An Emblem

LONG AGO A CROSS WAS ERECTED ON A HILL JUST OUTSIDE JERUSALEM WHICH HAS COME DOWN THROUGH THE AGES AS AN EMBLEM OF SUFFERING AND SHAME. BUT IN THE RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST THAT EMBLEM OF DEFEAT BECAME THE WAY TO A GLORIOUS VICTORY OVER DEATH FOR HIM AND FOR THOSE IN HIM.

**BEACON LIGHTS IS ALSO AN EMBLEM, AN EMBLEM OF THE UNITY OF OUR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUNG PEOPLE, A WITNESS TO THE TRUTH WHICH WE CONFESS. MAKE IT EVER MORE A LIVING AND VITAL WITNESS TO THE HOPE THAT WE HAVE IN HIS RESURRECTION.**
Observations - - - by Mrs. Andrew Voss

Being away from home affords many opportunities for observation. This is especially true of my position at the present time, my husband being one of the Rainbow Division which is composed of men from every State in the Union: it is truly an American Division and because of that fact one gets a cross section of morals and conduct of the American people as a whole.

The city nearest the Camp—Muskogee—has increased in population to at least one-third more than its normal size, due to the many wives following their husbands to the Camp. I have had occasion to speak with many people from all parts of our country. This has been very interesting and how quickly I have detected the results of training or lack of it.

Camp Gruber is eighteen miles from the city and in making the trip to and from Camp I have often had to contend with crowded bus conditions: every available seat being taken and the aisle filled with soldiers standing the entire ride. The rides are very interesting—the occupants often breaking forth in song. Needless to say, the singing is mostly of the latest song-hits. We, who by God’s grace learn to sing His praises, can see how sinful it is to fill our time with such nonsense, when it is the calling of man to serve God and sing His praises. It behooves our young people to maintain their distinctiveness by remaining separate and not joining the world in their song. The truth is brought to our mind: “ye are a peculiar people”. How often I have thought of our Chorus and Radio Choir and what a contrast to the constant jazz that is heard. In observing the walk of many people, I have been reminded of the blessedness of the Christian training we have been privileged to have received. Without God and His love in our heart there is no purpose in life. This is brought out so forcibly in the lives of many. Their speech betrays them—and how very careful we who profess to be Christians must be as to the language we speak. Profanity is so prevalent: God’s Name is spoken in vain so lightly. It seems that
every sentence must be punctuated by the misuse of God's Name. The more we study His Word and remember His greatness, the more careful we will be to use His Name only with reverence and godly fear, for we know that He is God alone and rules and controls all things. Let us be conspicuous by our lack of profanity and thereby also be a witness that we are different—we have a goal in life. Drink is an evil that is so manifest in army life. Life doesn't seem to be worth living unless they can have their drinks; and in moments of fear and despondency, will resort to drink to forget their misery. It is no uncommon sight to see two soldiers holding up a buddy who is unable to manage alone because of drunkenness. What a disgusting picture he presents. Or to see soldiers engaged in a fight in the camp bus or sprawled all over the seat so drunken they don't realize where they are. How necessary it is for us as Christians to testify "for me to live is Christ" and to seek the new life which is from above. We can never boast of ourselves, by saying that we are too good to follow such paths of sin, for we know that it is God's grace that gives us eyes to see sin and to hate it: he that "glorieth let him glory in the Lord".

There has also been opportunity for observation in the religious life of the people we meet. There are so many different theories—one of the most shocking to me being the belief that this world is getting better! I discovered this person was of the modern school and did not believe Jesus was divine, but just one of us.

None of the faiths can answer all the questions that come to our mind about our position in life and the many happenings in the world, as the faith which we profess,—of our sovereign Lord, Who has redeemed His people and is calling them, while He at the same time is judging the world for its wickedness. How rich has been our teaching and may we who are in the midst of the world be faithful witnesses of the riches we have received and glorify our Father.

* * * *

DONATIONS

More donations were received, for which we are very grateful. These donations are used to carry on the work of sending Beacon Lights to all our servicemen.

Mr G. Rietvelt, (G. R. Mich.) $ .75
Pvt. Francis Kwantes 1.25
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(Mail all donations to Miss A. Reitsma, 706 Franklin S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich.)
He Suffered

By Rev. C. Hanko — Oak Lawn, Ill.

