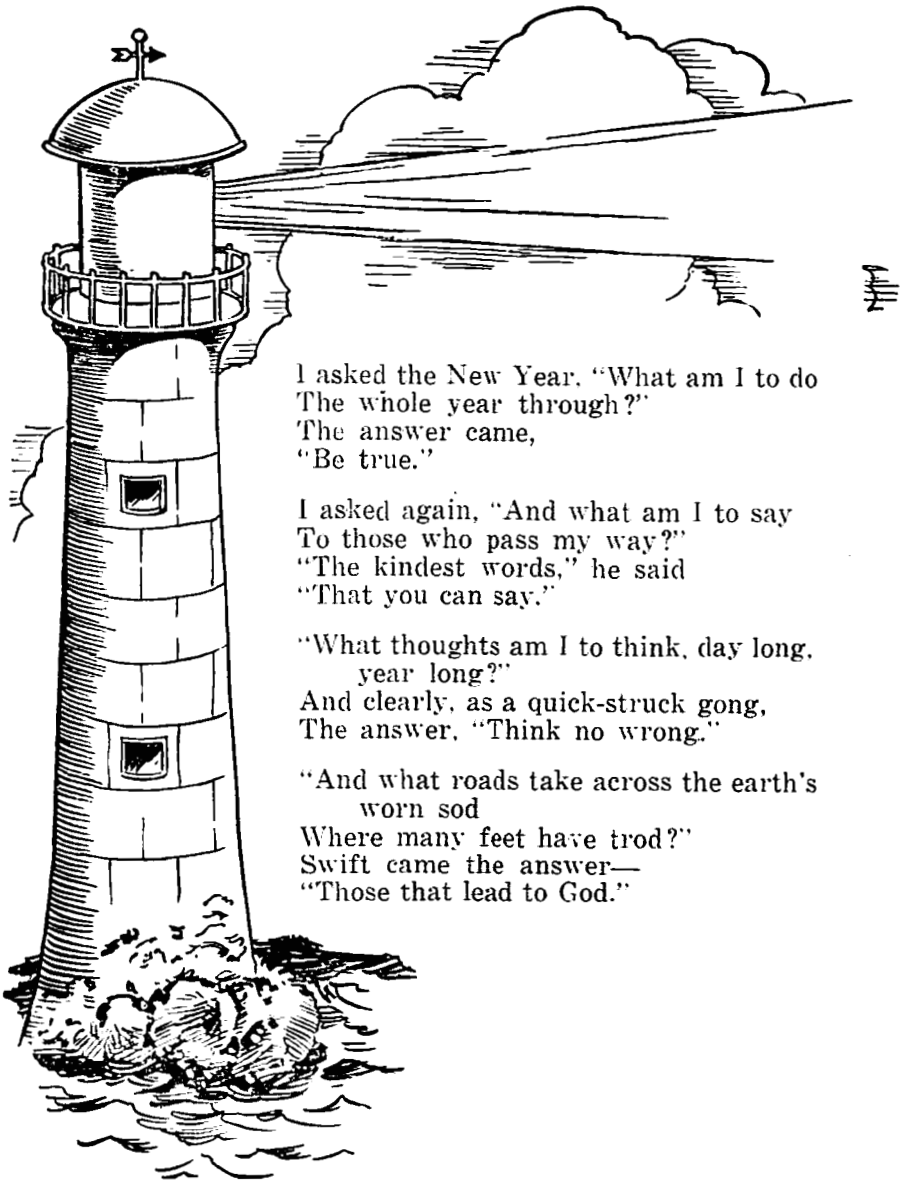
BEACON LIGHTS

JANUARY — 1943



I asked the New Year, "What am I to do
The whole year through?"
The answer came,
"Be true."

I asked again, "And what am I to say
To those who pass my way?"
"The kindest words," he said
"That you can say."

"What thoughts am I to think, day long,
year long?"
And clearly, as a quick-struck gong,
The answer, "Think no wrong."

"And what roads take across the earth's
worn sod
Where many feet have trod?"
Swift came the answer—
"Those that lead to God."

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New Year - - - 1943

by REV. C. HANKO — Oak Lawn, Illinois

As the last, fleeting moments of the dying year slipped away, I sat in quiet reverie, allowing my thoughts to linger over memories of the days gone by. Joys mixed with sorows, pleasures accompanied by disappointments, smiles and sighs passed in succession before me. Who could help but think even then of all the sufferings in a war-torn world, of young men who were called to bid goodbye to friends and dear ones, and of those who are left behind to wonder about their safety and welfare? Who can fail to note that another year, with all that was done and all that has happened, is written in the annals of heaven? Another part of our span of life is marked off and brings us that much closer to the end of our pilgrimage and our final goal.

The midnight hour struck, and with it dawns a new year. Strange how we bury the old in the past as we turn our faces toward that which lies before us. The new year carries with it new hopes and expectations, a certain enchantment of not knowing what the future may have in store for us. And yet at the same time we realize that a new year has dawned in an old, sin-ridden and war-torn world. The sun of a new day arises on the same path of our life journey which was shrouded in darkness as the old year slipped away.

Soon the customary "A Happy New Year" rings forth from friend and acquaintance. Wherever you turn you are greeted in the same, pleasant way. Yet these greetings are very much like a handshake: you soon detect its quality and sincerity. Some of them are cold and lifeless, a mere formality, thoughtlessly spoken. Others are warm and affectionate, but frivolous, lacking in conviction. While others carry a ring of genuine sincerity, arising from

a heart that understands what true happiness is.

There are new year's greetings which pass from one acquaintance to another without as much as scratching the surface of our consciousness. They are thoughtlessly spoken and as soon forgotten.

There are others, from well-wishing friends, loud and boisterous, but empty and meaningless. They would wish you all the "good luck" and good fortune in the world. Gladly they close their eyes to the realities of life, forget the sorrows of yesterday, hope for a better day tomorrow, and assure you that this old world is not such a bad place after all. It is the vain foolishness of a world that gropes in darkness ,is blind to its own misery, and refuses to see life in its proper light.

That God's anger is upon the wicked every day, visiting the world with His just judgments; that those who live at enmity with God must also live in enmity against one another; that the pride of heart, the lust of the eyes, greed and selfishness are the predominating factors that govern the course of a world that lives apart from God, they refuse to see.

Already at the first signs of victory, people begin to anticipate an early end of the war, accompanied by a universal, lasting peace. Already plans are being laid for a new and better world order, where unemployment, economic bankruptcy and wars will never be known. Peace and prosperity, friendly cooperation and good will among the nations is the only happiness they know and desire. And accordingly they wish you a happy New Year.

Only the Christian can wish you happiness in all true sincerity. He realizes that real happiness is the gift of God in Christ Jesus, our Lord. It consists mainly in this, that we have peace with God Who has delivered us from all sin and guilt and made us heirs of eternal life. We are in His Fatherly care, so that not a hair can fall from our heads without His will. Wherever we are and whatever may befall us in this coming year, we are safe in His keeping. He rules the nations by His might and visits the earth with His judgments, but even so He is busy working the salvation of His saints.

Though it may seem folly in the eyes of men, the meek shall inherit the earth.

We are more than conquerors through Him Who loved us.

True happiness is to commit our way unto the Lord, for He will direct our paths.

