Pilate said unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.
EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-chief.................................................................Rev. C. Hanko
Business Manager............................................................Miss Alice Reitsma

All matter relative to contents and the Open Forum should be addressed to

Subscriptions may be sent to Miss Alice Reitsma, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand
Rapids, Michigan.

All copy must be in the hands of Mr. Walter Hofman, 747 Fuller Ave., S. E.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan on or before the tenth of the month preceding date of issue.

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By Rev. P. De Boer
This very old subject was the subject of the very first proclamation of God to man after the fall. It is the Word of God in Genesis 3:15, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shall bruise its heel.” That same word of God continued to reveal in all history; it was fulfilled in the Old Testament dispensation, centrally in the cross, and in the history of the Kingdom of God on earth. This struggle which began at the dawn of history and which shall continue to the end of the present world is described to us in the Word of God; it is sometimes described in definite and detailed descriptions and sometimes it is implied in all the happenings that have taken place and shall take place.

We know that the very ultimate explanation of all history is the glory of God in Christ. “All things were made by Him: and without Him was not any thing made that was made.” However, the glory of Christ is revealed through the way of suffering, the cross, the way of a struggle. The struggle which underlies all struggles is that between the Christ of God and Satan, the prince of this world. We may speak of Totalitarianism and Democracy, or of the titanic struggle now going on in the world between social and political forces and breaking out in the present war. Nevertheless, the struggle
now as well as in the crisis of history, the cross, is between the forces of Satan, the forces of darkness, and the Church of Jesus Christ.

In a consideration of this conflict of the ages there is danger. To see Christ correctly is to see Satan correctly. To view Satan in the wrong light is to view Christ in the wrong light. Though there is conflict, though there are two forces, and though we speak of Christ versus Satan, there is nowhere in God's Word the revelation that these forces are dualistically opposed to each other. Let us first consider the Satan and his warfare. Then we shall consider the Christ and His victory.

Strange as it may seem, Satan has many names. All of these names are given him by God. Not one of them is a name that Satan himself assumes. Some of his names are: devil, evil spirit, destroyer, angel of the bottomless pit, prince of this world, roaring lion, adversary, Beelzebub, dragon, accuser, Lucifer, serpent, god of this world. Each one of these names tells us something of the evil nature of Satan. Just as God's Word pictures to us the infinitely glorious perfections of our Lord Jesus Christ with such names as Lamb of God, Lion of Judah's tribe, the Bright and Morning Star, Immanuel, The Prince of Peace, the Alpha and Omega, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, so God's Word pictures to us the full measure of iniquity and wickedness that is in the devil.

Of all these names, the name Satan is given to him most often. It explains his position and his nature more in general than do the other names. Satan means adversary. He always opposes God. The name of "the man of perdition" also expresses the same idea as Satan, that is, antichrist. The name, devil, literally means, he who throws against and therefore refers to Satan as the false accuser, the liar from the beginning.

The other names given to Satan are more self-explanatory. Angel of the bottomless pit describes Satan as the angel of hell, the pit with no end of deserved punishment. Prince of this age, prince of darkness pictures him as the ruler of this present age as it is characterized by sin. Beelzebub is a name given the devil by the Jews. It meant lord of lies, or lord of filth and dung and was transferred by the Jews to Satan. Incidentally we see the contempt of the Jews for Christ when they said that by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, He cast out devils. The names dragon and serpent are figurative expressions which refer to that detestable activity and desire to destroy even by the most evil cunning.

The Bible, however, gives more than these vivid descriptions of Satan with these names. It tells
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us something about the origin of Satan, his nature, his activity, his position, now, and his punishment.

Concerning the origin of Satan Scripture is almost silent. From a few passages it is possible to say that he is a fallen angel, and that his sin is pride. There are the following passages to which we refer: Jude 6; II Peter 2:4; John 8:44; I Timothy 3:6. We know, too, from Scripture, that the angels are creatures of God as we, as men. We can only conjecture, however, about the time in which they were created. It seems that Scripture implies in Job 38:7 that the angel world was created upon the first day of creation when the heavens were created and that therefore they were created before man.

Satan was certainly chief among the angel world. This is shown from the fact that other angels fell with him and also from the fact that he waged war in heaven with Michael and his angels. That he was an angel tells us something about his nature. Angels are ministering spirits. Satan is an evil spirit. He is therefore not bound to time and space as man is. Nor is he material, composed of body and soul. Neither is he omnipresent. He does not possess the attributes of God. Nevertheless, because he is spirit, we can say he does not grow old and die a temporal death. Because he is a spirit who has fallen he can never be converted and saved. Created perfect by God, he upon an act of his own will became unchangeably filled with hatred against God. Satan and his evil spirits are now always filled with enmity, filled with falsehood instead of truth, selfishness instead of love; hatred and malice have become elements of their active being. "He is a liar from the beginning," says Jesus, "and whatsoever he speaketh he speaketh of himself." Sinning and doing evil have become the moral necessity of his moral nature, just as love and holiness are the workings of the natures of the elect angels. "God gave them over to a reprobate mind" can be applied to Satan and his hordes of reprobate minds. As a fountain that is poisonous, impure, polluted, can only bring forth polluted water, so is Satan impure, and only capable of bubbling forth corruption and hatred.

Because God delivered Satan up to reprobate malice, envy, and hatred against Himself, the living God, for His own glory we see the activity of Satan in the history of the world. Satan personally enters upon every major scene. Each one tells us of his struggle, the conflict of the ages.

It is important to picture these scenes. The first scene is in paradise. Satan filled with hatred against God desired that God's creature, the crown of creation, might turn against his sovereign Maker and serve him, the devil. If these questions were raised: did Satan
witness God's creation of Adam and Eve? and, did he perceive God's purpose in making man a little lower than the angels in order to crown him with glory and honor in Christ, that is, did he know of the Christ, the first-born of every creature? the answers could not be given. We would be inclined to say not at all. But it shows us how much lies beyond the narrative of Genesis 3. We know only of the actions as they happened in paradise and that according to plan Satan seduced Eve and Adam to turn against God.

Upon that beginning of Satan's activity in the dawn of history we also read of God's announcement that the struggle shall continue. Enmity was established by God. From that time on Satan continued his work. He is called a murderer from the beginning. Cain's murder was from darkness, from Satan. It was the seed of the serpent bruising the heel of Christ, the seed of the woman. There is the later struggle against the church at the time of Enoch. At the time of Job Satan appears among the sons of God as an accuser of Job, and is given the power to afflict Job. The struggle of the whole old dispensation is pictured in Revelations 12 as the attempt of the dragon to devour the seed, Christ, that is to be brought forth by the woman. In the fulness of time God sent His Son into the world. And, Satan was there in person marshalling all his forces in his struggle to destroy the Christ. More than at any other time in the history of the world does Satan become active. First there is the attempt to kill the Child when he finds out it has been born. The result was a wailing and lamenting in Bethlehem—Rachael weeping for her children. Though later Christ was led into the wilderness to be tempted of Satan, the devil was there with all his cunning and attempted three times to cause the Christ to leave the way of obedience. Though the devil was defeated in his every attempt, we read significantly in Luke that the devil left Jesus, but not for long. His desire was by no means diminished. Everywhere there were the powers of darkness manifested at the time of Christ's ministry on earth. There were more possessed with demons than at any other time. Satanic power was revealed in the Jews, in the leaders of the people, who plotted from the beginning of His ministry to do away with Him. Satanic power was revealed in the disciples. In Judas the devil entered. Even in Simon Peter, one of the most intimate of Jesus' disciples, the devil was manifested. For Jesus said to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan". With Judas Christ forced the issue with the devil when He said, "what thou doest, do quickly." Shortly before we read Satan had entered into Judas. Finally upon the cross
in the most crucial moment of His suffering there was the attempt of Satan to cause Christ to leave the way of obedience and suffering. In the Jews and the soldiers there was the attempt with the words, "Come down from the cross if thou be the Son of God."