Strange as it might seem, the Christian Church has always summed up the whole earthly existence of her Lord in the two simple words: He suffered.

Many others have attempted to write a glowing biography on the "life of Jesus". Yet the Church has insistently confessed only this: "He was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered..., was crucified, dead and buried."

Many have pointed to the exemplary life of the Man of Galilee. Many have referred to His teachings, marking Him as the greatest of all the world's philosophers and teachers. Many have spoken of His miracles as the mighty works of the "sympathetic Jesus". Yet the Church brushed all these aside and tenaciously clung to her confession: He suffered!

If we would call it a biography, it is beyond a doubt the most unique biography that has ever been written.

Strange it might seem, that in a world of suffering humanity it should be said of Him that He suffered. Who of all mankind has not suffered? Who has not known the struggle for existence, tasted the horror of disease and devastation, or shared the constant dread of those who walk in the midst of death? Why should He be distinguished as the one who suffered?

Strange, that a more glowing account should not be written of the thirty-three years of His sojourn among us. Although He repeatedly exposed the sins of those about Him, He Himself knew no sin. Although He dwelt among us in the weakness of sinful flesh, He performed so many mighty works that all the people marvelled, and when He taught them they were forced to say that no man ever spoke as this Man did.

And although He was not understood, but even cast out by the people of His time, He was approved of God as a faithful Servant, even when He died.

Would it not be more proper after all, to tell of His exemplary life and emphasize His mighty works. His zeal for His cause and His principles? More fitting to
write a volume on the "sympathetic Jesus"?

Yet the Church of Jesus Christ stands rock-firm on her confession, summing up all His life and words and works in that one confession: He suffered.

And properly so.

She has all the Scriptures on her side when she makes this unique confession. All the types and shadows with their bloody sacrifices pointed to Him as the Lamb of God Who takes away the sins of the world. All the prophets spoke of Him as the Man of sorrows, the suffering Servant of God. Jesus Himself continuously spoke with many signs and wonders of His suffering and death on the cross and the glories that would follow. And the apostles preach only Jesus Christ, crucified and risen. They went out into the world with the Word of the Cross, which is foolishness to those perishing, but a power of God to all who believe.

Jesus' sojourn on earth was nothing but a continual suffering. He was born in abject poverty and never claimed more of the goods of this world than was needed for His bare existence. He was the sinless One among sinners, never understood, always despised, hated, rejected and cast out. The cross cast its shadow over His whole life, for from His early youth He knew that He must do His Father's business. Who can fathom the anguish of soul that accompanied even the signs of the miracles He performed? He came, not to do His own will, but the will of His Father Who sent Him. And the zeal of God's house devoured Him.

His suffering was unique, for He willingly bore the wrath of God against the sin of mankind. He willfully took our sins upon Himself and became a curse for us. Because He was the sinless One, the obedient Servant, He could pay the ransom for our sins. He destroyed the power of sin and death and merited for us eternal life. All His life He suffered to bring us to God.

The Church glories in her confession.

Jesus is not a mere example, that we should follow in His steps. No man, born of sin, can ever imitate the life of the suffering Servant of God. We need more than an example. We need a Redeemer, a Saviour.

He is not the greatest of all teachers. He is the Word which became flesh: the greatest of all the prophets, of Whom God says: Hear ye Him. He is the Way, for He is the Truth and the Life.

He was not a great philanthropist, or the world's greatest humanist, who came to improve conditions in this world of iniquity. He came to deliver us from darkness to light, and from death into life eternal.

He did not merely make salva-
tion possible. He redeemed us and saves us from our sins. He is the good Shepherd Who laid down His life for His sheep, so that He may gather them unto Himself into the folds of heavenly glory.

He accomplished all suffering. He made an end of all our sufferings in the flesh, so that we can glory in tribulation, knowing that tribulation works patience, and patience works a hope that will not be put to shame.

In Him we are more than conquerors, even in the midst of all the sufferings of this present time. For we suffer with Him that we may also be glorified with Him.

This is a faithful saying: He suffered!

Note the interpretation of this article in Lord’s Day 37 of our Heidelberg Catechism. The question is asked: What dost thou understand by these words, “He suffered”? To which the answer is given: That He, all the time that He lived on earth, but especially at the end of His life, sustained in body and soul, the wrath of God against the sins of all mankind.