The editorial staff of Beacon Lights takes this opportunity to sincerely wish you a happy and a blessed New Year.

War Restrictions

To a generation reared in the lap of luxury these ever-increasing rations and war-restrictions are bound to be a burden. A few less spoons of sugar, a minimum of coffee, a limited amount of soap, butter and meat may not be so calamitous, but the tread-bare tires and flimsy gas coupons already threaten disaster as far as the social life of the church is concerned.

Already the sorry complaint that we cannot get gas for this and we cannot get gas for that. Any and every undertaking seems to hinge on the question whether we can get there as conveniently as before.

Beyond a doubt, these war restrictions do create new difficulties and problems which we have never had to face before. Yet we have experienced nothing as yet in comparison with the occupied countries of Europe and the other countries that have been engaged in warfare for some years. As yet the enemy and the calamities of war have not trespassed our shores. We still have more than enough to eat and drink, sit in comparatively warm homes and have plenty of clothing. We can even freely meet and worship according to the dictates of our conscience.

We have not yet learned what it means to suffer and to sacrifice, to brave the anger of the oppressor for the sake of our principles.

The few difficulties that we do experience can only help us to appreciate the privileges we still possess. Catechisms and society life of our young people must go on. It may mean that some of us will have to go on foot. We may have to apply the rule of "share a ride" to the limit. But continue we must.

And even that has its own remuneration. How well I remember, and many others with me, the days of 1924 when our Protestant Reformed Churches first came into existence. We were cast out of the church in which we were baptized and reared, for a time were without our own church property and forced to walk or share a ride to the St. Cecilia building or Y.M.C.A of Grand Rapids, sometimes thru snow and biting cold winds to attend the services or the Young Men's Society. No one seemed to mind the distance or the inconvenience, but the services were always attended to the capacity of the building, and the society flourished as it possibly never did before or after that time.

Ask any of our Christian young men who have gone into service whether they would not gladly exchange their problems and inconvenience for yours. Many of them have searched in vain for a soldier of similar religious convictions

with whom they might enjoy some Christian fellowship. Many, who are more successful, are putting forth every effort to organize a young men's society similar to the one they attended back home. All of them realize, possibly for the first time, just what they are missing by being separated from home and church life. The sound preaching of the Word and the study of the Scriptures with those of the same faith mean more to them now than ever before.

In times like these, when unrest and confusion run rampant, when every foundation of human philosophy is broken, and only the sure foundation of the sole sovereignty of God over all things stands unshaken, when the Word of God is our only safe and sure guide, we must carry on. We need Christian fellowship in a united searching of the Scriptures.

If only our young people have the love and zeal that can carry on.

It is easy enough to say that it cannot be done. But it is more blessed to say that it must be done. Youthful, Christian zeal can do it.

Servicemen's Subscription Fund

Our Prot. Ref. Churches now have 111 Boys in the Service of our Country. 61 of these young men are from our Fuller Ave. Church. Every month, each one of these young men receives his copy of Beacon Lights, by means of our Beacon Lights SERVICEMEN'S Fund.

We have received donations from:

Miss E. Kooima, Rock Valley	$1.00
Oskaloosa Y. P. Society	5.00
Montana Y. P. Society	5.00
Kalamazoo Y. P. Society	3.00
Collection (Nov. 12 — Lecture)	
Expenses deducted	38.12

(Mail all donations to: Beacon Lights Servicemen's Fund, 706 Franklin Street, S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.)

Letters To Our Boys

by REV. WM. VERHIL — Edgerton, Minnesota

No, I don't mean to write some public or open letters to our boys in the different camps or to those in the war zones. No one invited me, nor do I feel inclined to do so.

One letter in each issue of the Beacon Lights will be sufficient, for, if more appear, I am afraid they will be of a stereotyped character—I am afraid they will be identically the same.

My purpose in writing this brief article directly concerns *you* and *you* and *you*, who are members of one of our Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

To begin with, *who* shall write "our boys" in the armed forces?

We brought this question to our Edgerton Society and we were well pleased with the response. Of course, you understand this question was not simply decided by taking a vote. Things are not done that way in our societies. There were some who came with the well-known objection: "I cannot write". Others remarked: "I am willing, but *what* must I write?" Yes, some misplaced inferiority complex was revealed, protesting that it simply was not in their line. However, after a lengthy discussion, every one agreed to do his or her part.

And so I come to you with some suggestions in order that we may accept some definite resolutions. Well, here goes!

Resolved, that every member shall by turn write one letter each week, to at least one of our young men in the Armed Forces. These men of course, must be members of our Society or of our local congregation.

And again we will emphasize the fact, that no one of the members is to be exempted. At the same time it is agreed upon that each week the secretary will ask whether or not he or she who had been asked to write, has complied with the decision taken.

Now let us face the next well-known question: *What* shall I write? Perhaps we know, but if we don't here are a few of the things that must be remembered. We are at war, and, especially when our boys are in the war zone, this means strict censorship. In other words, do not ask all kinds of questions concerning their localities, the number of men, whether or not they are actually fighting, or where they will go from "there". Leave the things pertaining to the war entirely out. And that again for two reasons. First, the censor

may not permit your letter to pass, or he may erase quite a number of your sentences. Secondly, you will not receive an answer about these matters, as our fighting men are well acquainted with the restrictions. (I received a letter of one of my own young men listing nineteen restrictions on seemingly innocent questions.)

Furthermore, do not write how awful it must be for them to be so far from home, their parents and their friends etc. etc. They know and feel that much better than you can express it in your letter. Besides, they are men, who for duty's sake (for God's sake) left us, and don't you try to make them believe that is really a pity when they perform their duty. Then there is the danger of asking too much, as if they are some kind of an "information bureau", who must try to please the inquisitive public.

The contents and purpose of our letters should be of interest to them. Even so much so, that although we do not always receive an answer, we have written to them something that may be to their benefit.

You say, yes, but *how* must I go about it, to be successful?

Well, first of all, write to them (if you are acquainted with the man to whom you are sending the letter) about the things in which they are most interested. And do it in such a way, that *you* yourself are speaking with him face to face. Perhaps it may sound strange, but you should get into that letter "yourself".

I know, it is not always possible to start out that way. I can imagine that it must be much easier when one belongs to a small society, of say twenty members, to be much better acquainted with our boys than when the number is fifty or sixty or more. But even in that case, you can write about the things of mutual interest, of the many things Protestant Reformed young people have in common, or, at least, should have.

Then there is the *personal* touch in letter-writing. In order to be of any benefit at all, one must be able and must always try to somewhat understand the other fellow. Who is he? That is, after all, not so difficult, is it? Speak to his brothers and sisters or parents, they will be of a great help in that respect.

Moreover, young people have so many things in common. For instance, that which impresses you most, may to a great extent also impress the man you are writing.

And then the field is broad. What struck you last Sunday in the morning and evening worship? What was one of the important discussions in your society? What are some of the activities in the congregation? All along the line you will find sufficient material to

write about. However, it must be first of all of interest to yourself. You must be enthusiastic about it and if that is the case, the letter-writing becomes a pleasure.

Of course, the so-called little things can also be written about. They like to hear from you concerning their parents and their friends. So a little talk with those parents and friends may be of a great help to you.

