the door of a few dictatorial powers who threaten human liberties. Many cherish fond hopes that when these powers are broken universal peace, prosperity and happiness without end will be our reward. May even fondly dream of the day when good will and brotherly love will triumph in a world that remains at enmity with the living God.

Others may babble as fools, blindly and persistently denying the reality of things. YOU know better.

We might as well join the fool-hardy multitude who drown their sorrows and fears in frivolous merrymaking or frantic carousing as to be deceived by such babblings.

We know full well that all these things are coming upon us as the judgment of a righteous God Who is visiting the sins of mankind upon them. Whatever the outcome of this war may be, other signs of judgment, still more severe, are certain to follow. Wars, earthquakes, famines, disasters and calamities of every kind will follow one upon another, ever increasing in intensity, even until the end. Wickedness will abound, antichrist will come into power. The Church will pass through the great tribula-
tion. and the apostacy will be great. All these things must come to pass, for the end is not yet.

Throughout the ages the Church has always sung the mournful song:

In Thy wrath our spirits languish,
Sinful 'neath Thy searching eye,
All our days are passed in anguish,
In Thy wrath we pine and die.
Three score years and ten we tarry.
Fourscore years the strong may stay,
Long the load of grief to carry,
Till at last we fly away.

There is one ray of hope shining through all the dark and weary night. One fond expectation ever warming the hearts of those who are keeping watch: The dawn cometh!

The night may seem long, stretched into years of waiting, and the Bridegroom may tarry, but the dawn of the eternal day is sure to come.

Almighty God still reigns in the heavens and does all His good pleasure. He has the hearts of kings in His hands and turns them withersoever He wills.

Christ rules in majesty at the Father's right hand and is coming with the clouds of the heavens to take His Church unto Himself in glory. All about us we see the evidence of the fact that He is hastening His coming.

He comes speedily: the dawn is approaching.

Our salvation is closer now that it ever has been before.

Three times four strokes the clock in the steeple measured off in painstaking accuracy.

Another year is gone. So much closer have I come to the end.

A new year is ushered in. For still I have work to do as a servant in my Lord's house.

I must buy out the time. I must work out my salvation with fear and trembling. I must walk in those good works which God has prepared that I should walk in them.

Labor while it is day, ere the night cometh in which no man can labor.

And all the while my Lord tells me to be of good cheer, for all is well. God's work never fails to run according to schedule.

A new year in an old world.
O send the day of joy and light.

For long has been our sorrow's night,
Afflicted through the weary years,
We wait until Thy help appears;
With us and with our sons abide,
In us let God be glorified.
So let there be on us bestowed.
The beauty of the Lord our God:
The work accomplished by our hand,
Establish Thou, and make it stand:
Yea, let our hopeful labor be,
Established evermore by Thee.

New Perils

Now that war has become a grim reality also for us in America we face new and graver perils than ever before.

The number of draftees will increase with leaps and bounds also in our circles. Many young men who have been deferred will now be called into service, others who were not considered eligible will now be reclassified. Many homes will see one or two, or possibly even more boys drawn into the service. And if the war lasts any length of time the number of recruits will continue to grow.

Army life will now take on its full significance for a number of our boys. They will be serving in coast defense, or may even be sent out into the possessions in the Pacific or to foreign soil. Many of them will be engaged in active warfare. Moreover, they will be cut off now more than ever from contact with friends and relatives at home. And with that all, wickedness and licentiousness will be rampant round about them. War tends to release, rather than to check, the pent-up emotions and passions of the human heart. According to a recent report a mere fifteen percent of the men in the army did not visit brothels, and that because they were either "married, engaged, fearful or disinterested." The shocking part of this report is that religion or principle is not even considered as one of the possible reasons for abstaining from all forms of prostitution. May that be the fundamental reason with our boys in the army, because that is the only reason that actually holds weight and is able to make them strong in the face of temptation.

Even at home many already fear the perils of war. In times past death stalked the battle fields, counting among its prey mainly those who were engaged in actual warfare. Today even the civilian population, especially along the coast, must be on the alert. No one knows where perils lurk, when, where and how suddenly death will strike.

And in all this, who can predict the outcome of the war, or the aftermath that may follow, particularly for the Church?

Yet there is no occasion to stand aghast as if some strange thing
had come upon us. Surely we have the revelation of the Word of God that cannot be misunderstood on this point. No more is there occasion that our hearts should be troubled. We who believe in God believe also that Christ has entered the Father House with its many mansions to prepare a place for us there. According to His own promise He will return, even with the clouds of the heavens, in signs and wonders in the heavens and upon the earth.

In God's keeping we are just as safe on the battlefield as in our homes. Just as safe in a complete blackout amid shrieking sirens as under the serene and starry sky. Israel's Keeper never slumbers nor sleeps. Therefore, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in Him will I trust."

Psalm 91 takes on a new and richer significance for us today. I do well to read it prayerfully each day.

Society Life
Is a Necessity.

We are created as Covenant creatures, who have need of reflecting God's own Covenant life in the midst of this world. A hermit is an abnormality: his position no normal person would adopt by free choice.

We need contact with others by that very natural impulse to exchange ideas, opinions and other friendly intimacies. An opportunity to express one's thoughts is like the steam valve on a boiler. An attentive ear of a friend into which we pour our confidences and our secrets is like the rushing river which sweeps them away and buries them in the fathomless depth of the ocean. A word of counsel at the proper time is like a lifeline thrown out to a drowning swimmer.

That fellowship in the Church bears the expressive name of "communion of saints". In the Church, the Body of Christ, all the believers are most intimately related to their Head, Christ Jesus, and thereby also inseparably and indispensably related to one another. One life fills all the members of the Body: one faith, one hope, one doctrine. Together they are united in the service of one God and Father. Who is above all and through all and in all. Together they have the same battle of faith, the same pilgrimage through a world in which they are strangers, the same struggles, the same problems.

Especially the youth of the church has need of fellowship with one another. Standing at the threshold of the future, they make some of the most important decisions of
a lifetime which will determine their whole life as it lies before them. It is but a natural impulse, and, therefore, a mark of the spiritual life within them, that they seek Christian fellowship with one another.

Society life is that, but it is more.

It is also a Privilege.

One of the attractive features of society life is that it is not compulsory. No one is forced to attend society. No one is drafted to this particular field of service. Only those who spontaneously enlist are inducted into this division of the army.

It is a privilege to join the ranks of the volunteers, where slackers are not wanted and where the morale can always be kept high. It is, no less, a pleasure to be in the company of those who take a mutual interest in the study of the Word of God, who are eagerly willing to discuss the vital issues of the day and the problems that confront any serious minded young man or woman.

It is a privilege to make your friends from a group of that kind; to establish a real friendship which can weather every storm and become more firmly rooted as the years go by.

It is even that, but it is still more.

It is also of lasting Benefit.

Two persons exchange ideas and both profit by it. They keep their own ideas and add those of the other to their store.

"Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."

The seeds that are sown in the early years of our life will continue to produce a harvest throughout the years to come. Many of our older people can assure us that they received their first training and acquired their first experience in spiritual activities in their own young people's societies. Small efforts which are wisely invested, now will bring big dividends in the future.