Utterly amazing was that first announcement: “Christ is Risen”. No one expected it. True it is that Jesus has plainly spoken to His disciples of the fact that He would be delivered into the hands of sinners to be crucified, that He would die and that He would arise again on the third day. But they were still such “fools and slow of heart to understand” since they still anticipated an earthly kingdom which He would establish. But He had died. Their minds were filled with confusion, they still held to their faith that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Now their confusion is only aggravated by the report that He is risen.

No one had seen the resurrection. There had been eye-witnesses present when Jesus raised others from the dead. James and John could vouch for the fact that He had raised the daughter of Jairus. The disciples had been present when the young man of Nain and
Lazarus were raised. But no one had seen Jesus come forth out of the grave. No one knew just when He had risen. An angel had come down and rolled the stone away with the touch of his hand, putting the guards to flight. They had no other testimony than the vacated tomb and the word of the angel.

No one ever heard of such a thing. They had heard of others being raised from the dead; had even seen it happen before their very eyes. But until now no one had ever heard of a dead man actually rising in his own power from the dead.

No one could give a satisfactory account of it. The rumor made its rounds that His body had been stolen. That was the report spread by the soldiers. That was the first confused account of Mary Magdalene, later to be corrected by herself. But eliminating this rumor, and holding to the report that He was risen, where was He? If He was risen, why did He not walk the streets of Jerusalem, or why had He not come to seek His refuge by His disciples? Why was it that He suddenly made His appearance to some of them, and equally suddenly disappeared again out of their sight? Why could no one give a satisfactory account of how He looked? And why had He forbidden Mary to touch Him?

"He is Risen!" A spark of hope flares up in the hearts of the disciples. Yet it is all so utterly amazing.

Which makes it so absolutely certain.

Unbelief can only deny the resurrection by ignoring all the facts of the case.

The fact is, that no human hand rolled away the stone from the grave. The first eye-witness found the grave opened, the grave clothes undisturbed, the tomb zealously guarded from intruders by heavenly emissaries.

Again the fact is, that the angels at the tomb announce to those who seek Jesus, that He is not there, but is risen from the dead. They invite them to enter and to see with their own eyes the place where the Lord had made His resurrection.

Another fact is, that He appeared to His followers, not once but repeatedly, when they were far from expecting it. He showed them that He was risen in the same body in which He had died. He convinced them that this body was, nevertheless, changed, for He was no more of the earth earthly.

These facts must be accepted in simple, true faith, or otherwise must be deliberately denied in unbelief. For these, too, belong to the things that no eye hath seen, no ear hath heard, and never entered into the heart of man: the things which God reveals unto those who fear Him.
Let unbelief say that the body was stolen: it can never prove its contention. Again, let it say that He arose only in the hearts and minds of His disciples. The facts are against it.

By faith we say, with the Word of God as our support: The Lord is risen indeed!

Glorious resurrection.

He arose. The Son of God Who came into the likeness of our sinful flesh went through death and the grave to arise again on the third day. By that resurrection He is powerfully proven to be the Son of God.

God raised Him up. As a divine seal on His accomplished work on the cross, God raised Him from the dead to take Him into heavenly glory.

He appeared in a new body. He received a perfect body out of death. He arose in a heavenly body. He now possesses a glorious body before the face of the Father.

The dawn of the new Day has come. The firstfruit of those who sleep in the Lord is gathered in. We shall be like Him when He returns with the clouds of heaven. Death is swallowed up in victory. Hallelujah! He is Risen!

Christian Living

By Rev. H. De Wolf — Manhattan, Montana.

Coming After Jesus.

Everyone will admit that if we are to come after Jesus, we must know Him. For we are to come after HIM; not after a Jesus of our own imagination, who after all is only an idol, but after Jesus Who is truly the Christ. We must therefore know Him as He is. He alone is able to tell us who He is, and if we are to come after Him then we must first of all and always be sure that we are not following after an idol but truly after Him. For to come after Him means that I walk behind Him, in His footsteps, in the way which He has prescribed for me in His Word. Always, in that Word, Jesus is going before us. And in the constant searching of that Word we see Him as He goes before us and we know the way in which He walks and the way in which we must walk to
come after Him. If I would come after Jesus I must always have an answer to the question: Where is Jesus? I must have that answer in all my life, in all circumstances and relationships, in my work, in the home, in the church and in the world in which I have been called by His grace to reveal and to confess His name.