Now in the New Testament dispensation Satan is still active. Repeatedly we are warned of Satanic powers. The apostle Peter warns the church to watch and pray because the adversary, the devil, goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.

It is true, Satan, that old serpent, is bound in this dispensation, this period of a thousand years, according to Revelations 20. But it is also true that he goeth about raging and foaming, planning and devising how to destroy the church. Revelations 20 refers very definitely to the binding of Satan so that he may not deceive the nations of the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog. And even in this chapter in Revelations it is plainly stated that that is only for a thousand years and that afterward Satan shall be loosed to deceive the nations. We are now approaching the time when the action of the nations of the four corners will be unleashed. It seems that now they are no longer deceived. They are awakening and have only now to learn the methods of western civilization which they do so rapidly.

Remember, throughout history it is the avowed purpose of Satan to destroy the Christ and His Church! Let that not be forgotten in this present struggle. Let us remember, too, that he uses every means, that God gives him, and every device he can imagine. The lie and the truth are employed, persuasion and flattery as well as condemnation and destruction. Lying, slandering, temptation, murder, and foul play of all kinds are his strategy.

However, be not dismayed. there is a punishment reserved for Satan and his demons. The beast and the false prophet and them that worshipped his image shall be cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. So shall the devil that deceived them also be cast in the lake of fire and brimstone. This final punishment of Satan and therefore the end of his power, his final defeat brings us to the Christ and His victory. The question of the power of Satan and the struggle of Satan is answered finally when we see the Christ in His power and victory.

With relation to Satan, how must we understand the Christ of God? Must we look upon Christ as sent of God only to obtain the victory over Satan? Many answer this question in the affirmative explicitly or implicitly. May our faith not suffer such shipwreck!

Let us see Christ as the First-born of every creature. Before the world was, Christ was. Before
Satan was Christ is, was, and shall be. The Almighty eternal God with a will, glorious in its perfection and sovereignly free in its execution, did not first will Satan and thereupon as second thought to remedy the fall of Satan will Christ. Eternally Christ was the Word of God, was God. He willed eternally to assume our human nature and in that perfect union of two natures in the one Person of the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. To be sure, all things are to the glory of God. But that glory is revealed in the way of Christ, the Head over all things.

In Ephesians 1:9-10 the apostle Paul expresses that truth which is an eye-opener, a key to many conceptions of Scripture. We read, "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself. That in the dispensation of the fulness of time He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." Concisely, beautifully it is stated here as it is also in other passages. For another example we take Colossians 1:16: "For by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him and for Him." Do you read with me, Satan was created by and for Christ and His Church to the glory of God the Father?

What a view of reality that revelation of the mystery gives us. It not only places us upon a mountain to see the earthly land of Canaan, but it causes us to look upward into the very heavens. We do not stand on Mount Nebo; we stand with John on Patmos and see heaven opened to us. The mystery of God and His Christ is opened to us by faith.

We see Christ victorious from the beginning. Though in the developing history it does not always seem that way, by faith we believe and see it. It often seems as frightening as it is pictured in Revelations 12. The dragon stands against a helpless woman about to bring forth a man child. Even when it is brought forth she must flee into the wilderness and the wounded dragon still struggles.

By faith, however, even in apparent defeat we see glorious victory. We see the Christ victorious in paradise. God thunders victory, "I will establish. . . ." We see the victory in the cross, the general victory. The powers, methods, and purposes of the Satan were laid bare. The Christ is shown in all His glory to the Father. In hell, suffering the agonies of hell, He was victorious. That takes us to the real understanding of the victory. The victory was Christ's eternally, always. The Satan only brought out the victory in more
perfect light. God crucified His Christ through Satan, His tool, to bring out His glory. The more Satan struggled the more God's work shown. He did shine as the light. But, "men loved darkness rather than light." They comprehended it not. "But as many as I receive him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."

Already the beautiful character of Christ's work has been implied in the preceding. The real work that was Christ's, that was in Abel, in Abraham, in the apostles, in the martyrs, in those who died in the faith, in us, is... obedience! Obedience. Adam disobeyed. Christ obeyed. He came to do the will of His Father who sent Him. "Be of good cheer," Christ the anointed comforted the disciples "I have overcome the world".

Finally, we must see this victory in us and for us. This is the victory that overcometh the world. Christ has caused us to have the victory too with Him by giving us faith, and obedience of faith. John says, I have written unto you, young men, because we are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one."

* * * * * * *

An Open Letter

TO THE BOYS IN CAMP

War is a grim business. No one realizes that more than you who are called into service, wherever that may be. We at home live in constant suspense, wondering what tomorrow may bring, but surely no more than you do. Yet of this we may be confident, that God rules over all and does all His good pleasure. He has willed this war, has also brought it about, and the outcome is in His hands. He has caused you to be called into service and has even determined the place where you serve. Wherever you may go, you may be sure that He has willed it so. Your very life is in His hands. Commit your way to Him, casting all your cares upon Him, for He cares for you.

From now on contact with home and friends will become still more difficult. We can but expect that there will be times when we shall not hear from you and times when you will not hear from us. But the bond of faith and love that makes us one in Christ cannot be broken. Be assured of our prayers for you, for distance need not hinder them, but can only serve to strengthen them. The same God rules over all.

We hope you are enjoying the Beacon Lights that are being sent to you and especially the pages set aside for your benefit. If you know of anyone who is not receiving his copy, will you please let us know? And whenever possible let us hear from you that we may keep contact with one another.

Your Brother in Christ,
Rev. C. Hanko.
Perhaps to most of us this sounds like an excerpt from Ripley’s column. If the statement read, “Four insects eat plant!”, it would arouse no curiosity because we know most insects as well as many animals are herbivorous, that is, they live on herbs or plants.

The fundamental difference between plants and animals lies in their method of obtaining food. Did you ever hear a plant eating? Have you ever rested in the stillness of a large forest and wondered how so many huge trees could be constantly eating or drinking noiselessly? The plants quiet method of absorbing dissolved minerals and water stands in sharp contrast to the munching, grinding, gnawing of animals. Even more remarkable is the fact that there are certain plants which eat insects, and this mastication, too, is inaudible.

There are only five members of this carnivorous (animal-eating) group of plants—the Sundew, Bladderwort, Pitcher-plant, Butterwort, and the Venus Flytrap. They are commonly called insectivorous plants because insects serve as the major part of their diet. Careful observation, however, has proved that they are carnivorous rather than insectivorous, as their food is not limited to insects but also includes many small worms, spiders, and microscopic animals.

By this time you, undoubtedly, wonder how these plants catch these small creatures. Have they means of locomotion by which they pursue their prey? Have they mouths by which they capture and eat their victims? Neither is the case, but they do have a means of enticing their prey and an ingenious trap of their own. Let us carefully observe the various means of ensnarement.