By the way, the Standard Bearer is undertaking to discuss some of the vital issues of our day in the light of the Word of God. Many practical, every day problems, such as drama, the movies, Christian entertainment, unions, socialism, and the like, are being viewed from a Protestant Reformed aspect. Since these matters are also of vital importance to every Protestant Reformed young man and woman they make splendid material for after-recess discussion. This can even be done by making use of the articles as they appear in the Standard Bearer.

Now that the societies are once more well under way, let us all put forth every effort to make the most of them.

You are leaders of tomorrow. On you rests the responsibility of the
Church of the future. Now is the time of preparation.

Our Open Forum

Until now my fears that the material sent in for the Open Forum would far exceed the allotted space have proved to be entirely undue.

No material has reached me as yet. There must be some reason for that.

Is there no one among all our young men and young women who feels the urge to express some thought, idea, suggestion or opinion? No one who has something to say, some question with which he is struggling, some problem that he would like to have discussed? Impossible. Perish the thought.

There can be but one reason why no one has availed himself of this wonderful opportunity. And that is that there seems to be some question as to what type of material is expected in this department.

That can be answered very simply. Any question that may have been discussed in your society, or even is fit material for society discussion, whether your society has discussed it or not, is fit for this department.

Besides, that any material that pertains to Beacon Lights or the young people’s Federation, or even to our Protestant Reformed youth in general, is material that we are anticipating in the Open Forum.

You may like the opinion of others on some matter that is of particular interest to you, or that is a problem in your mind and in the minds of others. Why don’t you write about it?

Some one will have to be first. Why not you?

MY PREFERENCE

I’d rather see a sermon than hear one any day;
I’d rather one would walk with me than merely tell the way.
The eye’s a better pupil and more willing than the ear;
Fine counsel is confusing, but example’s always clear.
The best of all the preachers are the men who live their creeds:
For to see good put in action is what everybody needs.
I soon can learn to do it, if you’ll let me see it done;
I can see your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run.
The lectures you deliver may be very wise and true;
But I’d rather get my lessons by observing what you do.
I may not understand the high advice you give;
But there’s no misunderstanding how you act and how you live.

—Selected.
Christian Stewardship... by Rev. J. A. Heys

How beautifully these two words express your relationship. Covenant Youth to God, your Creator, your King. Beautiful the expression is because, to the Child of God who is well acquainted with the Scriptures, it is very picturesque. Mention the word stewardship and the scriptural passages speaking of stewards and stewardship flash before the mind and you see a picture of the king's palace. And there he sees his stewards serving him in royal pomp and dignity. No slavery, no servitude, no despicable, dishonorable toil is indicated by this expression. To the child of God it suggests serving the king in his abode. I hasten to add, serving The King, because it it Jehovah, the Almighty Creator of all things, Lord of Lords and King of Kings, the God of all glory whom we serve as stewards. For, note, it is Christian Stewardship of which we speak. Beautiful the expression is also because it attributes to God the honor and praise due His name. It acknowledges man to be the servant and confesses God to be the Master. It also acknowledges God to be the king and attributes to us our rightful relationship of servants. It exalts God, the Creator, and leaves man, where he rightfully belongs and is, the creature made to serve His Creator.

A COVENANT PRIVILEGE.

The principle thought in stewardship is that we are placed over certain things to employ them to the best of our ability in the service of their rightful owner. By it we understand that relationship of service in which various things are intrusted to our care and for which we are responsible. Need I suggest to you Joseph as he was the overseer in Potiphar's house? All of Potiphar's goods were intrusted to Joseph to use to the best of his ability in Potiphar's service. He was Potiphar's steward. But we are God's stewards. He has entrusted various things unto our care which we must use to serve Him to the best of our ability. We are His stewards whom He has placed upon this earth with all its riches, all its creatures, yet, with all that it contains. And these He has intrusted to our care demanding of us that we use them, not to serve ourselves, but to serve Him. That is one principle we must remember. As stewards of God we must employ all that which He intrusts to our care to serve, honor and glorify Him. The man who uses these to serve self is exciting himself (of course, only in his thoughts, not in reality) to the state of king and not steward.

To be a steward of God, employing all He has intrusted to us to
His honor and glory is a covenant privilege. In that covenant relationship we were created. We were created in God's image, as rational moral creatures with true knowledge, righteousness and holiness, and by virtue of it, His friendservants. And a glorious creation He intrusted to our care which our first parents Adam and Eve did use to serve Him. But you know the consequent history. Scripture has informed you of man's rebellion, how he rose up in revolt, seized and ate the forbidden fruit and by his action said, "I will use this for my own good. I will be like God, knowing good and evil. I will no more be stewarded: I will be king." And in him we rebelled and our nature is still a rebellious one. But, thanks be to God in Christ Jesus, we, His covenant people, are re-created. The Spirit of Christ stills that rebellious spirit and implants within us the spirit of obedience. We are born again, once more to be stewards. What a privilege. For it is not our work. Our fellow men round about us are no stewards of God, not able to, not willing to, not able to be willing to use this earth and all it contains to serve the King of kings and God of all glory. It is a covenant privilege, a gift of grace we have in Christ as God's covenant people.

AN EXACTING DUTY.

But be not deceived. It is a difficult task and very exacting. And this it is for two reasons. In the first place because God demands that we use everything which He has given us to serve Him. Every possession He has given you, your money, your clothes, your food, your drink, your relatives, your friends, your automobiles, to mention but a few, must be used by you to serve Him, and not serve yourself. The air, His air you breathe, His earth upon which you walk, His electricity you use, His sunshine, His rain, his fish and fowl. His gold and silver, His life, His health and strength must be used. BUT I must come a step closer. It requires of you that you use yourself according to body and soul to serve Him. Your mind, heart and strength must be used. BUT I must come a step closer. It requires of you that you use yourself according to body and soul to serve Him. Your mind, heart and strength must be used. It is His, not mine. All you possess you must consider to be means wherewith to serve Him. It means you may never will anything apart from Him. You may desire your food and clothing, your thought must be this, "I must use all to serve God. It is His, not mine." All you possess you must consider to be means wherewith to serve Him. It means you may never will anything apart from Him. You may desire your food and clothing only as a means to serve Him. You may not lift a finger, take one step, speak one word, except to serve Him. Life, indeed is serious. And in our silly age of pleasure
and leisure we should, as people of God, bear these things in mind. Life is not our own, neither are the objects with which we in life come in contact. If we realize this serious calling of ours as stewards, that God demands all this of us, we will not be inclined to ask, "May I go to the movies, to dances, join the godless unions and the like?" These are questions all motivated by the desire to serve self, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life.

Still more this duty is an exciting one because it demands this service every moment of our lives. The Christian Steward does not have a forty hour week, does not have Saturday afternoon off, does not retire at the age of fifty or sixty years. It is a life-long duty. Neither are sickness and disease, war and depression, times when he is excused. And it is well for us to remember as we begin this New Year of 1942 that God demands this service of us every day in that year, every minute and second in each day.