Would you come after Jesus? Be not too hasty in your assertion. That means a very difficult way. Three things are constantly required: let him deny himself—let him take up his cross—and follow Jesus. And if only now the Lord had said that we should deny ourselves something, the matter would not seem so hopeless. But to deny one's self, that is very difficult indeed. For that means that self is an enemy that stands in the way of being Jesus' disciple. That means that that self must be put down, trampled under foot, mortified. Never may that self be allowed to boast, never may it have the satisfaction of its evil desires. Self must be denied. And that implies the willing on our part to be nothing in the eyes of others, to have no honor and praise of men, for the sake of our Lord. Yes, it means, if need be, to part with life itself. “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it”, and “What is a man profited if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” But there is more. Self-denial is not sufficient; that is only the first step. There is also a cross that must be taken up and borne. And that cross is not to be conceived of in a general sense as though it would signify the measure of suffering that is common to every individual in the world. But that cross is the cross of Christ as it overshadows those who cling to it. Not a cross of atonement, for that cross only Christ alone could and did bear. But the cross of Christ as the expression of the hatred of all the forces of darkness. They hated Him and to express their hatred they nailed Him to the cross. And they hate those that come after Him because He is in them and becomes manifest in them. This cross is therefore the reproach and persecution of the world. And if you come after Jesus, then you must take it up. You may not seek to evade it or to compromise with the world and its prince. But you must take it up and manifest thereby that you choose the reproach of Christ rather than the friendship of the wicked. And then, when you have taken up that cross, follow Jesus.

Are you coming after Jesus? Would you always do that?

Remember, the birds have nests and the foxes have holes but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head. Remember, he that will not forsake father and mother, brother and sister, wife and child,
houses and land, he is not worthy of Me; he does not and cannot come after Jesus.

Shall we still, in the face of all this, come after Jesus?

These things are real. We meet with them every day in our life in the midst of the world. Our sinful self always plagues us and we are constantly being tempted on every side by the powers of darkness. We are scorned and derided by the children of darkness who revel in the pleasures of sin. Jesus isn't popular and we can't be popular when we come after Him. We might as well realize that right now: it will save us bitter disappointment later on. The way is not easy, nay, it is most difficult. But we know that His grace is sufficient. And when by His grace we come after Him, then by that same grace He upholds us and brings us to the glorious end which He has promised. For coming after Him, we shall find Him. Some day we shall be where He is now.

Forever in glory!

A Convention In 1944?

I read with interest and approval the letter of Jim Van Weelden in our March Beacon Lights, in which he suggests that a Convention of our Young People's Societies be held this year. And yet, while I appreciate the spirit in which Mr. Van Weelden makes his proposal, it seems to me that we should look at this matter not alone from an ideal but also from a practical point of view.

I agree with him, that a convention is desirable, but only if it be a convention. By this I mean that having a mass meeting, or a meeting of delegates from Michigan and Illinois, without our western members being represented, would not be a convention, neither should we call it such. Nor would a meeting of this kind, erroneously called a convention, be fair to our sister societies in Pella, Oskaloosa, and Manhattan; societies which joined our Federation, in spite of the desire of the League of Western Young People's Societies to Federate as an Eastern and Western League.

This convention, then, must be a convention representing all of our societies, at which all have an equal representation and at which all have an equal voice in the deliberations. It follows also, therefore, that, in spite of the present emergency, an equal opportunity must be given to all our societies to send delegates to this conven-
This means, in effect, that the convention must expect to pay the traveling expenses of the delegates from the various societies, even though these expenses may be much larger than in former years when these trips could be made by automobile.

Assuming then that the delegates from Chicago could come by automobile and that those from Pella, Oskaloosa and Manhattan would come by bus, which is far cheaper than by train, the cost for traveling alone would be at least $315.00, which together with the other necessary expenses would make the average assessment per society at least $30.00, assuming, of course, that all the societies whether present or not would yet assume their share of the assessment.

The question, as to whether or not, due to present conditions, our young people would be able to take the time to come, I purposely omit for I feel confident that each society can find at least four members who can do so.