At the edge of a bog we see a small herb about the size and shape of a strawberry plant, whose oval leaves resemble a pin-cushion covered with pins shining brightly in the morning sun. Upon closer investigation we find that these many pin-like projections are sensitive hairs capped with a globe-like gland which secretes a glistening, sticky fluid similar to the droplets of morning dew from which it derives its name—the Sundew. Thinking that the sparkling leaves are flowers, insects alight upon them, but immediately the sticky secretion of the hairs imprisons them. While they struggle desperately for freedom the neighboring tentacles being stimulated bend in closely upon them. The glands then produce a digestive ferment which dissolves the insect so that it can be absorbed by the leaves.
while the remains are removed by the wind. Of the ninety species of sundew, only a few are found in our country, for most of them are native to Australia.

On the surface of ponds and streams one may find a Bladderwort drifting along. This filamentous plant sometimes grows to a length of 3 feet. In spite of the fact that it lacks roots the usual source of gaining food, it possesses many small pear-shaped bladders which capture microscopic animals. Although various theories have been propounded to explain the method of seizure, only recently has this mystery been satisfactorily solved.

Long ago, Darwin had suggested that minute animals, while searching for food or protection, found their way through the small opening into the bladder. Later, a Swiss scientist, while distributing some specimens to one of his classes for laboratory work, heard a peculiar ticking. After examination, he noticed that these small bladders operated on the same principle as the medicine dropper or the fountain-pen—suction. His explanation was that the insect, when coming into contact with the sensitive bristles guarding the opening of the bladder, stimulated the bladder to expand and suck in the water which often contained many tiny animals. To prove his theory of suction, he placed a hair in the opening and discovered that it no longer functioned. Further experimentation proved that pricking the bladder with a pin destroyed the power of suction. In both cases the damaged bladders were unable to obtain any more food as insects ceased to enter the bladders. Thus Darwin's theory of the voluntary entrance of animals was disproved.

A third interesting example is the Pitcher-Plant, sometimes found in the Michigan bogs. Its reddish-green leaves are shaped like a pitcher. Inside of the upper edge of the pitcher is a layer of sweet-scented nectar which attracts the insect. Eagerly the hungry insect investigates the source of this savory substance, only to find itself lured into a watery trap below. Futile are its efforts of escape for the slippery walls provide no foothold. Soon the pool of digestive juices at the bottom of the pitcher dissolves its body. Another insect has met its "Waterloo".

The Butterwort—another varied form of this special group of plants—possesses very greasy leaves upon which the victim struggles valiantly for release as he slides to and fro. These very efforts of escape stimulate the leaves to curl inward and, thus, entrapping it while the secretions of the leaves dissolve the helpless body.

For our last example we must travel to a small section in North Carolina, where we can get a glimpse of the Venus Fly-Trap. It has peculiar hinged leaves, resembling the shape of a butterfly's
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body. On the upper surface are six, jointed, sensitive hairs. When an insect touches one of these hairs the leaf immediately closes and comb-like projections on the margins interlock, thus preventing all means of escape. Special glands on the surface of the leaf produce digestive juices which dissolve the prisoner’s body.

Why do these plants eat insects and other small animals? Most of them are found in bogs or similar locations where the soil lacks nitrogen — an essential element for growth. The bodies of these small creatures contain these necessary nitrates, and so, by eating them, the carnivorous plants can obtain what the roots fail to provide.

In order to prove that nitrogen was so important, Darwin covered two plants with gauze to prevent the entrance of any insects. One of these he supplied with nitrates in the form of fertilizer, while the other was unfed. The result was that the former flourished, while the latter wilted and died. In another experiment, he placed particles of meat, cheese, hard-boiled egg, glass, and other bits of food into different Venus Fly-Trap plants. When he investigated the outcome he found that the meat, cheese, and egg particles were dissolved, while the rest were untouched, illustrating that only those foods containing nitrogen could be digested and were useful.

Even though these five types of plants have a very small root system, and are located in unfertile soils, they can beautifully reflect the providence of the great Designer.
(Continued from last Issue)

From 1790 to 1808 four ships were seen by the Pitcairn Islanders, averaging one every four and a half years. None of these stopped and it was not until 1808, when the colony had been in existence for 18 years, that Captain Mayhew Folger of Boston, sailing the Topaze on a sealing voyage, sighted the island and lowered two boats, whose occupants were greatly surprised to see a boat put out to meet them from the shores of the island they thought was uninhabited. Even greater was their surprise when they were hailed in excellent English by the three young men that occupied the boat. The young men invited Captain Folger to come ashore to visit a white man who lived on the island. Captain Folger visited Adams, and his account of what he heard and saw was the first news the outside world had heard of the colony of mutiners on Pitcairn Island.

The next visit was in 1815. H.M.S. Tagus, a British vessel, landed a small boat and was also met by a boat from the island. The account of one of this ship’s officers gives an interesting picture of life on the island at this early date:

"Some of these stalwart, vigorous youths visited the ship and one named M’Coy, seeing a small black terrier for the first time, became alarmed and ran to one of the officers for protection. The slight condescension of the officers, however, turned to embarrassed shame when, before eating breakfast, to which they had been invited, the Islanders said their usual grace. ‘I must confess’, he writes, ‘I blushed for shame when I saw nature in its most simple state offer that tribute of respect to the Omnipotent Creator, which from an education I did not perform, nor from society had been taught its necessity’. Ere they began to eat, on their knees, and with hands uplifted, did they implore permission to partake in peace what was set before them, and when they had eaten heartily, resuming their
former attitude, offered a fervent prayer of thanksgiving for the indulgence they had just experienced. Our omission of this ceremony did not escape their notice, for Christian, eldest son of Fletcher Christian, asked me if it was customary with us also. I, with candor, acknowledge I was embarrassed and wholly at loss for a sound reply, and evaded this poor fellow’s question.

Ten years later Captain Beechey in the Blossom found but little change. Adams had grown fatter and older and several of the children had married and a thriving crop of grandchildren had made their appearance. Beechey relates that Adams visited the ship and also several of the young men, who he described as tall, healthy, robust, with good-natured countenance. They were simple, polite, and filled with eager curiosity. In their desire to emulate their visitors, they wore their few prized European clothes acquired from their previous visitors. All lacked shoes and stockings. Some wore black coats on bare torsos, and some waistcoats without either shirt or coat, etc. Quite a caricature.

The inhabitants of Pitcairn Island had been educated to look to England as their mother country and now Captain Beechey was to them a visible and tangible thread with home. Whereas he represented officialdom to them, he was called upon to perform certain legal services for them, the first of which was the formal marriage of Adams, who felt he had lived in unsanctified union for 35 years. The captain of this, and later British men-of-war, was appealed to, to settle disputes and agreements they themselves could not decide.

Beechey records the population in 1825 as 66 persons, 36 of which were males. Two Englishmen, John Buffet and John Evans, who had been sailors aboard The Cyrus of London, which touched Pitcairn in 1823, had also become members of the colony. Buffet, a man of some education, undertook to teach the children to keep the register of island affairs, and to conduct the religious exercises. Beechey found his sermon to be good, but tedious, since it was repeated three times in succession in order to fix it firmly on the islanders’ minds. Adams also read not only the appropriate prayer from the Prayer-book, but also all those which were intended only as substitutes.

On March 5, John Adams, the last survivor of the Mutiny, died. So diligently had he labored and so commendable were his children, that something of his spirit carried over to the next generation. Adams was sixty-five when he died.