A RICHLY REWARDED TASK.

It is but natural that the steward asks, what are my wages to be for this service of mine? Not silver nor gold, not honor nor fame, shall be the reward. The reward is a spiritual one. And that spiritual reward is the joy, the pleasure, the inexpressable delight to be experienced only while serving. Surely, you have, at one time or another, experienced a similar though, not comparable, joy in the realm of the earthly. The thrill of joy we receive when we serve a superior, the joy to be experienced if we were given an opportunity to do something for our president, to please him in a small way, describes the joy the Christian steward experiences and which is ample reward for him. Why is this so precious to him? Because, as we saw, he was created as God's friend-servant. That is his proper sphere of life. In it he feels at home. As the fish feels at home in the water and enjoys it, the covenant child of God feels at home and enjoys this service. Therefore the words of Jesus, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them".

But that is not all. After this weary night of sin and death is o'er and the New Jerusalem descends out of heaven, we will receive glory and honor and praise. And we shall receive a glorious creation with which to serve God. And this joy of serving, of which I just spoke, will be increased and eternal. The reward then? It will be a perfect creature in a perfect creation, serving God in perfection and experiencing a perfect joy.

The world and your friends may wish you "A Happy New Year"; but God's Word alone can inform you as to how you can have a
The Selection of Books...

by Mrs. L. Doezema

The books you choose to read will be dependent in a very great measure upon the kind of person you are, and upon your personal interests. If you are interested in theology, much of your reading material will be devoted to that subject. If you are interested in education, many of the books you read will be educational in character. You may also have various other interests, and you will read accordingly.

The matter of choosing reading material becomes simpler if one first has a subject in mind. Have you ever gone to a library with merely the vague purpose in mind of finding something to read, and after studying title after title, returned home without a book? You had no definite aim, and not a book in the library attracted your interest. You can save yourself much time and work by first deciding what you want to read.

The problem is, How can we develop certain good interests? And then, How can we select good books? There are several ways, I believe, of developing certain tastes for reading and of learning to select the right kind of books.

One way is to discuss books in your societies. A society member who gives a review of a book for the after-recess program, may very well induce many other members to read it, or his report of it might cause some to decide not to read it. In either case the review has been useful. A society can even make a book list of its own and gradually add to it as more books are read and judged as to whether the society should recommend them.

Talking about books with your friends is also very helpful. Besides giving you something worthwhile to talk about, conversation about books often leads you to read things you never would have desired to read. A friend's interest in a book may very well awake your interest.

There are several reading lists which can be used as guides for selection of books. Church libraries very often publish book lists which are available for those who wish to have aid or suggestions for reading. Colleges also provide
such lists. Of course, these lists are not always dependable, and can be very definitely misleading in providing Christian reading material, but they can be of help to those who know how to judge.

You yourself can look for certain things in examining a book which you are contemplating to read. The title of a book often reveals something of the contents; however, a title alone is never enough to tell you whether or not to read it. Many books have a preface which tells the reader something of the life of the author or of the author’s purpose in writing the book itself and might determine for you if the book is worthy of your attention. Another thing to examine before choosing a certain book, is the table of contents, which informs you about the general outline and theme, and also by the chapter headings tells you whether the book is interesting or striking.

There are some books, I believe, which we should all own and keep on our bookshelf for continued study, reference, and enjoyment. The Bible is, of course, found on every one of our book shelves and we need not emphasize again that it should be read daily for our personal instruction and spiritual enjoyment. An authoritative church history should also find a place there, for we all should have a thorough knowledge of church history and should have available a dependable reference on that subject. Biographies of such church leaders and reformers as Martin Luther and John Calvin and others are also valuable. Also, and this can be called a necessity, a good Bible commentary is invaluable for preparation for society studies. For the same purpose a good Concordance also is very desirable. Some world and national history books and perhaps a few biographies of your choice will also find a place in that bookshelf. Then there must be other books of your personal preference that you will want for yourself.

We should not minimize the importance of finding means of selecting good books to read. It is not enough to read! In some cases it is better not to read at all. In order to read good books, we must first choose them.

Book Review

GIRL REBEL—the autobiography of HSIEH PINGYING.

John Day Company, New York

The literary simplicity of this book is due to the fact that it was translated from the Chinese by two young girls who studied in the United States, and I imagine we would appreciate the book far more if it were able to read it in the original language. But even in its
simple, rather childish form, it makes very interesting reading because of the information it gives about Chinese customs and way of life. The title of the book refers chiefly to the part that the author played in the Chinese revolution and the fighting against the Japanese, and secondly to her whole life, which was a rebellion against the ancient customs and superstitions of her fathers.

Revolution against authority, even if we are inclined to sympathize with it, is decidedly unbiblical. Most books which are written about revolutions, first picture to us some great oppression by a government or by an upper class, and then the courage and bravery of those who rebel, and our sympathy is naturally with the rebels. That is also the case in this book, but we need not let our feelings run away with our convictions.

One need not be sharp to determine that the author is an atheist, a rebel against God as well as man. She attended a missionary school for a while when she was still but a young girl, and was forced to quit because "she could not believe in God".

The merit of the book is in the picture it gives of the Chinese people and of their heathen customs and superstitions. Nowadays we read so often about the Chinese that it is well to acquaint ourselves a bit with the ways of a people that is so strange to us.

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Our Day...

by Mr. P. Zuidema

War has come to our own possessions. Before the year 1941 had come to a close Almighty God in the unfolding of His Divine Counsel brought the dive bombers to our island possessions in the Pacific. The implement of war which was developed to the degree of its great effectiveness, in modern warfare, in the United States has been effectively used to destroy a portion of our naval strength. How much damage was actually done at Pearl Harbor in this surprise attack is at present not fully known.

That God directs all things to come about at His appointed time was revealed to us in the manner in which our country was drawn into this gigantic World Struggle. Although our leaders continued in their efforts to help the enemies of the Axis powers in many ways, which they termed short of war, and also used our naval forces to carry on an undeclared war in the broad Atlantic, actual warfare strikes us from the Japanese in the blue Pacific. While so-called peace envoys from Japan were meeting in Washington the war leaders of Japan were planning the procedure of their surprise attack on Hawaii.

By one mighty stroke we notice a complete change in the attitude and sentiment of millions of Ameri-
cans. Ever since industry began its upward swing because of defense production and lend lease aid to foreign powers strikes have been the order of the day. Labor leaders were actively engaged attempting to stir up labor in defense plants to strike for various reasons. In plants where the union did not have sufficient members to control all they desired, they proceeded with a campaign to swing sufficient numbers to their side to gain the bargaining rights in these plants.

Congress was actively preparing some solution to the strike menace when the Japanese attack occurred. Immediately anti-strike legislation was forgotten while Congress busied itself with the greater danger at hand and prepared a declaration of war against the Japanese. Strikes also have disappeared from the scene. War preparations have taken their place. Disunity and wrangling have changed to unity and agreement. Isolationists have removed themselves from the scene entirely. Those who criticized the Administration because of its policy in the Atlantic are crying for a hasty attack on the Japanese in the Pacific. Japan's attack has bound the American people in a firm determined unity to defend her forces and possessions. God is also punishing us for our laxity and unreligious life by casting us into the turmoil which is afflicting great damage, death, pain, and misery to mankind over the entire earth. Let us turn to Him in His beginning of an hour of trial and cast ourselves upon His mercy and we are assured all will be well with us regardless of how events shape themselves in the future.