It is not my purpose in this letter to discourage a convention, but to place the facts before our societies in order that with the facts before them they may be able to judge intelligently of the facts, to assume the financial burden and to make the 1944 convention a success.

Fraternally yours,
James Howery
Vice-Pres.—Federation Board.

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Open Forum

PELLA—

The matter of having a convention this summer was brought before our Society. In our opinion it would be alright to go ahead and have a convention for those who can come, but with traveling conditions as they are now, making it almost impossible for some of our outlying Societies to attend, we would suggest having the costs of the convention assessed only to the Societies able to attend.

We do not know as yet if we would be able to attend. We would have to see how traveling conditions are at that time. But if it is at all possible, we'll be there as we have always found our conventions worthwhile.

With Christian Greetings.
Y. P. S.—Pella, Iowa.

* * * *

KALAMAZOO—

As secretary of our Y. P. S., I am reporting that we have discussed the matter of voting for Federation officers. However, inasmuch as our society is very much interested in the possibilities of having a convention this year, we have not yet cast our votes.

All members of our society are very
much in favor of a convention this year and are whole-heartedly in agreement with the opinion voiced in Open Forum in the March Issue of Beacon Lights. We are sure that a couple days of Christian fellowship in the way of a convention would be of great benefit to all and that all efforts set forth in that behalf would be richly rewarded. We hope that plans for a convention can be worked out.

With Christian Love,

* * * *

HOLLAND—

At our last Y. P. S. meeting, the matter of having a convention was discussed and it was decided that our Society is very much in favor of having a convention this year.

Sincerely yours,

* * * *

SOUTH HOLLAND—

At our Young People's Society meeting of last Sunday evening, we discussed the letter we received from the board and the proxy ballot. Our Society debated as to whether we could conscientiously vote as we are requested to do. Not because we are against voting for new board members, but because we consider it to be a poor and wrong basis for voting by proxy. We have a constitutional way, adopted by all our societies, to vote for a Board. That constitutional way pre-scribes a convention of delegates per year. We do not believe that even advisors have a right to advise acting contrary to the constitution. We believe further that our Federation should have convened during the past two years. We believe it is and was possible. The Chr. Ref. Societies and Young People meet in regional conventions, and have done so even last fall. The worldly federations and unions and clubs meet regularly, and their members come from all over the U. S. A. If they can meet regularly, so can we. So our Society passed the following:

Be it decided to express our disapproval of the action of our Federation Board in canceling our annual convention.

Fraternally yours,
Y. P. S.—South Holland, Ill.

* * * *

OAK LAWN—

We, the Y. P. S. of Oak Lawn, Illinois, have decided that we should have a convention this year!

Sincerely yours,
Y. P. S.—Oak Lawn, Ill.

* * * *

HOPE—

Concerning the matter of a convention our society decided at our last meeting to advise the board to hold a convention.

Sincerely yours,
Y. P. S.—Hope, Mich.
In response to the article placed in the Open Forum in our March issue regarding the Convention and also as a result of the action taken by the Federation Board in presenting a plan for voting for new board members without a convention, many letters were received from various societies and are published in the Open Forum in this issue.

In 1939 our Federation was organized and held its first convention in South Holland, Ill. In 1941 Fuller Ave. acted as Host Society and our convention delegates enjoyed a brief stay in Grand Rapids. In 1941 Oak Lawn invited us to be its guests at our third annual convention. Our conventions were wonderful! They served their purpose—binding our hearts together in Christian love and fellowship!

But in 1942 we were all disappointed. Plans were in the making for a convention at Roosevelt Park. But things had changed. Our country was at war, and as Rev. Hanko wrote in his editorial in the Oct. 1942 issue of Beacon Lights, "It would have been foolhardy to shut our eyes to the reality of things." The Host Society informed the Board of its desire to call off the convention and the Board made its decision. This was not done, however, without careful consideration. All societies were contacted. Two of our western societies replied that they definitely were not coming, one Michigan Society wrote that they were doubtful and several societies failed to respond at all. If at that time, the Board had received the encouraging letters it now received, we would, no doubt, have had a convention in '42.

But many questions still remain. Our two Illinois societies and most of our Michigan societies have responded favorably to plans for a convention, but will Iowa be there? And Manhattan? And then, too, will everyone that can come, be present? Will everyone be willing to give up other, less important pleasures in order to attend this—our Fourth Convention?