It is perhaps quite natural that some adopted an attitude of cant and self-conscious piety, due to the
reaction and praise their unpre-
meditated devotions had received from their visitors. Captain Wal-
dengrave on a visit in 1830 records that upon meeting with some Pit-
cain women he announced — "I have brought you a clergyman" — "God bless you, God bless you" — was their reply — "to stay with us?" — "No", he replied, "you bad man, why not?" — "I cannot spare him. He is the clergyman of my ship — I have brought you clothes which King George sends". — exclaimed Captain Waldengrave. — "We rather want food for our souls" — came the reply. Fortunately, this tendency was not universal. There is decisive evi-
dence that their piety was genuine. There had been an ever-present fear among the leaders on the is-
land, for years, that water shortage, famine and overpopu-
lation were problems that would have to be faced. So in 1830, after much planning and arrangement, the offer of the King of Tahite to do-
ate a tract of land there — for the step-children of Tahite — was accepted and H.M. Sloop Comet, and the transport bark, Lady Ann, embarked on March 7th for the sixteen-day voyage that brought the 81 colonists back to the home of their ancestors. This adventure proved to be a mis-adventure, for by September 2nd the last of the survivors, 17 having lost their lives one way or another, were back to their haven on Pitcairn.

The offices of teacher, registrar and pastor, which Mr. John Buffet, by virtue of his education had filled, were aggressively usurped by a certain Mr. Nobbs, a well-
educated man, who satisfied his passion for a visit to Pitcairn Is-
land in November 1828, and extended this into a permanent stay.

Since 1819 the Society for pro-
moting Christian Knowledge had taken a deep interest in the wel-
fare of the Pitcairn Islanders. Pre-
sents of religious books and cloth-
ing were frequently sent from England by them. Through this society, the wishes of the islanders and of Mr. Nobb also, to have a pastor duly accredited by the Church of England, were finally granted. Adm. Moresley, leaving his own Chaplain, Mr. Holman, and taking with him Mr. Nobbs, gave him passage via Valparaiso to England where, after some months Nobbs, was first ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Sierra Leone, and then a Priest by the Bishop of London. Before quit-
ting England, Nobbs was appoint-
ed a missionary at a small salary by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Nine months afterwards, Nobbs again landed at Pitcairn, May 16, 1853.

Although the previous attempt at settling elsewhere had miscar-
rried, the threat of scarcity of water and famine due to overpopu-
lation, caused the colony to petition the British Government to remove
them as a body. In 1856 Captain Mathers of the Morayshire arrived and carried the entire population of 187 persons to Norfolk; lately abandoned penal colony of the British. It is about 25 miles in circumference and situated about 100 miles northeast of Sydney, Australia, and over 4000 miles west of Pitcairn. After a two year period on Norfolk Island, some were lonesome for Pitcairn, as is always the case, so first two families, numbering 16 persons, went back to live on Pitcairn. Five years later four more families, numbering 31 persons, left Norfolk and returned to Pitcairn. These 47 persons, descendants of the Mutineers, form the nucleus of the colony as it exists today. The colony rapidly increased and by 1864 it had almost doubled itself, it then consisting of 90 persons.

In 1886 a major event in the religious life of the Pitcairn Islanders took place. John I. Tay, a missionary of the Seventh Day Adventists came among them. Ten years earlier a box of literature explaining their tenets had been sent to Pitcairn. These were first received with horror, later tolerated, and at last embraced. The Islanders, always interested in religious affairs and devoted to reading religious matter, could not resist the perusal of these documents of the new sect. So coming into a prepared field, Tay, during a brief stay of six weeks, was able to persuade a large part of the people to adopt the new articles of belief. A minority were opposed and threatened a rift in community affairs, but they finally gave in and unanimously thereafter adopted the newly-found faith. The people were sensitive to the criticism of English and American opinion, who viewed with regret and sorely lamented their religious debauch.

In 1890 the islanders celebrated their 100th anniversary. It was in this year that amid great excitement, the Seventh Day Adventist missionary ship, Pitcairn, made its first parochial call to the island. She arrived on November 25, 1890, on board, besides Mr. and Mrs. John I. Tay, being the Elders Gates and Read and their wives. The entire community was at this time baptized and a rich fare of theology was given the communicants to digest. In July 1892, the good ship Pitcairn brought Elder Gates back to the island for an extended stay. His influence was great. A literary society was organized. A newspaper “The Monthly Pitcairn” was edited by him. Also, Mrs. Gates’ zeal spent itself in the forming of a kindergarten.

When the Pitcairn touched at the island in 1893, the Gates’ took passage, but their place was taken by Hattie André, a young lady fresh from college, an excellent teacher and loved by all.
At the beginning of the present century, Pitcairn was again almost a forgotten island. Whaling days were over and the opening of the Panama Canal replaced the route around Cape Horn. This increased isolation made the fewer visits paid to the island events of great importance.

Within the last few years, however, Pitcairn has again been brought into regular communication with the world. Vessels of the New Zealand Shipping Company, on their way to and from Panama, stop at the island for a half hour as a diversion for their passengers. The natives come out to sell their curios while the passengers ask them their ill-advised and impertinent questions.

The observance of the Seventh Day Adventists Sabbath (i.e. Saturday, of course) is described in the diary of a visitor as follows:

"Up later than usual this morning — 6 a.m. —, but I am ready for Sabbath School. When the bell rang at 7:30 I decided to sit through all the services, so I might be able to observe how they are conducted on the island. The Sabbath School service began as a general meeting. The church was crowded. Practically every able bodied man, woman and child attended. The service commenced with hymns. A prayer was offered by Ted Christian, Assistant Elder. He is 6 feet 6 inches tall, and in a vibrant voice uttered his prayer in the ever-moving hypnotic words of the Old Testament. Then followed his reading of some Seventh Day Adventist literature. This literature contained an appeal for funds for missionary activities. The collection that morning amounted to £8-10s — quite a figure for 178 poor islanders to roll up. After the collection the congregation split up into five classes and commenced their respective lessons. These classes were followed by church services at 11 a.m. at which communion was celebrated, after which the men retired to an outer room and armed with basins and towels they performed the foot-washing ceremony. At 3:30 p.m. a sort of Young Peoples' service was held and at 7:30 a church business session was conducted."

The island's population today is over 200 people. It boasts a town-hall, a church, a school house and its not so neat houses. The people, through contacts with the outside world and lately by radio, keep quite up-to-date, especially when compared with their former almost complete isolation.

It is remarkable and noteworthy to see the hand of God in directing the way of mutinous English sailors to establish a colony among these native Polynesians. God, no doubt, had His chosen vessels here also and by strange means He brought them to the knowledge of His Word.
The Bible...
—by James Howerzyl,
Vice President, P.R.Y.P.F.

In this age of printing, with its millions of books, we more or less take the Bible for granted. Oh, I know we've read it, studied it perhaps, some more some less, but did you ever pause to consider its supreme importance?

It is, of course, true, that we have another revelation of God beside that in the Bible—in nature. But that revelation must and can only be seen in the light of the Bible. God's revelation of Himself in nature is not complete. Nature alone, without the Bible, could never reveal God to us completely—that is in as far as we can know God here on this earth.

But the Bible is far more than a mere sequel to the revelation of God in nature. In the Bible God reveals Himself to us, especially in the face of Jesus Christ, as fully as it is possible for us to know Him here below. The Bible is the only source of this complete, full, knowledge of God.