Apparent Changes In The European War

In as far as we can rely on reports coming from the European news sources, it appears as though the fortunes of war are changing. The Axis powers seem to be suffering reverses on both battle fronts. The Russians continue to report offensive successes which German communiques do not deny. In Northern Africa reports favor the British forces up to the present time. A question enters our mind as well as the minds of many others—Is Hitler meeting his equal in the wastes of frozen Russia as Napoleon met his? Time alone will tell. If so, we have another mighty force to prepare against, the forces of Communism.

Dutch Activities In The War

Although the Netherlands has been subject to German rule for some months, already the Dutch citizens who are not confined under the Germans in the Netherlands proper are giving a very good account of themselves in present affairs. Dutch submarines manned (Cont. on page 16)
If your curiosity should ever prompt you to consult a map of the United States of America in order to locate Manhattan, Montana, you would very likely discover that to all appearances this certainly must be a very small place. For many maps do not even take the trouble to indicate the spot, and the rest are satisfied to identify it by a small dot and very small-sized letters. But, after you did discover the location of Manhattan you would also notice that we are surrounded by mountains, which would, I suppose, make you conclude that it must be a region inhabited by "hill-billies". That seems to be an idea generally held by our people back east.

Well, it is true that Manhattan is a very small town. We are willing to admit that fact gladly, especially because in reality Manhattan is not the center of our "Holland Settlement" at all*. The greater majority of the "Dutchmen" in our Gallatin Valley seldom come into Manhattan, but do most of their business in the nearby city of Bozeman. Two small communities called "Church Hill" and "Amsterdam" serve as the religious and business centers for our people. Manhattan is merely our mailing address.

As to the idea that we are all "hill-billies" we say: "Nix". Even though we might be isolated geographically we are not in need of pity. The main line of the Northern Pacific Railway runs through our valley as well as Transcontinental Highway No. 10. Nor are we far distant from the Yellowstone National Park, which brings many people from the eastern part of our nation to our vicinity. We insist that we catch on to their peculiarities rapidly. In fact, since we are some four or five thousand feet higher than most places back east, we are apt to feel a bit exalted rather than anything else.

There are two churches on "Church Hill", the Christian Reformed and our own Protestant Reformed. We were organized, as you will remember, just a few years ago with eleven families. At the present time we number about seventeen families. While our Sunday services are very regularly augmented by other families. An increase in membership was also our experience in our Young People's Society. Our first meetings were attended by about fourteen members, while at the present time our roll lists thirty members. Our church is also blessed in that

* The "minority", however, includes the Hoekema family, three of which are found in our society. I fear their reactions to this statement.
there are many small children, all of which means that we have good prospects of future internal growth.

Our society is very active. We meet Sunday evenings in the Church auditorium. Our meetings are usually run off in the following order: the period before recess is devoted to discussion of the Bible lesson outlined by Rev. P. De Boer in "Beacon Lights", after recess we have our business matters, and a program. The program differs from week to week, except that regularly one program each month we have what is called "Question Week". On this occasion our pastor, Rev. H. De Wolf, answers the questions found in our "Question Box". Otherwise an essay, reading, impromptu speeches or a musical number fill up that time. Just recently we have introduced the idea of critics to our program. Two members are called upon to offer their criticisms after the program. This seems to be working out very successfully. I should add that we meet through-out the year, without a "vacation". During the summer months our Bible discussion is concerned with some book of the Bible. This past summer we covered a good portion of the book of Nehemiah.

Within the next few weeks we hope to render our annual Program. This is to take place in our church auditorium, and the general public is invited to attend. This among other miscellaneous numbers. During the Summer months we sponsored a series of four lectures by our pastor, which were enjoyed very much. Rev. H. Hoeksema also spoke for us when he was here last Spring. All of these things keep us quite busy, but we like it. "Semper Fidelis" is not only the name but also the ambition of our society.

This past summer we have also joined the PRYPF. This, in our opinion, has been one of the most worthwhile things we have done. Our delegation returned home from the Third Convention at Oaklawn, Illinois with such encouraging reports that we are determined more than ever to keep our place in the Federation. The true Christian fellowship which we felt there will not soon be forgotten. It has made us feel more keenly that we are one body in our Lord Jesus Christ. May God continue to bless our Federation together with its "Beacon Lights". We find our magazine to be very inspiring, not only, but also very educational. Rev. De Boer's Outlines are truly interesting.

Several of our young people have left us for the winter months, and are now working in various places. Perhaps you have met some of them. However, we hope to see them all back again in the Spring.

As we take a look backward, we can rejoice in the fact that the Lord has blessed us in many ways.
BEACON LIGHTS

It is our hope and prayer that He may continue to bless us, and will enable us to be in truth “Semper Fidelis”.

CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP
(Cont. from page 9)

Happy New Year. We are at war. It’s horror and death, it’s misery and woe is also ours now. Can our New Year be a happy one? Our brothers, our boy friends, and our relatives are in the army. Can we be happy? Can they? Did we perhaps celebrate Thanksgiving Day just in time? Not at all. To be sure, the flesh will suffer. We may experience untold physical misery; but even then the year can be a happy one, even in war, even in the army, difficult though it may be, if we still as Christian stewards serve God with the little He has left us. To serve ourselves we need many things and never have enough.

But you can serve God with bread and water. And if we find ourselves in the Army we can have a happy new year too if we use all that which we come in contact to serve God. A faithful steward, using all intrusted to his care, will have true happiness, and this not only in 1942 but from time to time and in an ever increasing measure as he grows spiritually and his capacity to serve increases. To wish you a “Happy New Year”, let me wish you the joy that Christian Stewardship affords.

OUR DAY
(Cont. from page 13)

by Dutch sailors have taken a sizable toll in the Pacific. Four troopships and two tankers have been accounted for by Dutch submarines. In the Mediterranean a Dutch submarine sunk one of three Italian cruisers which were attacked by the British. We find that conquered countries can still play an active part outside their own occupied territories.

The year 1941 has been a very eventful year in the history of the world. As the year 1942 enters the annals of history we wonder what changes will take place. God will continue to unfold His counsel before our eyes. May we have eyes that see and ears that hear and hearts that understand His marvelous works in conjunction with His mighty Word.

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Open Forum... by John Flikkema, Manhattan, Mon.

At the business meeting of our last Convention a transaction of major importance was made which I did not like. I hope hereby to air my personal opinions, and, if possible, to hear further comment by other young people.

The matter in question is in regard to the joining of leagues with our Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation. Frankly, I am wholeheartedly in disagreement with the proposed idea that would allow a league of societies to join our Federation as a league. It is my impression that in respect to this matter a "mountain is being made out of a molehill". For, after all, in reality there is in our circles only one "League" at the present time. The distinction made between "east" and "west" can not be applied to the situation as far as the Federation and the Western League are concerned today. The admission of Manhattan, not to mention Pella and Oskaloosa, nor even South Holland or Oaklawn, eliminates the possibility that the term "league" could be applied to our Federation.