The Federation Board meets again next week. And you may be sure that your Board Members will carry out the desires of the Societies represented in our Federation!

* * * *

The article entitled "Reformation in Randolph" which appeared in the previous issue of Beacon Lights was written by Mrs. Peter Taminga better known to Grand Rapids people as Hilda Wiersma. Through error the author's name was omitted when the article was published.
The Reformed Witness Hour

The Reformed Witness Hour is approaching the close of another season. It has been a very successful season, which has not only witnessed the expansion of our program within our own circles, but which has also introduced our program to many new listeners outside the scope of our denomination. The committee has especially been pleased with the response received from our Chicago station W J J D.

This encouraging response can perhaps be best illustrated by the following excerpts from three letters all written on March 26.

A listener in Chicago writes,

...I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the truly God-glorying radio program that you sponsor each Sunday afternoon. Here in Chicago many of us listen regularly to the Reformed Witness Hour and the rich sermons which Rev. H. Hoeksema delivers are a real inspiration to those who love the Reformed, God-centered truth. May I also compliment you on the type of music used on your programs. In these days when the superficial Arminian hymns seem to be the fad on most religious programs it is good to hear your choir sing the beautiful psalms. Keep it up!

A Wisconsin listener writes:

As a student for the christian ministry I have found your program rich in thought and delivered in an edifying manner and potent with spiritual knowledge toward the glorification of the Sovereign God. Broadcasts such as the Reformed Witness Hour make one proud of his Reformed heritage and make one understand that Calvinistic doctrine is not dead but still alive and valuable for the salvation of men and the glorification of God. May your program increase until its influence covers our whole land.

And another from Chicago writes:

I look forward every Sunday afternoon to hear the word of God preached over this station at that hour. It surely has been a blessing to me to get this spiritual food so clearly and distinctly that I can hear every word that is spoken.

We are sure that you will agree that letters such as these warrant our continuing on the air next season, if possible over an expanded network. And we, therefore, ask for your prayers and support for our efforts in witnessing the Reformed Truth.
The Way is Being Prepared.

Space did not permit in last month’s Beacon Lights to develop the idea brought forth that our world is getting smaller and that consequently those two signs of the coming of Christ, namely, the spreading of the Gospel to the four corners of the earth and the rise of the Antichristian world empire, are closer to their realization. A few additional remarks can be made now before we consider the more specific current events.

As was stated in last month’s Beacon Lights, places formerly inaccessible to missionaries and others are now made accessible thru the use of the airplane. This in turn serves both the rise of the coming antichristian kingdom and the spreading of the Gospel. Yet I wonder if our soldiers, sailors and marines as they are fighting this war and hacking their way thru jungles, making highways to the interior of the islands of the sea, and as they lay new roads thru the desert wastes and over mountain ranges, realize the role they are playing in the fulfillment of God’s counsel. God is certainly using them to prepare the way for the preaching of the Gospel to the heathen tribes which formerly could not be approached. Perhaps we may expect a brief period of fruitful foreign missionary activity after this war during which God’s chosen people in distant lands shall be called out of the darkness into God’s marvellous light. On the other hand, this war itself, apart from the roads and inventions that are achieved thru it, is bringing the nations closer together and thus paving the way for the realization of that worldwide antichristian kingdom. When we look at this war in that light, especially when we as soldiers, sailors and marines who are fighting this war and as loved ones of these soldiers, sailors and marines consider what we and they are doing in that light, we can understand somewhat more clearly why we must be separated from our loved ones and lay down our lives in this bloody, cruel war. It all seems so useless and such a waste
of life and material. But we know that God never does anything that is foolish or not necessary for the realization of His counsel. The unbeliever will mock and say, “So you believe that a God of love leads you into all this misery and woe?” The believer answers, “Yes, He loves His people, and wills that every one of His own, even though they live on the far corners of the earth, may come to the light and believe in His Son. He is using me in this war to realize the spreading of the Gospel to these objects of His love. He loves me, too. I am convinced, and in that love He will send His Son in the last days to usher in a glorious kingdom for me. He is using me in this war to prepare the way for the rise of the antichristian kingdom which must needs come, according to His counsel, before His Son can come to judge the quick and the dead and restore all things.” Considered in that light there is something glorious in serving in the armed forces of our land for it is serving God and the realization of His counsel and thus the welfare of Sion.