In this connection we see also that the opponents of God and His kingdom, both within and without the church, always begin their evil work by denying or tampering with the Scriptures. The unbeliever always denies it and calls it a book of fables and dreams. The heretic, on the other hand, always tries to tamper with it and so make its message conform to the imagination of his wicked heart. We read in 2 Peter 3:16b "which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction". So the Jews of Jesus' day made God's law of none effect, by their traditions, Matt. 15:1-5. So also in our day those who follow the example of the Jews of Jesus' day and make the law of God of none effect by their traditions. Take, for example, the Roman Catholic Church which adds the Apocryphal books to God's Word, adds the tradition of the church to that and above all places the power of the Pope. And solemnly pronounces anathemas upon any one who denies the equality of the Apocrypha
and tradition with Holy Scripture and the supremacy of the Pope over all.

Over against these outright denials of, changes in, or additions to the Bible, the church has and always must take the position that the Bible is the only true, correct, complete and final revelation and word of God to man in this life.

But immediately questions arise. Who is to be the judge of what the Bible should contain? Is not the Apocrapha perhaps a part of the Bible? Are not parts of the Bible perhaps missing? How do we know it is complete? How do we even know that we have the correct Bible?

To answer these questions we must first find how the Bible was obtained. In 2 Peter 3:2 we read, "That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandments of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour". And in 2 Peter 1:20, 21, "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost".

This of course proves that the Bible is no mere, ordinary, commonplace work of man, but is the Divinely inspired Word of God. And when the human authors of God's Word were moved by the Spirit to write, the church recognized it as the Infallible, inspired Word of God. Not always, of course, immediately upon its being written. Our New Testament was not officially recognized as a unity until 397 A.D., but even then its several books had been read in the churches from the time they were written.

Throughout history the church, guided by the Holy Spirit is the judge whether or not any given writing is Divinely inspired and therefore infallible or not. Before the coming of Christ in the flesh this had been done by the Jewish Nation, the Old Testament Church. It had studied and discarded many books and retained those contained in our present Old Testament. That this is the correct method for determining what is Scripture is proven by the fact that Jesus set His stamp of approval upon them and quoted them as the Word of God while He was here on earth. His apostles also by their quotations indicated that also in this the Old Testament Church was guided by the Holy Spirit. So also the Church of the New Dispensation chose between various books in order to determine which were the Word of God.

The Bible itself also bears witness of its own Divine origin. Besides the texts which could be quoted to prove this, the Bible pre-
BEACON LIGHTS

Our Day...

by Mr. P. Zuidema.

Pacific Activities

The war in the Pacific has been in progress approximately ten weeks at this time. For the past month it has been in the spotlight continually. Even though the British have lost most of the region they had gained in northern Africa during this same period greatest interest has centered in the Southwest Pacific. Japan after its initial attack on the United States Fleet has carried on its main drive against the British Empire. The main thrusts have been through Thailand and thus against Singapore which has also fallen into their hands. The Gibraltar of the Far East has fallen and opens the way for the Axis powers to start activities in a third ocean of the universe, the Indian Ocean. This of course, is a severe blow to the United Nations, for Russia and the Imperial forces of North Africa are receiving much of their supplies from the United States by way of this route.

Impatient Questioning

On the streets, in the homes, in the shops, in offices, everywhere we hear questions being asked: Where is our fleet? Why don't we bomb Japan? Why doesn't McArthur...
get help? At present it is impossible to release all information that might be given to our own people to quiet their fears and impatience, for it might be of great help to our enemies to do even more than has been done.

**Answer to Questions**

From reports we can know that our planes are arriving and are also taking an active part. From the attacks on Gilbert and Marshall Islands and the battle of the straits of Macassar we also know that our naval forces are awaiting the most opportune times to inflict the greatest loss possible with a crippled fleet. From other reports such as the Truman Senate committee in conjunction with a report of the Republic Aviation Corp. we learn that this corporation has announced the donation of the 7th plane -P47 of the 189th series to the Air Corps. The series mentioned indicates that many planes of this type have been produced at this plant.

**Failure to Analyze Conditions**

In our questioning and critical minds we fail to properly consider some very important conditions. First of all we fail to realize that the present battle front lies from seven to eight thousand miles from our western shores. Our planes need bases nearer the field of combat than this to be effective. Our supply of usable ships to transport the needed materials and men is very limited. So limited that at present only the most vital materials are being sent. On Dec. 7 we were awakened suddenly but previous to that time we were fast asleep and did not produce necessary equipment. The largest percentage of our equipment was sent to other countries then at war.

Finally, we fail to realize that we have a powerful enemy to fight against. We may feel that in the end we will have the victory but not if we continue to think that way for as the old saying goes—"Tomorrow never comes".

The most important condition, which we as Christians do not realize as we should and which the world does not consider at all, is that all these things are directed by One Almighty Power. Who has also caused all things to develop as they have. He has caused some of the strongholds produced by men and in which man placed his trust to fall before the onslaught of the enemy. The history of the past must teach us to trust in God and not in the power or strength of man. What His final purpose is we all know,—namely, that His Church may be brought to its final reward and that they may live in true peace with Him forever. May we all have our eyes open to see the development of that perfect kingdom which will triumph with the King of Righteousness at the end of time.
Army Life...

Have you often wondered just what we do to keep ourselves busy and also what sore of an outfit I am in? On the outside, looking in, one might have a different slant on things. Even when I was first in the Army and for many weeks after, I wondered just how everything was handled, but of course, now that I am really in the thick of it I know, and believe me, I really know! First of all we have let ourselves believe that we know nothing until it actually happens. Rumors are a joy to many men and spreading them is considerably overdone. Until we see it in writing as an order we try and let it pass by.

I'll try to give you a rough idea of Army Life by starting with the 32nd Division and breaking it down into the small part that I am proud to be doing. First of all the Division is separated into the different organizations called Batteries and Regiments. They, in turn, are either of the Infantry, Field Artillery, Calvary, Anti-Tank or Special Troops together with the Quartermaster and Medical Detachments. Each one of these units has its particular work. The Infantry, such as our 126th Infantry, is separated into 3 Battalions, with 3 Rifle Companies and 1 Heavy Weapons Company in each Battalion. In each of the 3 Battalions there is a Battalion Headquarters.

I am in the Battalion Headquarters of the 1st Battalion. Each Company is split into platoons and squads and each Bn. Hq. is split into sections. The Battalion Headquarters consists of a Pioneer Section, Message Center Section, Intelligence Section and a Headquarters Section. Each Rifle Company has about 190 men and each Heavy Weapons Company has about 170 men. The Headquarters Detachment has 44 men with each section doing a different job. I am in the 1st Battalion and we have about 825 men, making a grand total of about 2575 men for our Regiment.

The 1st Battalion consists of Company A, B, C, D, and the Headquarters Detachment (called the Battalion Headquarters). Each one of the letter Companies indirectly take their orders from the Battalion Headquarters. As clerk of this Battalion, I take and issue orders to these Companies by Order of the Battalion Commander. Besides these duties my work consists of everything that pertains to each man regarding his status from day to day. Every move that the men make is handled through me and any changes from promotions and demotions, transfers, sickness or hospital entries, stockade, furloughs, payrolls, court-martials and ever so many more instances that one can hardly realize would cause
so much work. However, it is very good experience and also qualifies me for administrative work, meaning that if my 1st Sergeant should leave, I would be qualified for his job. My ambition right now is to become the 1st Sergeant or to apply for the Officers Candidate School. My 1st Sergeant and I are quartered together in the Battalion Headquarters' Office. We have the only telephone that is in the Battalion, therefore, causing us to be real busy at times.