The suggestion our northwestern Iowa and Minnesota societies had in mind, namely, that two leagues be formed and the two leagues together should form a federation is therefore impossible. This might be a good suggestion if it were possible for all of our societies to join a league of that description. But, as things are today, where do our outlying societies come in? Distance makes it impossible for Manhattan, Redlands, Beilflower, Pella, and Oskaloosa to effectively belong to such an organization. It certainly is not fair to ask us to hang on to the apron strings of a Federation composed of two leagues located in northwestern Iowa and in the vicinity of Grand Rapids.

To admit a league of societies as such into our Federation means that many difficulties will arise that would make a simple problem a very troublesome one. For example, how is this league to come in, as a league only, with its representation based on that fact, or will it have a voice in the common affairs both as a league and as it is composed of different societies? Neither way would prove satisfactory.

There is, as it appears to me, only one way in which this thing can be worked out. Our Federation should consist only of our different societies, and from them should come the delegates to our annual Convention. As individual societies we should all join the PRYPF. Then, let us form as many leagues as is desirable. But these leagues are not to be given any voice in the Federation. If there is a request or suggestion a

(Cont. on page 22)
BEACON LIGHTS

Potpourri... by John H. Piersma

WHAT MAY WE BELIEVE TO BE TRUE. . .

Now that war has been declared by our government we are again faced with the difficult problem of finding out just what we may believe of all the reports that circulate amongst us. Certain we are that much of that which appears in print and is heard by way of the radio as "war-news" is often the victim of propagandizing influences.

A very good paragraph on this subject appears in the January, 1942, issue of the Young Calvinist, which, as you undoubtedly know, is the official organ of the American Federation of Reformed Young Men's Societies and the American Federation of Reformed Young Women's Societies. Under the heading "We Face '42", Mr. Earl Strikwerda, a teacher of history in the Grand Rapids Christian High School, looks at this problem from the point of view of "Censorship". He writes:

"As we go into '42 we should learn to refrain from snap judgments, and to aid ourselves in that discipline let's accept as truth very few of the items that are passed off as such, in print or via the radio. One day we are informed that Midway and Wake have been taken from us. A day or two later we are told that those islands are still ours. Because censorship is in force, it behooves civilians to accept with reservation. Even democracies must institute censorship, because civilian reaction to untoward events can seriously compromise governments or administrations in their conduct of the war effort and foreign policy. Such departments as State, War, Navy necessarily become vastly more managerial. They cannot afford to lay the facts on the table. Moreover, outright censorship has a helpmate in distortion. An example of this is easy to find: Recently one of our Michigan papers gave headline prominence to the fact that a German converted-merchantman had been sunk by the British, but the far more significant fact that German "seawolves" had stripped a British convoy of five vessels was recorded in fine print. Such things are done for obvious reasons, and hence such pawns as we stand to benefit more by sober reflection on the larger outlines of events than by cocksure judgments based on a kaleidoscopic array of necessarily "doctored" and confused facts. Were it not for the fact that the Communists tore open the Russian archives in 1917, we would know very little of the background of that struggle. Great Britain, we are told, opens her foreign office records on a given event only after fifty years has elapsed. So how
can we presume to know anything really significant on the background and struggles of our present-day catastrophe?"

* * * *

Rev. Harry A. Dykstra
interprets. . .

In the November issue of the Young Calvinist we notice that the department entitled: "After-recess Program Topics" has been assigned to a former missionary to China, the Reverend Harry A. Dykstra. Missionary Dykstra has been laboring under the auspices of the Christian Reformed Denomination, but due to the extenuating circumstances existing in the Orient, has returned to this country.

Under the general heading "Christian (Reformed) Missions" Reverend Dykstra has been asked to consider the case for Christian missionary activity. And the very first article, more or less introductory, bears out the fact that this is a most interesting subject. If some of our own young people's organizations are looking for a good topic for a lively after-recess discussion, try this one.

The question asked in this first article is: "Are Christian Missions Presumptuous?" The writer paraphrases this question in the very first sentence by saying that "stated in plain words, we should face the question whether it is not "nervy" on our part to carry on missionary work in the world".

Then, on the basis of a few incidents drawn from the writer's personal experience and an analysis of conditions within our "so-called Christian countries", the author seeks to establish the propriety of this question.

One of the evidences cited to warrant the asking of the question concerning the presumptuousness of Christian missions comes very close to all of us as members of Protestant Reformed Churches. For, after a consideration of the fact of war and its development as it reveals itself among the "Christian" nations as well as the pagan nations today, and noting the "materialistic conceptions and strivings" permeating our institutions, Reverend Dykstra turns his gaze inward to a scene close to his own place of abode. In my imagination I can see him looking out of the window of his Redlands, California home. Then, taking his pen in hand again, these words appear:

"Lastly, note the confusion in the religious world of our own land. Here in Redlands the distance between the Christian Reformed Church and the Protestant Reformed Church is but a few blocks but how vast is the separation which un-Christlike controversy motivated by selfish pride and pettiness has brought about."

That this statement is not inconsequential is evident from the statement immediately following: "In view of the above does not
Christian missions to pagan lands appear somewhat presumptuous?" Together with the other facts that picture the sad situation in so-called "Christian" lands, this is brought to us a true interpretation of the cause for the existence of a Protestant and a Christian Reformed Church in Redlands, California, and as such good reason to ask the above question as to the presumptuousness of Christian missions.

Two issues of the Young Calvinist have appeared since these words were published. In neither of them has this interpretation been branded as false, nor upheld as true.

This column at this time makes no deductions, nor draws any conclusions.

It only extends an invitation. It is directed to the young people of the Redlands Protestant Reformed Church. The invitation requests that they take cognizance of this interpretation of their fellow-citizen, and then appoint one or more than one to favor "Beacon Lights" with an article containing their reactions. Please... 

* * *

"Will Our Schools Also Be Liquidated?"...

Under this question the Reverend Leonard Verduin, pastor of the church for students at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, expresses his well-founded concern for the future of our private Christian Schools. Certainly the fundamental reason adduced by the writer as basis for alarm is correct. He writes: "Let no one think that it speaks for itself that private, positively Christian schools will be welcome in society. Let no one suppose that it is self-evident that they will always be tolerated in our good United States. For the Christian School is too intimately connected with a life and world view that the natural man detests; it is too closely tied to an offence-giving cross to be sure of a place for the hollow of its foot."* 

Reverend Verduin then goes on to show that the decline of religious liberty in Germany has taken place in a way that could be duplicated in these United States. Religious freedom and Christian education may have the support of various laws and a few court decisions here at present, but such was also the case in Germany and the other similarly totalitarian countries. This type of legislation is very easily discarded if a certain issue must be faced, if "a real national emergency should make the realization of the democratic ideal" attainable only at the sacrifice of those bowing beneath the "offence-giving Cross" of our Lord Jesus Christ.