I know, I have not said the last word, neither is it my intention to do so. In fact there are many different angles of approach. All that I have tried to do is this:

Take it upon yourself to start a little work for the sake of the boys who left us. Get into it and if you do, I am sure, that it will be greatly appreciated and at the same time will also benefit you.

Now, then, get busy and write!

WHAT HAVE WE DONE TODAY?

By Mrs. J. A. Pastoor

Much is to be done in the year to come:
What have we done today?
We shall give our aid in a gentle way:
What did we give today?
We shall lift the burdens and right the wrongs;
We shall cheer our comrades by singing glad songs;
We shall speak kind words of love and cheer.
What did we speak today?

We shall be kind and true through the coming year.
What have we done today?
We shall bring a smile to some lonely life.
What have we brought today?
We shall give to the poor a helping hand
When in their troubles they shall stand,
We shall feed the hungry souls of the earth
But whom have we fed today?

We shall reap many joys in the year to come;
What have we sown today?
In the sky our mansions we would build:
How have we built today?
Right here and now, do we do our task?
Yes, this is the thing that we must ask:
What have we done today?

The Destroyer

By Mr. C. De Boer
Kalamazoo, Michigan

Stairway Collapses! Piano Falls Into Basment! Telephone Pole Strikes Passing Car! Similar headlines attract attention. Upon reading the article in detail we find it was sabotage—the secret work of unknown guests—the Termites. These notorious insects have done thousands of dollars of damage and are still at work today; ceaselessly toiling and ruthlessly destroying.

In spite of their destructiveness they prove to supply a fascinating subject for study, especially from the social viewpoint. Many mistakenly call them white ants, but careful observation on the part of scientists has proved them to be quite different and to belong to a distinct order consisting of approximately 1800 species of which about sixty different kinds are found in the United States. Most of them, however, inhabit the tropics of Africa and South America.

Without a doubt, some of the following questions have already entered your mind. How can one distinguish between an ant and a termite? Where do they live and what do they eat? Why are they, unlike ants, rarely seen? Why are they of interest from the social viewpoint? Do they have natural enemies? Of what value are termites?

The bodies of all insects are divided into three parts: the head, thorax (chest), and abdomen. In ants the abdomen and thorax are attached by a very thin hairlike spine while in termites this connection is much larger for it is about the size of a small matchstick in diameter. Termites usually vary in color from a creamy-white to a tan. To distinguish, then, observe their color and notice especially the size of the connecting link between the last two parts of the body.

The natural habitat of these creatures is wood in the form of decaying logs or living trees or finished lumber as in homes. Their nests vary in size from that of an orange to mounds thirty feet high and several feet in diameter. Some found on the trunks of trees fifteen feet above the ground were six feet long and three feet in diameter.

They are equipped with strong powerful jaws which enable them to bite off particles of wood. Very strong is their digestive system which supplies juices making possible the softening and decomposition of this wood. Some termites are unable to digest what they eat without the aid of microscopic one-celled animals called protozoa. These protozoa break down the tiny particles of wood swallowed by their host, using it in the meantime, as their own food supply, and in addition provide certain sugars for their benefactor as a reward for their safe keeping—a mutual relationship by which both reap the benefits. Experiments have shown that when the temperature was raised to a certain degree, the protozoa were killed, resulting in the starvation of the host—the termite.

Don't misunderstand. Not all termites are equipped to eat wood, for only one group—the workers—are able to carry out the work of destruction ,and the king and queen when they first leave the nest, temporarily possess this power until workers arrive to provide for them. Undoubtedly, most of you recall the old, outmoded and unhygienic custom of mothers who chewed certain foods for their infants and then transferred this partially masticated mass to their babies . Workers instinctively carry out a similar plan, for they regurgitrate the food which has already undergone the process of digestion in their stomachs, and then feed it to the young, the soldiers, and to their royal highness—the king and queen.

Rarely are termites seen; commonly, the reason given is because they live inside of trees and logs. However, the real explanation lies in the fact that their bodies are very sensitive to heat and sunlight. Since they have no protective coat as most insects do they dry out very rapidly; therefore, they avoid heat and sunlight.

From a social viewpoint they provide a fascinating study. Like ants, bees, and wasps they have division of labor. The first caste consists of workers whose duties are to construct the termitarium (the nest), to obtain food, and to feed the regurgitated food to the other members, to carry the eggs laid by the queen to the distant cells where they develop, to care for the growing nymphs (the young), and to massage the king and queen.

On the other hand, the soldiers have only one responsibility which is to protect the other members against the enemy; but when we consider the number and size of their foes we realize that this one duty is sufficient. Their most formidible enemy is the ant-eater, others are spiders, lizards, snakes, birds, toads and true ants. How

can the small soldier meet such opposition? Some are equipped with snapping jaws: others have a tubular mouth which operates like a squirtgun, shooting forth a sticky secretion or a poisonous gas which kills the intruder. Both the worker and the soldier are sightless, wingless, and unable to reproduce. They usually live to be from two to four years old.

Kings and queens are much larger than the other members of the termite family, and they alone possess wings, each having two pairs which are used only at the time of flight when they leave the termitarium to establish a nest of their own. After selecting a site for their home, they shed their wings and commence burrowing into the wood. As soon as they have established themselves, the queen assumes her duty of laying eggs, a task which occupies twenty-four hours of the day. They are laid at the rate of six per minute or 8,640 per day or 3,153,600 per year. According to reports, queens live from twenty-five to fifty years. Imagine the progeny! But, consider the enemies! Both the king and queen live in a greatly enlarged room called the royal chamber where each is attended by a score of workers who do nothing but massage their bodies and provide droplets of food.

The eggs are oval shaped and are about the size of a pin-head. The workers carry them to small cells, where they remain until they are hatched into nymphs, which molt from five to eight times before reaching maturity. After each molt, they devour their own skins, thus keeping their homes free from debris.

Natives of Central Africa relish eating the larger termites and some own large mounds of them and care for these insects as we would care for bees. They are also valuable to man in speeding decay of trees and mixing the soil.

Current Events

By the Rev. H. De Wolf

Manhattan, Montana

Bible-Reading.

The Gallup poll, which seeks to find out popular opinion or reaction in respect to almost anything, recently came up with some statistics on Bible-reading in our nation. Its findings were published in the "Newsweek" and indicated that on the whole, "Bible-reading was far from universal among the nation's people". Just in case you are interested, its findings are as follows:

41 out of every 100 that were interviewed admitted that they had not opened the Bible for at least a year;

A tenth of the adult population (8,500,000) reads it daily, and half of that number report that the war led them to turn to the Bible more frequently;

Bible reading has been cut down by a few because their time is taken up with additional work due to the war;

Twice as many women as men consult the Bible daily;

Three times as many men and women over 50 as those under thirty, read the Bible daily.

A few have turned to the Bible since Pearl Harbor with a new purpose, "for comfort in perilous times and understanding of the world that will emerge from them".