During the day we clerks all work in a group at the Regimental Headquarters, in the Personnel Section, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. We keep all the Service Records in one building and we try and do all our work that pertains to them during those hours.

Our Battalion is really outstanding and I am proud to be one of them. Now that I am a soldier and take part each day in correcting any deficiencies that exist of my own and also of the men, I naturally am glad to be able to do my share even though I am one in millions.

It's really interesting to know all these men and find out what each one really is made of. We have their civilian records at our disposal and those men who have never had any responsibility give us an inspiration as we see them make progress each day. Rather than to waste time with those men who think they are here to have a good time, we have our ways and means to deal with them. We're here for nothing but strictly business and 'tis either do or don't.

Up until a few weeks ago we have had the pleasure of having Rev. Schaal render our Sunday Sermons to us in the City of Alexandria, about 18 miles from Camp, but now that he has left we are at a loss. We really do enjoy our Sundays when we can all gather in a group and again feel that certain something that somehow separates us and tells us that we are God's people. How happy I am that I have had the training of a Christian home and amongst Christian people. There have been many times that I have been comforted by prayer and the realization that it is God's will that we are here and that He will see us through this terrible thing that has arrived. I feel that we also have that certain satisfaction in our hearts of knowing God and that during our trials we can turn to Him, whereas those fellows that are of the world continue to live in their misery, we see them every day.

Our Camp recreation consists of playing softball, baseball, football, ping-pong, reading and writing. We certainly can keep busy. Letters from our families, friends, and especially from our dear ones, are always good excuses for time-out to read what they have to write about home.
BEACON LIGHTS

From a Soldier's Correspondence... 

Parris Island, South Carolina

Today I received my copy of the Beacon Lights. I was very glad to get it. I haven't had time as yet to read it, but expect to soon. I have glanced through its pages, and believe I will enjoy it very much.

Well, now a little about Parris Island. It is located about 10 miles from Beaufort, South Carolina. It is quite a pretty Island: there are many palm trees around and it is very warm here. We have just come back from the Rifle Range and I am very well satisfied with my shooting. At present our Platoon, which consists of 61 men, is on mess duty. It isn't hard work, but the hours are quite long. We start at 2:30 a.m. and work until about 7:30 p.m. I like it quite well here. We, that is our Platoon, has been on guard duty lately and that is quite a lonely job. We have to walk our post for 2 hours and then are off for 4 hours.

We have an opportunity to go to Church on Sunday morning. I have been each Sunday since I have been here. It certainly cheers one up very much. Well, I'll close now, and will write more soon.

Yours, Pvt. Charles Sikkema.

* * * * * * *

Camp Lee, Virginia

How are you...? I'm sorry that I didn't write sooner but I haven't forgotten you. Now that I have a real taste of what it is like to be away from home and in the army, I prefer home. I haven't found a decent soldier around here but I seem to get along all right. Everywhere around one sees and hears much gambling and swearing. Tomorrow I start drilling and learn how to use my gas mask. We will also get in some shooting experience and many other maneuvers.

I'd write more about the camp but all such news is censored. The officials are very strict about that. I expect to drill for about 4 weeks and then I hope to go to school for mechanics. In all I expect to be here about 8 weeks at the most, and from then on, I don't know.

The weather here is usually warm, especially when the sun shines. It rains about every other day. The soil is very sandy and the water soaks right through so that it never gets muddy.

Well, I am getting sleepy... have to get up at 6:15 new time.

Yours, Pvt. S. H. Van Weelden.
BEACON LIGHTS

Fort Benning, Georgia.

First of all I want to thank you for your swell encouraging letter. You can't imagine how much I appreciate getting a letter from a friend back home and I look forward to the letters which I receive from the fellows of the Young Men's Society... We have student cooks who do the cooking for us. These cooks are going to the school for cooks and bakers here at Fort Benning and they do slip up once in a while and burn whatever they are cooking. Of course, I would rather be home and be able to attend church and Young Men's Society. But as long as I am in the Army, I will do the best I can for that is my Christian duty. I am getting along fine at school and I have only two more weeks until I can go back to Camp Livingston. In a way, I kint of hate to go back to Livingston, because I'll have to live in a tent again, while here I am living in a swell brick barrack with steam heat. But I have all my friends in Camp Livingston and a place to go and spend an enjoyable Sunday at the home of Rev. and Mrs. Schaal, where I can be with my Christian friends and enjoy Christian fellowship. While I was in Camp Livingston, I spent my Sundays at the home of Rev. Boeke and later Rev. Schaal and I attended the services that they held. Here at Fort Benning I first attended the services at the Post Chapel, but the sermons were very brief and modernistic. For the past four Sundays, I have been going to Columbus, Ga., where I attended the services at the Methodist Church. I enjoy these services much more than those of the Chaplains here at Fort Benning, but they are nothing like the sermons I am used to hearing at home. The people at the Methodist Church are very friendly and I even had a taste of this Southern hospitality a few weeks ago when I and a friend were invited out to a chicken dinner.

At school I have studied every part of an army motor vehicle and now I am doing the work that I will be required to do when I return to my organization. I think I am rather fortunate to be able to attend this school. It may help me when I can again return to civilian life and it has already given me a little extra pay in the army and I expect a better rating when I complete the course.

I have heard about the success of the radio talks by Rev. Hoeksema and of the wonderful singing of the radio choir. I would also like to hear this program and I hope it isn't too long until I get the opportunity to do so. It would be a wonderful thing if this program could be given over a nation-wide hook-up so that people all over the U. S. could hear the truth of God's Sovereign Grace.

I have received copies of Beacon Lights. I think it is a wonderful magazine and I enjoy reading the various articles and the Bible Study Outlines very much. It is hard to find decent literature to read here in the Army Camps, and I always look forward to the next copy. I also get the Church News every week and a church-bulletin, so I keep pretty well posted on what goes on in the church and society.

Yours, Pvt. Henry Koster.
THE UNPROFITABLE SERVANT

1st Week of March

For the parable read Luke 17:7-10.

Strictly speaking the contents of these verses can hardly be called a parable. The usual introductory words “the kingdom of heaven is like unto” are altogether absent; besides, the parable does not even say “a certain man had a servant”, or something similar. The introduction is in this case an appeal, “But which of you, having a servant...”. Hence the usual form of a parable is altogether absent. Nevertheless, the verses ought to be treated in connection with the parables. For, first of all, the words complete the thought of the entire section of parables running from Lk. 15 through Lk. 17:10—the series of parables begun with the lost sheep is rounded out by this story. And, secondly, although the usual form of the parable is absent, the story implied is parabolic, and intended as such, as the application given in vs. 10 sufficiently shows.

The Chief Lesson

The story speaks of a servant returning home from his day’s work of plowing in the field. The servant spoken of is a bond-servant, a slave who belongs entirely to his master. Such a slave does not go home from his day’s work expecting that his master will don slave’s apparel and serve him. On the contrary, when he arrives home it is his duty to prepare and serve his master the evening meal, afterward he may eat and drink himself. Does the master thank him for working so faithfully, for serving him before he ate his own supper? Of course not: as his slave, that is the man’s duty. So, Jesus continues, “likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do.” From this conclusion it is evident: a. That the bond-servant represents man. The picture is exact, for man as the creature of
God is wholly God's; over against his fellow creatures he may speak of "mine" and "thine", but in relation to God all that he has and is, is not his own but the Lord's. b. That as the slave was kept to serve his master, so man is obligated to do what is commanded of him. In relation to God he has no free time, no possessions, etc., of his own. God commands man to serve him with all that he has. c. That when man has done all that is commanded of him, he is an unprofitable servant. Unprofitable means: worthless, good for nothing, useless. Quote, the parable does not teach that man is an unprofitable servant if he fails to do as commanded, but when he has done all that was commanded. Hence, even Adam before the fall was such an unprofitable servant. How much more, then, the Christian, who always falls far short of doing all. The sinner is worse than unprofitable—he is wicked and rebellious.