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a spokesman for the Nazi party. to show that the fact that "orthodox Christianity and confessional schools are said to be divisive" has made them unwelcome. "Our children are introduced to the conflict of faiths on the first day at school and a yawning chasm begins to divide German hearts in the earliest days of youth. Therefore the German nation feels the Protestant and Catholic schools to be an unbearable yoke and the most deadly peril to the German will to unity. We want our children to experience together first and foremost that they are Germans." This quotation is taken from the book entitled Germany's New Religion, a translation by T.S.K. Scott-Craig and R. E. Davies, published by Abingdon Press. You know, perhaps, that the originator of the "prevailing philosophy of education" today is Dr. John Dewey of Columbia University. And, as the Reverend Verduin proves, "John Dewey is just as much out of sympathy with the ideology of historic Christianity as is the Nazi theologian". For he writes: "Faith in God and in authority, ideas of soul and immortality, belief in divine grace... have been made impossible for the educated mind of today. (Woerful, Molders of the American Mind. Columbia University, p. 119). And in Dewey's A Common Faith (New Haven, Yale University, p. 84) we read: "Historic Christianity has been committed to a separation of sheep and goats, the saved and the lost, the elect and the mass... those outside of the fold of the church and those who do not rely upon belief in the supernatural have been regarded as only potential brothers, still requiring adoption into the family.' And then follows immediately this awful sentence: "I cannot understand how any realization of the democratic ideal as a vital moral and spiritual ideal in human affairs is possible without surrender of the conception of the basic division to which supernatural Christianity is committed." The author of this article is correct when he concludes that "Dewey sounds too much like Hauer for comfort!"

Let us watch and pray... * * *

Worthy of Imitation... 

Often the very idea of imitation is looked upon with scorn by human beings. The fact that there is in reality "nothing new under the sun" seems to make no difference. Disparaging criticisms are cast upon the one that has obviously "copied" from someone else. Nevertheless, this column is advising the Board and Editorial Staff of Beacon Lights to deliberately copy something from another paper of a similar character. The other publication is the aforementioned Young Calvinist. The thing to be copied, as we see it, is its
new "soldiers and sailors department".

The November, 1941 issue announced this new feature as follows:

"Beginning with the next issue, "The Young Calvinist" will publish four pages each month devoted to our soldiers and sailors. These pages will be filled with stories, pictures, articles, letters from and to our boys. In co-operation with the Board of Home Missions we hope to make these pages of great interest to the boys in the camps and to the folks at home. Your interest and assistance is requested."

The two issues that have followed this announcement have revealed the truth of the fact that this material is interesting at least for those "folks at home". Naturally, we are most interested in the affairs of our brothers in the service.

But this idea is worthy of imitation not so much from the point of view that it provides interesting reading material as that it is a way for us to assist our boys in their new surroundings. All of us agree that we should do all we can to maintain an effective and vital point of contact with those that have left us for the time being.

"To what extent Beacon Lights can copy this idea is a question. Our means are limited. To mention just a few examples, under the present set-up we are not in a financial position to have the necessary cuts made so that we can reproduce pictures of our boys in the military service. Nor would we be able to add any number of pages to our format.

But, be those limitations as they may, the idea itself can be imitated to a large extent, even if it would be necessary to do so unaided by any other agency of our own denomination. And if our own Home Mission Committee should see fit to offer Beacon Lights aid financially and otherwise, who knows but that we could also create a department "of great interest to the boys in the camps" not only, but also one through which they may be encouraged and strengthened to fight a double battle.

I am saying this strictly on my own responsibility, yet I feel quite secure when I say: Watch this paper for further developments!

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OPEN FORUM
(Cont. from page 17)

certain league wishes to bring to the attention of the Federation this could be done in the form of advice brought by letter or by committee.

I am sure that some plan of this sort would work out very favorably, and would prove to give justice to all. I would like to suggest that the committee which has this matter in its hands presents a plan
of this sort at our next Convention. In the meantime let us have more discussion on this subject. Perhaps some one has a still better plan. The discussion could be continued throughout the summer, if necessary by means of Our Church News.

There is one thing that I would like to re-emphasize. That is the fact that all of our societies should be represented in the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People’s Societies. There is no reason why this cannot be done. Come in, Bellflower and Redlands! It is not only pleasant to go to the Convention, but it is also our duty to go. There is nothing that can bolster our feeling of unity as Protestant Reformed Churches more than by taking an active part in the activities of our own Federation.

Did you attend the Convention at Oak Lawn last summer? Do you remember the young man who took movies of the crowd in front of the church? He was John Flikkema, of Manhattan, Montana. We present him to you in this issue under the captions “Manhattan Speaks” and “Open Forum”.

* * *

By the way, Mr. Flikkema derived more than spiritual benefit from last summer’s Convention. He also won the hand of Miss Grace Miedema, one of the debaters from South Holland. Their marriage will take place in the near future. Many congratulations!

* * *

The tremendous events which are shaking the world at the present time must be interpreted in the light of the Christian’s world view. Therefore in this issue we again feature the timely comments of Mr. Peter Zuidema.

* * *

With this issue of Beacon Lights your present managing editor concludes his duties. He wishes to express his appreciation for the support of the Protestant Reformed reading public as well as the cooperation of the other members of “Beacon Lights” editorial staff and also the printers. It has been a privilege and honor to serve you in this capacity.
Bible Study...

by Rev. P. De Boer

Outline XIII

THE BARREN FIG TREE

1st Week of January

For the parable read Luke 13:6-9. For the setting, one ought to read the first five verses of the chapter, and it would be well to read the preceding chapter, especially from vs. 41 on.

THE STORY

In this parable Jesus tells of a fig-tree a man had planted in his vineyard. We are accustomed to see vineyards that are one unbroken array of vines; in Palestine it was otherwise. Fruit trees were planted about in the vineyard, wherever they would take root in the soil. The fig-tree naturally had been planted for fruit. Hence the lord of the vineyard each year looked for fruit from the tree, but for three years found none. Authorities state that a fig-tree was expected to bear fruit at least by the third year, and if by that time it was still unfruitful it usually remained so. Hence, the lord after the third year orders the dresser to remove the tree, that it may not also cumber the soil. The dresser, however, asks permission to labor still more on the care of the tree during the next year, and if it then still bears no fruit, it shall be cut down.

THE SETTING

The setting or occasion of parables frequently sheds much light on them. This is also the case in this instance. The concluding verses of the preceding chapter clearly indicate the terrible judgments of God upon those who continue in sin and evil. The first verse of this chapter tells us that at this very time Jesus was speaking there were those that told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. Jesus' reply to them, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things?", seems to show that those that told him of this agreed that judgment followed lack of repentance, but they made the application of Jesus' statement to others, and not to themselves. As Job's friend had reasoned, and as the wicked Jews reasoned concerning the man born blind, so
these men reasoned that specific judgments followed specific sins. In the meantime they excused themselves. Instead of seeing in God’s judgments a call to repentance for themselves, they made application only to others. Hence, Jesus maintains the sinfulness of all, “I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish.” To emphasize this point Christ also refers to the falling of the tower of Siloam under which eighteen men of Jerusalem perished, saying, “think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish”. Let it be added that the word “likewise” of vs. 3 and especially of vs. 5 implies a similar frightful visitation impending upon them. The word translated “likewise” in vs. 5 differs from that used in vs. 3, and emphatically means “in the same way”. We ought to think of the frightful destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D.