I think the article is interesting because it opens a field for speculation as to the real reason why many read the Scriptures. At the same time it clearly indicates that, although the Bible is still the best-seller, it is by no means a very popular Book in our nation. And then of course, a review of this nature shows that God does not leave Himself without witness. Although by far the greater majority of people in our country do not read the Bible, one may safely conclude that there are but a very few who have never heard of the Bible and are not to some extent acquainted with its contents. However, if this poll is anywhere near being reliable, it doesn't seem as though the war has had much fruit in the way of causing people to turn to God, as some would contend. Of course we know that God is able to use war as a means to the end that there would be a great

universal conversion and turning to the Lord, as some present day preachers like to think, but there doesn't seem to be much evidence for such a contention nor much basis for such a hope, not only i the light of the above statistics but also of Scripture itself which in the last instance is the only reliable source. The heaven on earth, which some preachers predict, will certainly come, but not until this earth has been cleansed of all wickedness and sin.

That is the object of the Christian's hope!

German Morale.

It wouldn't do not to say anything at all about the war in this column.

Passing through the last issue of The Saturday Evening Post, we came across an article that is of some interest. It is entitled "How Germany Looks From Switzerland" and is written by an able newsman who, before America entered the war, spent a great deal of time in Germany. He is now in Switzerland, which he calls "the crossroads of Axis-controlled Europe" and which he describes as "an excellent listening post". He gathers his information by interviewing the people who "travel in and out, through the Axis countries and back again".

His article is interesting because it sheds light upon the oft debated question of whether German morale is breaking down. He makes plain that there is no doubt in his mind concerning this question. He says, "Since returning to this country I have talked to many people, and in general they seem to have the impression that Germany is on the verge of collapse. Don't make any mistakes, Germany is still a rugged, closely knit organization. Even with the scales tilted against them, they are far from a beaten people. Today, after thirty-nine months of cruel war, they are more united in their determination to follow Hitler through to the end and win World War II than ever before." He goes on to make plain that the reason for this is not a love for Hitler but because "practically all Europe is thirsty for German blood. . . . they want to make the Germans suffer as they have suffered. The Germans know this, and they shiver at the thought of an Allied victory. That's why they'll fight, desperately to win, even though many of them realize even now that they are bucking a hopeless game."

Mr. Lanius gives some very convincing arguments in his article.

There are many reasons to wish that this war was over, especially for us as young people, but let's be careful that we do not build up any false hopes. As we said last time, remember:

"God rules!"

Book Reviews

Mrs. L. Doezema
Bellflower, California

John G. Paton

by Theodore Mueller
Published by Zondervan Publishing House.

This is a missionary biography, material for which was obtained from John G. Paton's *Auto*biography, which was published by his brother James. The author relates the high spots in Paton's missionary labors and does so in a way that is interesting and not too lengthy; the book can easily be read through in one evening.

John G. Paton was a missionary to the New Hebrides Islands which are located in the "South Seas", the southern portion of the Pacific Ocean, about a thousand miles north of New Zealand, and about four hundred miles west of the Fiji Islands. (Some of our troops are now stationed in the New Hebrides). At the time that Paton worked in the islands, the population was more than seventy thousand, savages of a very low type, mainly Malayan and Papuan, who had no religion or civilization except fetishism and honoring the spirits of the departed ancestors. Polygamy, cruelties, and vices of the lowest sort existed. Paton labored on two of the thirty islands of the New Hebrides.

Paton was brought up in Scotland by God-fearing parents, and even in his early boyhood he keenly felt the desire to be a missionary. As a young man he engaged in city mission work until he finally received a call to labor in the New Hebrides Islands. In August, 1858, he and another missionary set sail with their wives. He worked first on the island of Tanna, where he experienced many hardships and reverses; his wife and new-born son died and he was ill himself because of the tropical climate. But he kept up the work on Tanna for four years, and then was forced to leave because of extreme opposition by the savages of the island. He then took a much needed vacation and collected funds in Australia for a missionary ship and money to engage more missionaries. When he had enough money, he went to Scotland to en-

gage more missionaries and then he returned to the islands with his second wife. At the age of forty-two he began labors on another island, Aniwa, where his work bore great fruit. Paton lived a very full and busy life. He not only did his missionary work on the islands, but he translated a part of the Bible into the native tongue and printed copies of it on a home-made printing press; and in his old age he made a trip around the world, speaking in behalf of missions; he also wrote his autobiography. Paton died at the age of eighty-three.

Few authors have the ability to be brief and yet thoroughly interesting. Yet I found that to be one of the outstanding characteristics of this biography. An evening spent in reading this book can be considered wellspent. It is instructive too, and the author has a pious, sincere outlook upon this missionary work and missionary work in general. One must marvel at the physical and spiritual courage displayed by missionaries like Paton and conclude that they were able to work only by God's grace.

Yet, one question arose in my mind as I read this account: "What about total-depravity preaching to the heathen?" I do not know whether Paton preached that doctrine, but it is indeed missing in this account of Paton's work and preaching. It seems to be the prevailing opinion among many missionaries that Christ and an offer of salvation can be brought to the heathen, but that total depravity is a doctrine that could never be understood. Yet how can one truly bring Christ to the heathen without first teaching them the necessity for the Christ?

Conquest After Battle

by Dan Gilbert
Zondervan Publishing Co

The author of this novel uses his story as a means of propaganda against the materialistic, modern professors in a worldly university. The plot centers around four young people, Alex, Esther, Dudley and Marilyn, who having been brought up in Christian homes, were sent to a worldly university to receive their higher education. All but Esther succumbed to the influence of the evolutionistic, modernistic teachings of their professors. Alex became a total unbeliever, and when he graduated, a crooked businessman. Marilyn was misled by Alex, finally jilted by him, and then became a vile woman of the underworld. And Dudley, who had inherited a tendency toward alcoholism, became a chronic alcoholic. Esther alone remained firm in the faith, and tried by her "sermonettes" to stay the other three from straying away, but pray and

preach as she might, she had no power against the deadly influence of the university teachings. Alex Marilyn and Dudley all keep going from bad to worse, until the close of the book, when each in turn goes through a terrible experience, and each of them is suddenly con verted.

The purpose of the author in writing this novel is not bad. He truly attempts to expose the evil teachings of the modern professors of the university, and in a way this book serves as a warning to those Christian young people who feel they must attend such an institution to complete their education, for he shows how easy it is to fall into the snares of teachings of evolution, socialism, communism and recommendation of immorality such as companionate marriage. The author undoubtedly has come into contact with the reality of it, for he must have obtained his own doctor's degree at such a university.

However, I think the whole story is very much overdone. First, the author causes three of the four characters of his novel to be led astray. That could certainly be possible in an extreme case, but the fact that so many of the characters fall, and also the fact that their fall has such terrible effects in their lives seems a bit exaggerated, and it seems to me, weakens the purpose of the book. The three sudden conversions which occur at the end of the story are also an exaggeration. Such a phenomenon is possible, certainly, but not probable. Those three characters who have fallen so very low, are converted just like that! Esther visits each of them in their calamity, prays with them, urges them a little, and when they get up from their knees they feel they are saved! Even one of the godless professors is converted upon his sickbed. Possible as everything is possible with God, but not probable. The book smacks very definitely of revivalism.

The worst criticism I have to offer after having read this book, is that it has very clearly stated Arminian teachings. Let me quote a portion of Esther's conversation in trying to urge one of the wayward friends to return: "Are you ready now—ready for complete surrender? Are you through compromising? Are you ready to call upon Him in this hour of despair? Are you willing to let Him be your strength and your shield, your refuge and your rock? Are you willing to trust Him only? . . ." I could quote numerous other passages which teach the same doctrine. Such insidious teaching is dangerous, especially in this form, because it seems so pious. This shows us that even when we read so-called Christian novels we have to be very careful to read critically.