Perhaps it seems strange that Scripture should call a faithful servant who has done all "unprofitable," "worthless", good for nothing". Yet, this is exactly the case. God, the Living God, is the All-Sufficient and Self-Sufficient One. We cannot add to Him; we cannot bring Him anything that was not first given to us. It is forever impossible for the creature to ever be other than on the receiving end. If we walk in His way, it is His grace that enabled. We are always debtors to Him, He never is to us. Besides, never for a moment does the Living God need us. Acts 17:24, 25.

Naturally, this parable does not imply that God does not reward His servants. It only emphasizes that He does not owe a reward, He is not beholden to bestow anything upon us even were we perfectly obedient. Never must the Christian look upon the reward of grace as something merited, and which we can claim upon the basis of our work. Nay: that attitude must be far from the Christian. He must understand his unprofitableness; as sinner and as creature. The rewards God gives and will give are His free goodness. There is no room for glory other than in the Lord. It is His free grace that He deigns to make those who are worse than unprofitable servants His children, heirs of eternal life.

The Occasion of the Lesson

The immediate occasion of this lesson of the non-meritorious character of good works must be sought, first of all, in the immediate connection. The thought undoubtedly runs as follows: In vs. 3 and 4 Jesus emphasizes the solemn duty of forgiveness toward the brother that repents of his sin, even until seven times in one day. The apostles felt their inability to perform what Jesus set forth as their duty, and they turned to the
Lord with the request, "Lord increase our faith". And that correctly so. Before they could perform what was commanded them, they needed to receive strength of the Lord, the strength that can move mountains. But if then, by their own admission, they need to receive the strength from the Lord to fulfill their duty, it follows that the reward cannot be of merit, and so the Savior used the occasion to emphasize the lesson of the non-meritorious character of good works.

If now this parable be taken in connection with the previous five parables of Lk. 15, 16, a beautiful unity becomes evident. The parables interweave and form one perfect pattern, acting correctly upon one another. The parables of Lk. 15 (lost sheep, lost coin and prodigal son) point out that salvation is of free grace and not of works. Chapter 16 shows in the parables of the unjust steward that although we are saved by grace and not by works this does not mean that works occupy no place at all in the scheme of salvation. The parable exhorts the Christian to do good works, to be faithful in his stewardship. The parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus makes clear that failure to be a steward of God as in the case of the rich man means eternal destruction hereafter. To be without good works is fatal. But, lest that emphasis upon good works again be misunderstood, the Saviour added the parable of the unprofitable servant. There is a reward for faithful stewardship, but it is not of merit lest any man should glory. All salvation is of grace.

QUESTIONS: This parable has been used to justify slavery; what is your opinion on this matter? According to the theory of a "covenant of works" Adam could have earned eternal life had he remained obedient; in what way does this parable disprove that? Catholics speak of works of supererogation: what do they mean thereby, and how does the parable condemn such a position? In what sense can man even apart from sin be called "unprofitable"?

Outline XXII
THE UNJUST JUDGE
2nd Week of March


The Setting

A proper picture of the setting of this parable is highly necessary to understand the point of the story aright. The last part of chapter 17, verses 20-37, treats of the coming of the kingdom of God in its final glory: it stresses: a. That this final coming does not lie in the immediate but in the more distant future, vss. 22-25. b. That this final coming will be preceded by days of great sensuality and excess, vss. 26-30. c. That faithful watching will be necessary the more the day approaches (vss. 31-33), and that only the faithful
will participate in the salvation then revealed (vss. 34-37). Vs. 1 of chapter 18 continues this same line of thought, and introduces the parable the purpose of which is "that men ought always to pray, and not to faint". The emphasis falls upon the last words, "and not to faint", i.e. and not "lose heart", "be discouraged". This includes that circumstances will be such that believers may lose heart and be discouraged and so give up praying. It will seem as though God does not hear their prayer for deliverance. They will be tempted to give up in despair. Lest this take place, Christ tells the parable as an object lesson; they must not cease praying, in time God will deliver.

The Lesson

The lesson of the parable is not that if we only keep on asking for something (no matter what it is) God will eventually grant it. Of course not. Yet prayer is not infrequently so construed. The context speaks of the final and glorious coming of the kingdom—it is for this and all connected therewith that Christians must perseveringly pray. Positively expressed, the lesson of the parable is that God will certainly hear the prayer of His people for complete deliverance although it may seem for a while that he does not hear their cry. The church must not lose heart, she must not be discouraged

—The Lord will deliver his people when the time is ripe for it.

Elements of the Parable

The poor and defenceless widow seeking help and deliverance with the duly constituted authority represents God's elect church. The church is as a widow, since her Lord and Husband is in heaven. The world with Satan at its head is her adversary, persecuting and hounding her through the ages and bringing bitter tribulation upon her especially just prior to Christ's return. The widow appealed to the judge. The judge whose calling it was to do justice and to defend the widow, cared not about God or man and refused to take up the widow's cause. The widow persisted in her appeals to the judge. The judge finally, not because of a change of heart, but out of sheer weariness of her frequent annoyance, took care of her complaint. So the church must persist to cry to the Lord for deliverance. Even though God does not hear at once, the church must continue to cry. She must not faint, but keep on praying for the day of Christ's return, which is the day of her justification. In this world the church never is justified; the authorities that be never give the church true justice. Apparently even the Lord is not interested, for He permits this persecution and trouble to continue. The church must not despair. If the
bring the day of Christ with its
salvation for the church, but waits
until the measure of sin is full and
all the elect are gathered together.
He, as it were, holds back his in-
tense longing to avenge His elect
and punish the wicked, until the
proper time. The Lord is not slack
concerning His promise, He has
not forgotten His people and never
will; God's waiting His people
must account to be unto their sal-
vation (II Pet. 3:15). In the mean-
time His people must remember
that God will avenge them speedily.
There is no checking of sin, there
is no retardation, everything is
hurrying on as fast as it possibly
can to that great day when all that
is crooked shall be made straight,
and His church shall be justified.

Hence, God's people ought al-
ways to pray and not to faint,
knowing that their prayer shall
soon be heard.

QUESTIONS: Aimee Semple McPherson
and others teach that if we only con-
tinue praying and believe God will grant
our petition for bodily healing, etc. What
is wrong with this teaching? Why does
Christ compare the church to a defence-
less widow? What is the difference be-
tween God's forbearance and God's long-
suffering? In what sense is Christ
coming quickly? May the church avenge
herself of her enemies? Prove and ex-
plain in connection with vs. 8b that as
the end draws near there will be only
a few, comparatively speaking, that con-
tinue steadfast in the faith.
Outline XXIII
THE PHARISEE AND
THE PUBLICAN
3rd Week of March


Occasion and Scope

The parable of the unjust judge emphasized perseverance in prayer; this parable emphasizes true humility of heart as the requisite of acceptable prayer. Vs. 9 states "and he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous and despised others". Who these certain were is not stated. Some think of Pharisees present in the audience, others prefer to think of disciples who in some way had revealed the same disposition so peculiar to the self-righteous Pharisees. Certainly this much may be said, that the attitude of self-righteousness was not then, and is not now, limited to a peculiar group, but repeatedly becomes evident in every son of man as he is by nature. The purpose of the parable is evidently a clear warning against all self-exaltation and an exhortation to humility before God. Hence also the final application, "every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted (14b).