QUESTIONS: Do calamities that come upon individuals and nations imply that they are greater sinners than others? Prove your point. Just how did the destruction of Jerusalem take place in the year 70 A. D.?

THE MEANING

It was to emphasize the truth that “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” that Jesus told the parable of the fig-tree. The fig-tree refers primarily to Israel as a nation. God had planted it, he had expended labor upon it, he had a right to expect fruit. A pointed passage to read in this connection is Isaiah 5:1-7. But Israel had borne no fruit; it continued to walk in sin. As a nation the last efforts were being expended upon it, and if it did not now bear fruit, it would be cut down, and its place removed. Matt. 21:19, 20 tells of Jesus cursing the barren fig-tree during Passion Week. There can be no doubt but Matt. 21:19, 20 represents the prophetic act of doom, while this parable is the prophetic warning of what will take place if there is no repentance. The cursing of the fig-tree is the prophetic fulfillment of what Jesus warns against in this parable.

There are those that take the three years of the parable as representative of Jesus’ three years of ministry, and the one year more as referring to the period between Christ’s crucifixion and the final destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 A. D. There are several objections to this forcing of the parable: the first is that it is not altogether certain that Jesus’ public ministry did last three years; and the second, if the three years are chronological, then the “one year more” should be, which cannot be the case since some forty years intervened be-
tween the crucifixion and the destruction of Jerusalem. It is more in harmony with Scripture to take the three years as representing all the labors of the prophets in Israel during the Old Testament. As a fig-tree ought to bear fruit at least by the third year, so Israel should have at least by this time borne fruit. The one more year seems to refer especially to the ministry of our Savior, the period during which special care and attention was expended upon Israel; all his time and efforts were upon Israel. But it was therefore also imperative that Israel repent, for if now it did not repent, God would erelong take away their place. Israel did not repent, and its place was taken away. It perished on account of its sins, even though it was God's good-pleasure that their fall should be the riches of the Gentiles.

QUESTIONS: Who are represented by the lord of the vineyard and by the vine-dressers? In what way does the parable emphasize Israel's responsibility? What is meant by fruit-bearing in the parable? May we conclude from this parable that God failed to attain his purpose with respect to Israel? See Rom. 11:1-5. If God in His good-pleasure does not make one a partaker of the internal and efficacious call, why has He the right to seek fruits of repentance? See Lord's Day IV. Q. 9.

Outline XIV

THE GREAT SUPPER
2nd Week of January

For the parable itself read Luke 14:16-24: for the entire setting read all the preceding verses of the chapter. It would even be well to read the verses following the parable.

THE STORY

Jesus speaks of a certain man who made a great supper and bade many to come. (The word translator "bade" and "bidden" may equally well be translated "called", since the word used is elsewhere usually translated "called"). At supper time he sent his servant to tell those bidden to come, for all things are now ready. However, all those called offer excuses and refuse to come. The master was angry, and being angry he ordered the poor and maimed, the halt and blind, to be gathered from the streets and lanes of the city. The servant did as commanded, but returned to the lord with the message that there was yet room. Then the lord said unto the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled." The story closes with the words, "For I say unto you. That none of those men which are bid-den shall taste of my supper."
THE SETTING

Before proceeding to the lesson of the parable, attention ought to be called to the setting. According to vs. 1 Jesus had received and accepted an invitation to eat at the home of one of the chief Pharisees. The fact that it was a Pharisee that invited him, and the information of vs. 1 that the party the chief Pharisee had gathered “watched”, i.e. spied on him, make it evident that the Pharisee had invited Jesus for the purpose of catching Him. Very likely the fact that a man ill with dropsy had been placed over against Jesus (vs. 2), and that it was on the Sabbath (vs. 1), show that the enemy wanted to catch Jesus in Sabbath transgression. Jesus knows their evil purpose, heals the man, condemns their wicked conception of the Sabbath, and silences them. But Christ did more. One the one hand he taught the guest-friends of the Pharisee a humiliating lesson in obedience. As they came in they chose the best seats, and Jesus warned them to do the opposite, ending His remarks with the spiritual lesson, “For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased: and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (Vs. 11). On the other hand Christ gave the host himself a lesson, a lesson in true benevolence. The host had invited his friends to this supper. Christ instructs him henceforth to invite the poor and maimed, those who cannot recompense the favor. Then he shall be blessed, “for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just”.

One can readily imagine the consternation of the host and the friends to Jesus’ pointed exposure of their hypocrisy and wickedness. One of them, undoubtedly merely trying to give the conversation a more favorable turn, exclaimed, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” This exclamation can hardly be termed an expression of godliness on the part of the man that uttered it, for Jesus answered “him” with the parable of our outline. The parable contains one impressive warning, a warning well paraphrased by Godet (Commentary on Luke, p. 367) as follows: “Yes, blessed; and therefore beware of rejecting the blessedness at the very moment when thou art extolling its greatness.”

THE LESSON

In view of the setting as well as of the parable itself—and we may add even in view of the verses that follow (“whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple”, vs. 33)—the parable is one great warning, a warning to beware lest anyone refuse to partake in the supper prepared. The supper in the parable represents the full sal-
vation prepared of God in Christ the bread of Life. The supper is a great supper. In the Old Testament God had announced it, but when Christ came, suffered, died and rose again, then it was historically “ready”. Undoubtedly the servant (note the singular) represents the Christ, the great Servant of the Lord, who sends out His servants. Those bidden who refused when called to the prepared supper must clearly be thought of as having first promised to come. There can be no question but these represent, first of all, the scribes and Pharisees who said they were obedient to God, but actually were not. When the Christ came they claimed to be pious, but actually they were wicked, and showed that they did not really care about the kingdom of God. They gave all kinds of excuses—they would not enter the kingdom. The halt and the maim clearly represent the publicans and sinners, who repented at the preaching of John and at the preaching of Jesus, and entered in. These were obedient to the call. However, all the elect are not gathered in when these are brought in: there are also the sheep of the other fold that must be gathered in and become one fold, i.e. the Gentiles. Those of the highways and hedges represent a class held in still lower esteem than the publicans and sinners. Undoubtedly, Jesus has in mind the Gentiles, and here prophesies of their reception into the kingdom after the rejection of the Jews has taken place.

We should not fail to note that the parable speaks of the Lord being angry when those called refused to come. It ought to be remembered that invitations to feasts allowed no refusal; they were tantamount to commands. Therefore those that refused were wicked, and the master justly angry. Neither should we fail to note that the lord of the parable says, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. This the master said “unto you”. This “you” does not refer to the servant: it cannot, since it is in the plural. Undoubtedly Jesus meant to let the man of the parable say this to the chief Pharisee and his guests, who were exactly such as refused to enter.