To Our Boys In Service

Grand Rapids, Mich.
Dec. 18, 1942

Dear Fellows:—

I received a couple of letters from the boys since I wrote my last letter to you, which I appreciated very much. They were very intersting. One came from New Guinea, and although the writer did not specifically state this, I got the impression that it was written in different installments and between battles. The other contained some very interesting information about life in the camp, and about the training our boys receive. The writer seemed to do real well, and also receive grace to stand in the midst of the world, and to bear witness of the truth as it is in Christ. In this I rejoice.

Well, as I am writing this letter to you, another holyday is approaching: Christmas! On that day we concentrate our attention especially upon the glorious fact, that God sent His Son into the world, that we might be saved from our sins. Long before He was born He was announced as the "Prince of Peace"! And in the night of His birth, that "silent night, holy night", the angels sang of Him in the fields of Bethlehem as the One through Whom there would come peace on earth!

Peace! Perhaps, fellows, as you are spending your Christmas far from home and church, some of you in the camps where you are trained for war, others probably in the thick of battle, you are inclined to feel down-hearted, especially when you hear that magic word "Peace", magic to all of us, but especially to you. Perhaps, to many it appears today, as if this "Prince of Peace" did not have much success in the world, for after nineteen hundred years of His reign, the world is in the throes of the very worst war of history.

Yet, I am sure that you know better. Christ came to make peace with God, peace that is based on the righteousness, not of man, but of God. He established this eternal peace-relation through His perfect obedience on the cross, which was sealed in His resurrection. And also realizes this peace by His Spirit through the Word of the gospel in our hearts, when He assures us that our sins are forgiven, and that we are partakers of His own righteousness before God. That is a peace which passeth all understanding. It is a peace not of this world, and that cannot even be disturbed by the battles of this world. It is a peace which you, too, may possess and enjoy,even though you must spend your Christmas in the camps or in battle. And soon He comes again to destroy forever all the enemies of this peace, and to establish His kingdom of righteousness and peace forever!

May God give you grace so to celebrate Christmas!

Yours as ever,

Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Letters From Our Boys

Camp McQuaide,
California.

Dear . . . .

It is Sunday afternoon and the weather here is swell. The sun shines brightly and the balmy breezes are blowing from the Pacific. Fred Pype and I are here together. It certainly was wonderful that we could stay together as we both entered the army at the same time.

This morning we went to the Post chapel and enjoyed the service more than we ever did before. Truly tho it's not like listening to our own ministers. We miss them very much. We hope that someday we will be able to hear them again, but we must have patience and wait for that time to come. We certainly must stand fast and know that we stand by fighting the good fight of faith until the end. We have confidence that the time will come when God will cause this war to cease and we can see one another once again.

I certainly was glad to hear about the Young People's Banquet you had back home. Truly it must have been an enjoyable day for those who were still at home. Rev. Hanko's speech in the afternoon must have been very interesting for I know he has a good way in bringing out his point. I can imagine that the discussion was quite lively after he finished his talk. I wish that I could have been able to be there, but as you know, I am serving in another purpose. I received a letter from Rev. Hoeksema and also received the "Standard Bearer"; and eve y week I get the bulletin—so you see I still get a chance to know what is going on in our circles. I certainly was sorry to hear that John Koster had to leave, and Geraldine Bylsma writes that things are beginning to become a little vacant when so many men have left for the Service. Well, we all must do our part. However, we must hold fast to what we have, knowing that some day we will be rewarded by our Lord Jesus who manifests Himself as King. So we must be faithful unto death and we know too, that even He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end."

Your brother in Christ,
Pvt. Maynard Bouwman.

P. S.—I always like to hear from those eback home.

* * *

Dec. 25, 1942

Dear Sirs:

I would like to notify you of my change of address in connection with your sending of Beacon Lights. I think it is a very good booklet for those who are in the service.

My new address is as follows:

Pvt. George Regnerus (36371248)
Med. Det., 110th Inf., A.P.O. 28
Camp Livingston, La.

Your Beacon Lights Reader.

From the Editors Desk

The signature of the Reverend W. Verhil to this month's feature article marks his debut as a contributor to Beacon Lights. His article is timely and interesting and worthy of your due consideration.

* * *

The addition of Rev. Verhil's name to our roster of contributors marks the fifteenth of our ministers who have contributed material thus far to Beacon Lights. Next month we hope to add some more new names to this list when we present the ALL IOWA Issue. It is being prepared under the guidance of Rev. G. Lubbers of Pella. Early reports promise a superb performance. Don't miss next months ALL IOWA Issue!

* * *

Among our regular contributors the Reverends C. Hanko and P. De Boer are serving their third year as Editor-in-Chief and Editor of the Bible Outlines respectively; a commendable achievement. At a recent Executive Board meeting we received Rev. De Boer's resignation, effective at the close of this season. We wish to take this opportunity to thank him for his excellent work and splendid cooperation. At his suggestion we are already casting for a new editor for this department. Any suggestions will be gratefully received and considered.

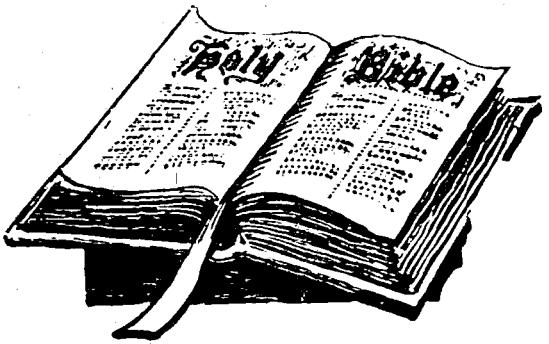
* * *

Looking over the list of contributors to our Service Men's subscription fund we notice that Grand Rapids contributors are conspicuous by their absence. Many more than half of our young men in the service are from G. R. Come on Grand Rapids—let's go!!

* * *

If our memory serves correctly we once inaugurated an Open Forum column and have received just exactly one contribution, from John Flikkema in Manhattan, remember? Let's hear from our readers ,pro or con, criticism, suggestions or what have you. Write that letter today!

SERVICE MEN!! — WRITE US A LETTER!!



Bible Study

by the Rev. Peter De Boer
Holland, Michigan

Outline XIV
ABRAHAM SACRIFICES ISAAC BY FAITH
2nd week of January

Heb. 11:17-19—By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

Compare also Gen. 22.

Abraham's obedience to God in sacrificing his son is the crowning instance of Abraham's faith. More than aught else in Abraham's life obedience to God's command in this matter demanded faith, faith that is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

A SORE TRIAL

It is at once evident from vs. 17 how must we look upon God's command to Abraham. We must look upon it as a trial, a testing, or as Gen. 22 says a "temptation". That it must so be looked upon is evident from the words, "When he was tried". Neither ought it at all be forgotten that this whole matter was a trial. Otherwise we lose ourselves in idle speculation, as some have indeed done just exactly because this was forgotten. Some have asked, How could God possibly demand Abraham to present his son as a burnt- offering, when the Scriptures so abundantly show that he has no delight in human sacrifices. Israel later, for example, was warned not to offer them: yet God here commands Abraham to do so. Further, neglecting to bear in mind that we have to do with a trial, some have said, How could God command that which the sequence shows was not his determinate will and counsel? In connection with such idle speculations the following should be borne in mind: (1) That we do not too hastily say that God has no delight in human sacrifices.