The Two Prayers

Two men went up to the temple to pray. Both were intent upon a religious act, both were engaged in a religious performance. Outwardly, there was in so far no difference. Inwardly, there was a great difference. Besides, one was a Pharisee, i.e., a representative of the sect that sought their righteousness by the works of the law. The Pharisees appeared very pious, and the populace looked upon them as paragons of virtue and piety. The other was a Publican. The publicans were tax-gatherers in the employ of Rome, generally hated, and not infrequently guilty of extortion. The populace generally thought as little of the publican from a spiritual viewpoint as they thought highly of the Pharisees.

The Two Prayers

The prayer of the Pharisee was really no prayer. This is indicated already in the words, "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself". This means more than that he stood by himself: it means that he prayed with his thoughts on himself and spoke to himself. Before his mind was the "holy" Pharisee, not the thrice holy God. He was in the temple but not at all conscious of himself as a sinner before God. That his prayer was in the real sense no prayer at all—but wicked abomination, becomes evident. furthermore, from all he says and from what the publican prays and he fails to pray. There was in his prayer no confession of sin, no humiliation in dust and
ashes. Hence, there was no real thanks—only self-exaltation. The Pharisee extolled his own virtues. He complimented himself for fasting twice a week, and for tithing all he had. The Old Testament required Israel to fast but once a year, the Pharisees observed a weekly fast, this Pharisee did it twice a week. The law required tithing of the year's main income, the Pharisees tithed even their thummim and codumim, this Pharisee tithed all he had. In his mind he was very pious. In reality he was very wicked: the righteousness of God and his own depravity were not at all in his mind.

In contrast to the Pharisee the prayer of the publican is simple, yet infinitely glorious. The publican stood “afar”, afar from the holy place, for in his mind he was far from God. His sin weighed on his mind. He saw only his own wickedness. It was not so much certain sins as the fact that he was a sinner in his very nature that he confessed before God. His only plea was for mercy.

God's Answer

Vs. 14a tells us, "this man went down to his house justified rather than the other". God gave the Publican the mercy he asked, and also in his own consciousness he went home with the sweet experience of the blessedness of the man whom God forgives. The Pharisee went home without the peace of God in his heart, that peace for which he felt no need whatsoever. He returned home, justifying himself; he was not justified of God.

Vs. 14b expresses the abiding lesson thus, "For every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted". Cf. Ps. 138:6, Prov. 21:4, James 5:6, I Pet. 5:5.

QUESTIONS: Do Christians ever assume the attitude of the Pharisees? When only does man pray as the publican prayed? Is it always wrong to thank God that we are not as other men are? In view of this parable may we call the prayers of wicked men good and pleasing to God?

Outline XXIV

THE POUNDS

4th Week of March

With this outline we begin the study of the third and last group of parables. As was stated in Outline I (cf. Beacon Lights of Oct. 1), the third and last group of parables all deal with the consummation of the church and kingdom. All treat of the return of Christ on the clouds of glory, and of the rewards and punishments then meted out. The idea of judgment, the judgment of the kingdom, both as it pertained to the Jewish nation and as it would be finally, dominates in these parables. If our chronology is not amiss, then all these parables were spoken during the last days of Jesus' public ministry, i.e., dur-
ing the period immediately preceding His crucifixion.

For the parable of the Pounds, read Luke 19:11-27.

The Story

This parable was spoken in the vicinity of Jericho (vs. 1). The story could not help but remind the people of what had taken place here at Jericho some thirty years before. The palace of Archelaus, the hated tyrant, still stood in Jericho. This ruler who had inherited Judea as his domain from Herod, had travelled to Rome—as was the custom—with much money to influence the Emperor to crown him king of Judea. His fellow-citizens hated him and sent fifty representatives to Rome, where eight thousand more joined them, to appeal to the Emperor Augustus to deliver them from the cursed Archelaus. They failed to attain their purpose. Archelaus was made king, and returning as king by a bloody purge rid himself of his opponents, and built a marvellous palace at their expense. The inhabitants of Jericho, naturally understood quite well when Jesus told the story of a nobleman who went to a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return.

As to the various features of the parable we should note: a. That it speaks of a nobleman who went to receive a kingdom and then would return as a king. b. That it speaks of fellow-citizens who did not want him crowned and who sent an embassy to the far country that they would not have this man as their king. c. That it speaks of servants who each received a pound to labor with as stewards during the lord’s absence. d. That the lord did return, and at his return made an accounting of the servants. The faithful were rewarded according to their diligence, the one unprofitable servant had taken away from him even what he had. The fellow-citizens that would not that he should reign over them were slain before the king.

The Meaning

From vs. 11, “And as they heard these things, he added a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear” it is evident that Jesus spoke the parable to take away a serious misunderstanding. The Jews of that day, not excluding even the apostles, expected the Messiah to establish a reign of glory as soon as he appeared, and that with Jerusalem as the capital. The parable was spoken to show that Jesus would go to a far country (heaven) there to receive the crown, after that he would return. Further, whereas the Jews imagined that all would hail the Messiah, Christ made plain that the fellow-citizens did not want this man to reign over them. At the cross they certainly clearly manifested
this; the Messiah was rejected and nailed to the accursed tree. The servants, in distinction of the wicked Jews and all outspoken enemies of Christ, represent the apostles and followers of Christ—we might say the church members. While Christ remains in heaven they are called to work, to work in His interest, and thus employ the pound entrusted to them. It should be noted that all receive a pound—none more, none less. In this respect the parable differs from that of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30), and the two must not be confused. While the parable of the talents refers to the distinct and different talents each has received and with which each is called to labor according to the number of talents he has received, the parable of the pounds has reference to those gifts of God which all believers have in common (His Word, His sacraments, etc.) and with which each is called to work. As in the parable not all the servants produced an equal number of fruits, so in the church not all labor equally as diligently with the means of grace. As there is one who does not labor at all, so there are church members who although they do not deliberately break with Christ and His church and say “We will not that this man be king over us”, they in actuality fail to use their opportunities, wholly neglecting to employ the pound entrusted. It should further be noted that when the king returns he rewards the faithful servants, disapproves of the wickedness of the faithless servant, and metes out punishment upon the wicked.

Hence from the parable is evident: 1. That twixt Christ’s first coming and second coming there is a period of time during which he is in the far country receiving the kingdom. Christ is today in heaven, and lord over all. 2. That the period of His absence is for the church a period of active waiting, a period during which His servants are called to labor with their pound. 3. That when He returns He will punish not only those who deliberately expressed they would not serve him, but also those church members who were that only in name and did not make use of the goods entrusted by the Saviour of them as stewards. 4. He will reward the faithful according to their faithfulness.

QUESTIONS: The word “nobleman” in the original actually means “the well-born one”; in what sense can this be said of Christ? Who are represented by the fellow-citizens? Who are the servants? What are the pounds which the servants are called to employ? Is mere outward affiliation with the church sufficient to guarantee a place in the final coming of the kingdom? Will there be any difference in the glory of the servants when they receive their reward? Explain.