QUESTIONS: In what sense can it be said that God calls many to the Great Supper, who nevertheless do not belong to His elect? How would you answer those that teach that the preaching of the Gospel is a well-meant offer of salvation on the part of God to every one to whom the Gospel is proclaimed? Should man be “compelled” to enter; if so, in what sense? Will there be room in heaven left after all the elect have been saved?

Outline XV

THE LOST SHEEP

3rd Week of January

The parable is told in Luke 15:
4-7. The chapter contains that marvelous triad of parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son. All three follow immediately one upon the other. The occasion of this series of parables is stated in the vs. 1-3: an occasion and setting which ought to be borne in mind in connection with the study of each of these precious parables. In general all three emphasize the value of finding the lost, but each one does so in its own distinct way. Besides, there is progress in the thought: the three parables are not bare repetitions, but the second adds a thought not included in the first, and the third a thought not developed in either the first or second. This will become evident as we proceed.

THE SETTING

The story of the lost sheep is so well-known, that we need not repeat it. We can at once call attention to the occasion that called forth the parable. As to the occasion note two things: First, the statement in vs. 1 that all the publicans and sinners drew near to Jesus to hear him. Very likely, Jesus' exhortation to invite the poor, those that could not return the favor, (14:13); together with Jesus' parable, showing the ingathering of the publicans and sinners, gave the latter boldness to draw near to Jesus to hear Him.

“All” flocked to Him to hear Him. Surely, they were spiritually drawn to Christ. And Jesus received them. Secondly, note that the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, “This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them”. They condemned Jesus for receiving these people instead of repulsing their advances. Little did they realize that their condemnation of Jesus' reaction implied highest praise. Yet such was the case. It was Christ's very purpose to seek and find the lost. And in the three parables, Jesus plainly defended His work. Hence, vs. 3 says, “And he spake this parable unto them (i.e. unto the scribes and Pharisees), saying”. The parables were spoken to the Pharisees and against them. In answer to their scornful murmuring the Savior utters these three parables, all of which were intended to show that He is fully justified in receiving sinners, since both in heaven and on earth great importance is attached to finding that which was lost.

THE INTERPRETATION

Rather than call the parable the Lost Sheep, it would be more to the point to speak of it is: the Seeking Shepherd. All emphasis is laid upon the shepherd, who loses one of his sheep, who leaves the rest to find the one, who seeks it until he finds it, who finding it tenderly carries it home, who is full of joy.
at finding and calls his friends to rejoice with him. The shepherd, of course, is the Christ, the Good Shepherd. Everyone of his sheep is precious to him. Not one of those the Father hath given him is left to die, but he seeks every last one, and that "until he finds it". He seeks His sheep by His suffering and death and thus making atonement for them, but He also seeks them by His work from heaven, applying what He merited. He brings each of his own to repentance, one by one.

The question quite naturally arises. Who are represented by the ninety and nine who need no repentance? Various explanations have been offered. The most in harmony with the context understands by the ninety and nine the selfrighteous Pharisees and scribes who in their own mind needed no repentance. In actuality, of course, there are no people who need "no repentance". When the scribes and Pharisees murmur because Christ receives the publicans and sinners, the Saviour, as it were, says in this parable, "Let us grant that you are right, that you are really righteous and have no need of repentance. Is it then not proper for me as a faithful shepherd to leave you and seek the one lost sheep? Is it not natural that there is great joy when the lost is found?" Heaven rejoices when a sinner repents: if the Pharisees do not, it is evidence of their wickedness.

QUESTIONS: Why did Jesus compare the lost sinner to a lost sheep? Does Christ seek all sinners? How does Christ seek and save the lost? Does Christ always find those He seeks? Why does Jesus in vs. 7 say, "that likewise joy shall be in heaven..." rather than "on earth"?

Outline XVI
THE LOST COIN
4th Week of January
For the parable read Luke 15:8-10.

The parable, in general, emphasizes the same fundamental thought as the preceding. Christ is still busy defending his action in receiving publicans and sinners. The conclusion of the parable of the lost coin as given in vs. 10, "Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" is similar to that of the preceding parable given in vs. 7.

However, the parables are not entirely identical. In this case that which is lost is a coin, the one that seeks is a woman. Note, further, that while in the case of the lost sheep the lost represented one of a hundred—a small part, the lost now represents one of ten—a much greater part. In the parable of the prodigal son the lost is one of two—still much greater. So Christ points out that the lost is not insignificant but very great. In each parable the lost becomes a greater part. As a matter of fact, after
Christ ends with the wickedness of the elder son in the third parable. It is evident that God rejoices only in the lost and not in the other at all. By implication, the Pharisees and scribes are excluded entirely: only sinners and publicans are es- teemed and cause rejoicing in heaven. The poignant words of Luke 5:32, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" might well be called the final lesson of this chapter of parables.

While the lost in the previous parable was a sheep, in this it is a coin. The coin spoken of in the original is the Greek drachma, worth about sixteen cents. A coin can find itself much less than a lost sheep. It rolls away when dropped, but it is absolutely impossible for it to find itself. A sheep may conceivably wander back: a coin never. Although man is not a stock and stone and God never treats him as such, but remains a free moral agent, and God always deals with him as such, it is none the less true that as far as finding himself and coming to repentance is concerned he is spiritually as unable of himself to return in repentance as a stock and stone. He must be found of God, e'er ever he will find. This parable emphasizes that man is dead in trespasses and sin, hopelessly lost. He must be found or he will forever remain lost. "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him". (John 6:44).

Personally, I believe the woman refers to the Holy Spirit, and His work in the heart of man. The shepherd of the previous article unquestionably is Christ, the father of the next parable is the Father in heaven: one would expect the woman here to represent the Holy Spirit. And indeed, even as the woman sweeps about, looking for the coin with the candle, so the Spirit with the candle of Scripture searches in our hearts, revealing iniquity and sin, and brings the elect to repentance. Neither is it unusual for the Scripture to picture the Spirit as a woman: in Gen. 1:2 the Spirit broods as a hen broods, quickening life: the Spirit-filled church is pictured in Scripture as a woman that brings forth children. Hence, I think that this parable emphasizes the internal quickening operations of the Spirit whereby the dead sinner is brought to the knowledge of sin and to hearty repentance.

It is noteworthy that vs. 10 does not speak of the joy of the angels, but of joy "in the presence of the angels of God". This does not refer so much to joy on the part of the angels, as it does to joy on the part of God Himself. Yet, God's joy is not secret but revealed, it beams forth in the presence of His angels, wherefore they also rejoice. But it is God's joy. As Meyer well says, "The joy of God is rendered perceptible, as He, surround-
ded by the angels, allows it to be recognized in the presence of them”. How wicked it is then for the scribes and Pharisees and all those who do not rejoice when Christ receives unto Himself that which was lost.

QUESTIONS: What objections are there to treat this parable as a mere repetition of the former? Does the Spirit always find? Does the church on earth ever murmur when sinners are received? In what sense is man spiritually like a lost coin? How do Pelagians and Arminians conceive of the condition of the natural man?