Indeed, God does not delight in these. But the basic reason is that he himself brings the sacrifice in Christ Jesus, who was a living sacrifice. We must not lose the cross when we deny that God delights in human sacrifices. (2) Furthermore—and here all emphasis must fall—the whole history was a trial. That implies that it was not God's purpose that Isaac should actually be killed, but that Abraham's faith might be evinced in his readiness to sacrifice his son to his God. It is true Abraham did not know that until afterward. Had he known it, it would have then been no trial of his faith. God did not tell Abraham of the outcome, as was his right, and as was necessary that the instance might be fully and wholly a trial of his faith.

Just what does it mean that God tried Abraham's faith? In answer to this question we may say that it does not mean that God tempted Abraham to sin, in the sense in which Satan tempts, James 1:13-15. When Satan tempts, when we succumb to the temptations of our own heart, it is because we delight in the sin as such. When God tempts his purpose is not delight in sin; his purpose is always holy, pure and righteous. What it means here is that God made it hard for Abraham, God cast his faith in the crucible, and God did that in order that Abraham's faith might be revealed in all its glory. Thus considered Abraham's trial serves a three-fold purpose: (1) Frist of all it is to God's glory, God tests his own work in his covenant friend-servant that the glory of his own work may be evinced. (2) Secondly, it serves to Abraham's further strengthening in the faith and by this instance he becomes very clearly evident again as the father of all believers. (3) Thirdly, it comforts the church of all ages, since it shows the power of the faith God operates in His people.

Indeed the trial was a sore trial. It was that: for Abraham as a father, and for Abraham as a believer. It was that for Abraham *as a father*, first of all. God demanded of him that which was above all precious—his child, his only child, the child he loved. His child, than which nothing was dearer to him of all he had, that God demanded him to sacrifice. It was hard for Abraham to send Ishmael away, but it was harder to do what God now commanded. Isaac was perhaps in his early teens. Now Abraham was to put him to death with his own hand. Certainly the trials of many believers pale away in insignificance before this one. But, secondly, we should not merely think of this history as a trial for Abraham as a parent—it was also, and above

all, a trial for Abraham *as a believer*. The child was the child of the promise, concerning which God had assured him that in Isaac shall thy seed be called. The promise of God was to be fulfilled in Isaac and his seed. That child of his faith and hope it was that God called him to sacrifice. And God's command brooked no delay —he was to take that son and go at once to mount Moriah and sacrifice him.

QUESTIONS: In which sense has God no delight in human sacrifices? In what sense was Abraham tried? Does God still try his peoples; and if so, how are believers today tried? Why was God's command a sore trial for Abraham as a father? Why, for Abraham as a believer?

A Marvelous Accounting

Abraham obeyed the Lord. However, that does not mean that there was no inward struggle on Abraham's part. It is true the account in Genesis does not with so many words speak of a struggle. From this silence, however, we may not conclude that there was none. That could hardly be. Even our Savior passed through a violent struggle in the garden of Gethsemane, be it that it was without sin. Abraham certainly did not stand higher than the Christ; on the contrary, he surely may not even be put on the same plane with the Christ, for Abraham is like unto us in all things, sin *not* excepted. When Abraham went to Egypt he was not without fear, when he sent Ishmael away he passed through a struggle, and when he first left Ur his arrangement with Sarah (Gen. 20:13) shows that even then his faith was not entirely unmixed. Surely then, Abraham must have passed through a struggle before his faith had the complete victory. The text of Heb. 11 settles the matter and proves beyond dispute that there was some accounting on Abraham's part. The word "accounting" implies this; it means a reckoning such as a bookkeeper or accountant makes when he tallies the disbursements and the receipts. The same word is used in Rom. 8: 18 ("reckon"), where Paul compares the present sufferings with the future glory and comes to the conclusion that the former are not worthy of consideration over against the glory of the latter.

We can easily imagine the accounting Abraham made. On the one hand there was his great paternal love, and what God had promised concerning this son. Looking at this side of the ledger obedience seemed impossible. But on the other hand there was God's clear command to sacrifice the son as a burnt-offering. Besides, on this side of the record also belonged the fact that the Almighty and Faithful God was able to

raise Isaac from the dead, if so he willed.

Abraham's faith was evident exactly herein, that the outcome of this accounting was in favor of obedience to God. Abraham came to the conclusion that God was able to raise Isaac from the dead. This does not mean that Abraham believed this would surely happen; the point is that he reckoned God was able to do that, if that was the way for the promise in Isaac to be realized. Undoubtedly Abraham so reasoned by faith not only once, but over and over during the three days journey to mount Moriah. Unbelief never reasons thus —for unbelief the balance always swings to the seen things. But Abraham saw his God, and in faith's reasonings God wins. In that very faith he had at once set out when God commanded it, and in that faith he continued.

QUESTIONS: Prove that Abraham did some accounting. Why did God send Abraham to mount Moriah to sacrifice his son rather than order him to it right where he was?

Abraham obeyed. He sacrificed his son. Indeed he did not actually kill his son and so literally sacrifice him a burnt-offering to the Lord. Yet the text of Hebrews is not incorrect when it says, "By faith . . . Abraham offered up Isaac". For, in his mind, Abraham did it a thousand times on the way. And on top of Mt. Moriah, he built the altar, laid the wood in order, tied down his son, and lifted his knife to plunge it into his heart. As far as Abraham was concerned, when the Lord stopped him he had very completely surrendered his son and sacrificed him.

That obedience was also rewarded. God gave him his son back, back as it were from the dead. For Abraham received his son from the dead "in a figure", which simply means, "figuratively speaking". As one risen from the dead, as one he had wholly consigned to the dead, he received him back.

So God attained his purpose, and Abraham's faith was clearly evinced as a complete trust and obedience. And God blessed Abraham anew.

QUESTIONS: Did Abraham sacrifice his son? Did Abraham believe in a resurrection from the dead?

Outline XV

ISAAC BLESSES JACOB AND ESAU

3rd week of January

Heb. 11:20 — By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

Compare also Genesis 27.

Perhaps one would hardly expect the name of Isaac to be enrolled among the heroes of faith of Hebrews 11; and, certainly, it is striking that as the instance of

his faith Heb. 11 should choose the matter of his blessing of Jacob and Esau. Although Isaac certainly was not the man Abraham his father was, nor even as strong as Jacob his son. The aggresiveness of his father and of his son is absent in his life. His wife Rebekah seems to be more exemplary in this than Isaac does. Yet Hebrews 11 mentions Isaac, and the Spirit made no error when he enscrolled his name here. And yet, one would hardly expect that the incident of his blessing would be chosen as the example of faith worthy of mention. There can be no question but the text refers to the history mentioned in Gen. 27, and superficially read that chapter leaves the very impression that Isaac was fooled in blessing Jacob. Yet the Holy Spirit makes no mistake when this incident is mentioned as a striking illustration of Isaac's faith. In justice to the Word of God we must so approach the passage.

But did Isaac also bless Esau? Such is the first impression one receives from the text. The text at first sight seems to mean that Isaac blesed both sons, Esau as well as Jacob. In the light of Scripture as a whole, this cannot, however, be the meaning. No interpreter dares to say that Isaac blessed both in the same sense. Those that claim that both were blessed always go on to say that while Jacob received the eternal blessing, Esau only received a temporal blsssing, i.e. a so-called "common grace" blessing. To this interpretation there are several objections: (1) That in that case the word "blessing" used only once in the text must be emasculated of its true meaning in the case of Esau, and in this way mean something different in Esau's case than in that of Jacob. To solve the difficulty in the way of "common grace" transgresses the rule that the same word in the same connection must be understood in the same sense; here especially because the word is used only once. (2) That a careful study of Gen. 27 makes plain that Esau received no blessing at all (as the sequence of this outline will attempt to show). (3) This same book of Hebrews in the next chapter, vs. 17, refers to this same history, and there emphatically states: not that Esau was in some sense also blessed, but that he was *rejected*. To my mind the only proper explanation of the mention of Esau in this connection, since it cannot be in the light of the above that he was blessed ,is that as the natural heir of the blessing he could not be left unmentioned. Isaac in the bestowal of the blesing had his two sons before him, and when he blessed he so blessed that the blessing came upon Jacob and not upon Esau.

Isaac's Natural Inclinations

For some twenty years after their marriage Isaac and Rebekah had no children, until in answer to their prayer God gave them the twin sons. From a certain viewpoint these two boys were as alike as it is possible for two humans to be. They were born of the same father and mother; they were even twins ,and so as closely related as brothrs according to the flesh can be. They were also alike in this that both were historically children of the covenant, with the same training and the same advantages. On the other hand, the two were as unlike as two brothers can possibly be. They were unlike from a mere natural viewpoint. Already at birth, because Esau was red and hairy, while Jacob was other. As they grew up this difference became still more evident: Esau was a man of the woods and liked to hunt, while Jacob was a keeper of flocks and loved his home. Also their characters were unlike: Esau was open, frank and hearty, while Jacob was more reserved and sneaky. *Spiritually* they were also unlike. Before they were born this spiritual difference had been revealed to their mother—Jacob was the vessel of election, while Esau was reprobate. As they grew up this spiritual difference also manifested itself: Esau was profane, sold his birthright and married heathen women; Jacob loved the things of God's covenant and promise, although he did not always sek them in the right way.

Isaac's natural inclination was to bless Esau. Between the two sons he had to choose in the bestowal of the patriarchal blessing. (We should remember these blessings were a serious matter; they were not mere wishes or prayers, but prophecies of things to come). Isaac only had one blessing to bestow, the birthright blessing. This birthright blessing did not merely mean a double portion of the inheritance, but it implied according to its chief idea. also dominion, authority over the family, and here especially the covenant promise. Now it is evident from the whole history of Genesis that it was Isaac's natural inclination to bless Esau rather than Jacob. He loved Esau, he liked his venison, and took to Esau. Besides, Esau was also first-born, and so naturally had the historic right to the blessing rather than Jacob. As a matter of fact Gen. 27 makes plain that when Isaac set out to bless he intended to bless Esau and not Jacob at all.

Isaac's Actual Deed

The fact of the case is, however, that Isaac blesed Jacob. Perhaps you say he was tricked in doing so. In my opinion, although Isaac

did question whether the son that so soon appeared before him was really Esau, he was in so far deceived. However, in the sequence of the event Isaac maintaind his blessing of Jacob, and that was only by faith. Note that when Esau appeared his father says in regard to Jacob's blessing, "Yea, and he shall be blessed". That was faith victorious over his flesh and natural desires. Note further that to Esau's pleas he gave no heed at all, he refused to be influenced by Esau's pleas to change what he had done. That was faith victorious. And shortly later when Jacob fled to Padan-arm Isaac once more bestowed upon Jacob the blessing. Besides, if you consult Gen. 27, you will note further that the *whole* blesing was given Jacob (the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth, the corn and the wine; the dominion over his brother, who should serve him and be in subjection to him as Edom later was to Israel; "Cursed be everyone that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee"—all this included the whole Abrahamic blessing, all of which was given Jacob).

Isaac did *not* bless Esau at all. Some contend that Esau was also blessed, blessed at least with a temporal blessing, and refer to Gen. 27:39-41. However, Gen. 27 does not at all state this. Vs. 39 does not say that Isaac *blessed* Esau, but that Isaac *said* unto Esau, and that is something wholly different. Besides, what he said is the very opposite of the blessing. Interpreters generally admit that vs. 39 is improperly translated in our Bibles. The Hebrew does not say, "thy dwelling shall be *of* the fatnes of the earth, and *of* the dew of heaven from above", but it says: "thy dwelling shall be *away from* the fatness of the earth, and *away from* the dew of heaven from above". Jacob had already received the fatness of the earth and the dew from heaven, and now Isaac said to Esau that he should be away from it. Therefore also vs. 40 says that he should live by his sword. Thus indeed it was with Esau and his descendants (the Edomites) in history; they lived on the barren mountains. Malachi 1 also substantiates this. The second part of vs. 40 in Gen. 27 does not refute this, but simply means that Esau should always be seeking to break the rule of Jacob but be unfruitful in his continual struggle. Furthermore, it is exactly because the writer of Heb. so understood Genesis to mean that Esau did not receive a blessing that he writes in Heb. 12:16, 17 that Esau was *rejected*. When Isaac so addressed Esau as he did, he set his seal upon the blessing of Jacob, and expressed that Esau was rejected from it. And so also you must understand vs. 41 of

Gen. 27—Esau hated Jacob for the blessing wherewith his father had blessed him (and that *him* is, not Esau, but Jacob). Esau did not repent, he did not receive the blessing, and therefore he wanted to slay Jacob.

Isaac's Glorious Faith

Thus understood it is evident that Isaac's faith revealed itself in this history very clearly. It revealed itself therein that he spoke of things to come, which showed that he still adhered to faith himself. It revealed itself especially herein that while he was naturally inclined to bless Esau, his faith prevailed and he blessed Jacob and rejected Esau. That was faith, faith prevailing. Otherwise Isaac had never acted as he did.

QUESTIONS: In what respect were Jacob and Esau alike, and in what respects opposites? In what way did Isaac show faith in this blessing act? (I believe you will find many questions and a warm discussion on this passage).

Outline XVI
JACOB'S DYING BLESSING
4th week of January

Heb. 11:21—By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph: and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

Compare Gen. 47:27-48.

It is not strange that Jacob's name should be enrolled among the heroes of faith, but it is strange that the text should single out of all the rich events of his life this incident of his last illness as the outstanding example of his faith. Usually, in the treatment of the life of Jacob, this event receives little attention. There are, it seems to me, two reasons why the Holy Spirit singled out this particular event. The first is that this dying act of faith best illustrates the viewpoint of faith emphasized in the first verse of the chapter. And, secondly, the writer wishes to spur the believers on, not only to live by faith but also to be ready to die in and for the faith (cf. vs. 13—these all *died* in faith), and therefore quite appropriately shows how the dying Jacob manifested faith even in that hour. Perhaps we might add a third reason, and say that while the writer had spoken of the blesing of Jacob and Esau he now quite naturally turns to Jacob's blessing of both the sons of Joseph.

Jacob's Dying Testimony As Such

"When he was dying", brings before our mind the scene of Jacob's last illness, spoken of in Gen. 49. Jacob was in the closing days of his life, about to meet the last enemy which is death. The picture Gen. 49 draws is that of an old man, bedridden, failing eyesight,

weak and sick. Jacob was 147 years old. He was not as old as Abraham had become (175), nor as old as Isaac (180), but the number of his years were full and his life was fast ebbing away. Perhaps his active life and his bitter experiences had in comparison with his forebears prematurely aged him. The number of years allotted to him by his God was full. The Bible tells us that his eyesight was dimmed, that he was bedridden even before his last and final illnss (Gen. 47:31 compared with Gen. 48). He indeed was "a dying", and perhaps his failing strength accounts for it that he accomplished his last prophetic utterances by stages at different times. Still, we must not get a picture of him as of an old man who has lost control of his faculties and does not know what he is doing. Jacob was mentally alert, his mind was sharp. He knew what he was doing: he knew his death was nigh; he spoke of his burial in Canaan; his deliberate calling of Joseph, and later of his other sons, all show this, as does the careful crossing of his hands over the two sons of Joseph that the younger rather than the elder might receive the chief part of the blessing.

Jacob's *spiritual* strength certainly was not ebbing—it was as great as before. His eye of faith had not grown dim, even now that Israel was far from the promised land, he still believed his seed should inherit Canaan. Besides, although himself face to face with death, the king of terrors, he was wholly occupied with the things of faith—he spoke of them ,and conserved his strength to address his sons on the things of God's covenant. As a matter of fact his faith shone with a great glory in this hour. The Jacob in him is not in evidence—it is Israel on the foreground, waiting for God's salvation. He was ,in the words of Ps. 90, fresh and green in his old age.

How His Faith was Manifested

The dying Jacob manifested his faith in two ways: (1) He blessed both the sons of Joseph, (2) He worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

As to his blessing of the two sons of Joseph, the following: It refers of course to Jacob's bestowal of the birthright upon Joseph, which in this case refers especially to the double portion. He blessed *both* the sons, the text says, to distinguish this instance from Isaac's blessing of Jacob and Esau. The aged Jacob deliberately crossed his hands and gave the chief blessing to the younger of the two lads, to Ephraim. And Ephraim did indeed in history became the leading tribe of Isreal as far as power was concerned.

This particular blessing Hebrews singles out rather than the blesing uttered upon the other sons for the following reasons: (1) Because it regarded the birthright, which was taken from Reuben and given to Joseph. (2) Because Jacob incorporated the two boys, who were more Egyptain than Israelite, into his seed, and made them count among Israel. (3) Because in it Jacob clearly spoke and confessed the goodness and grace of God, see Gen. 47:15,16.

Jacob also manifested his faith when he "worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff". In Gen. 47:31 you read, "And Israel bowed himself upon the bed's head." Hebrews 11 follows the Septuagint translation, and it is not easy to understand how instead of "upon the bed's head," Hebrews 11 shoud have "upon the top of his staff." Perhaps he leaned toward the head of his bed, supporting himself with his staff. The emphasis falls, of course, upon the fact that the aged Jacob "worshipped". That means literally that he bowed in a kneeling position. He bent his aged body in the attitude of obeisance and homage before his God, in humility and praise. In that position you see not so much the Jacob in him as the Isreal, trusting in his God, and waiting for the salvation of Israel. In this attitude he met the last enemy, beholding by faith the glory of the Lord's salvation.

ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Thus we must die if all is to be well. Not that we should expect this testimony of Jacob at every deathbed. Some build all upon the deathbed testimony, and that is wrong. Sometimes it is very gloriously present, as when a dear one dies with a song of praise on the lips, or in an attitude of prayer. However we cannot always expect such blessed deathbed scenes Sometimes the bodily suffering is so great that the mind is entirely befogged; at other times God's children wrestle in agony with the last enemy, and faith does not stand out in its strength. Yet, faith as the tie to Christ, must be there. Otherwise though calm and fearless, only perdition awaits.

Thus to die, we must so live. A death-bed conversion, Jacob's was not. Surely these are also quite rare. We must learn to die all the day long. We must be strangers and pilgrims in the world, adhering to the unseen things of God's kingdom and live for them. Then, at even it shall be light, for the day of the Christian's death is better than his birth.

QUESTIONS: Was Jacob's faith dim as he lay a-dying? Prove your point. Why did Jacob bless the two sons of Joseph? What does it mean that Jacob worshipped? Can we rightfully expect every Christian's death-bed to be such a glorious testimony? What about so-called death-bed conversions?

Outline XVII

JOSEPH'S FAITH

1st week of February

Heb. 11:22—By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel: and gave commandment concerning his bones.

Compare Genesis 50.

The dying act of Jacob undoubtedly reminded the writer of the dying testimony of Joseph.

JOSEPH'S FAITH AS SUCH

How different Joseph's life from that of Abraham, of Isaac, or of Jacob. All the latter spent much of their life in the promised land of Canaan; Joseph spent the largest part of his life far away from it in Egypt. The others were all strangers on the earth, but Joseph was that in a double sense in Egypt. How many, how varied, how strange were his experiences. Different, yet in another sense alike. For as all the others had lived and died in faith, so too did Joseph. Even in Egypt he was faithful to his God and to the promise, and to his people. This is all the more striking in view of the fact that the church as it then was in Jacob's sons had done him nought but evil. The world had higly honored him and made him great and powerful. Yet Joseph did not turn away from God and his people. Their cause was his cause. Prosperity and honor had not turned away his heart from God. The deepest reason for Joseph's faithfulness must be sought in the fact that his God remembered him and sustained him in his faith.

Now Joseph had reached the end of his earthly life. As he lay on his death-bed the things of God were before him.

THE TESTIMONY OF HIS FAITH

The text emphasizes that Joseph made mention of the departing ("exodus" is the word actually used) of the children of Israel. Gen. 50 tells how Joseph reminded them that God would surely visit his people and bring them up out of Egypt to Canaan. Perhaps Joseph saw troube looming for Israel, the trouble that soon came upon the people of God in Egypt. One thing is evident Joseph believed the promise, and now spent his dying moments to reassure his brethren that God would in due time fulfill his promise.

The arrangements Joseph made for his burial seal his testimony. For when the pasage says "gave commandment concerning his bones", it is evident from Gen. 50 what this means. Joseph made the brethren swear that when the day of redemption would come his bones should be carried along in the coffin to the land of promise and there be buried. This was

not to be done at once, as in the case of Jacob, but these bones were to be preserved in Egypt in the unburied coffin until the day when they could be carried out with God's people and buried in the promised land. That unburied coffin in Egypt was during the intervening centuries a silent testimony to Joseph's faith in the final deliverance from Egypt. By requesting this, and placing the brethren and their generation under oath, Joseph renounced Egypt and encouraged his brethren, and sealed his spoken testimony with his action.

QUESTIONS: What is unique about the life of Joseph? How long did Joseph live? How long later was it that Israel was delivered? Prove that Joseph's bones were taken along in the exodus? May Christians practice cremation? Does the Bible teach the propriety of an honorable burial?