Germany Awaits The Invasion.

From all appearances Germany is deliberately weakening the eastern front to prepare for the expected invasion from the west. The Russian army is at this writing well over seventy five miles inside the old Polish border and is knocking at the door of Rumania with its cannon fire. Yet the Germans are holding tenaciously to the ruins of the Italian city of Cassino. With us it is still street to street fighting although the whole town of Cassino has been demolished in a bombing attack. The Russians on the other hand seem to have the Germans in desperate flight. Is it because the Russians are such superior fighters while our soldiers are no match for the Germans? That might be the answer were it not for a few other considerations. The fact that we are fighting in mountainous country while the eastern portion of Russia and the western portions of Poland and Rumania are more open country should be taken into consideration. Besides Hitler may be convinced that he can hurl our invasion back into the sea. At that he may be right and have good reasons. He realized himself that he could not cross over into England and therefore he never tried it. He may be recalling his troops from the eastern front and making one supreme gamble for victory by massing all the men he can spare in the west to hurl the invasion back. That may be the reason for Russia’s recent amazing successes. Having hurled us back Hitler perhaps figures that then he can turn his attention to Russia and even sue for an armistice.
What Is a Neutral Nation?

An interesting development of recent days was the refusal of Ireland to expel Axis diplomats in that country. Ireland has chosen to play the role of a neutral nation taking sides with neither the Allies nor the Axis. As such it has become a pipeline for information to the Axis. Axis spies under the name of "Diplomats" gather there to discover what they can of our invasion preparations. The lives of many of our loved ones may depend upon this action of Ireland, for if Germany knows the day and hour and exact spot we have chosen for the invasion, her preparation for the onslaught can be the greater and more thorough. Naturally we favor the expulsion of these spies. But do we have the right to demand this? Are we not by this demand trying to force Ireland to become our ally? Are we then respecting her neutrality? From Ireland’s side there is another angle to consider. By expelling these Axis agents the lives of many American and English soldiers will be spared, but by not expelling them the lives of many German soldiers will be spared. As a neutral nation, Ireland must feel for the loved ones and the life of the Axis as well as those of the Allies.

Of course we would be more than pleased to have Ireland drive out these German and Japanese spies. but may we demand this of Ireland? May we enforce economic sanctions upon her? You may say. "Let Ireland expel all foreign diplomats, Allied and Axis, both, and that will make it fair." But are we not morally obliged first of all to recall all our spies in neutral Turkey and in Spain and Portugal? We think nothing of making use of neutral nations to spy on the enemy. Is it right then to call a nation unneutral when the enemies spies have the advantage due to no fault of that nation? What is a neutral nation? And can Ireland help it if, due to her geographical position, she is more profitable to the Axis’ diplomats than to the Allied diplomats in her land? Other neutral countries due to their geographical position are more profitable to us, and unless we would approve of Germany’s demand that they expel our diplomats we have no right to apply economic sanctions to Ireland no matter how much we desire to have these Axis diplomats expelled.
A Useful Skeleton

By Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

Many centuries ago, even prior to the time of Christ, in the region of the eastern Mediterranean Sea, many men were busily engaged in a profitable occupation. Both Homer and Plato refer to this business in their writings. Daily workers left the shores to seek their livelihood in obtaining certain organisms growing on the bottom of the sea. Already in the age of Aristotle, diving suits were used for this purpose. What marine specimens furnished the incentive for such a hazardous undertaking? Certainly not the mere love of adventure could incite this dangerous employment. At dusk the returning ships offered the solution, for an observer would see the gathered treasures of the day—a harvest of sponges!

Again the age-old question arises—"Are they plants or animals?" Because of their stationary habits, their bright coloration, often green, and their branched shapes, they were considered to be members of the plant kingdom for many years. In fact, it wasn't until the middle of the 19th century that they were correctly classified as animals, for then conclusive proof was established that their essential qualities were those belonging to the animal realm. It was discovered that the green color was due to the growth of small plants called ulgae, which frequently covered their surfaces. Also the fact that the cell walls did not contain cellulose as is characteristic of plants aided in determining their proper classification. A further proof might be in the case of the young, for they are actively swimming larvae.

Did you ever realize that when you were using an ordinary sponge for bathing or for cleaning purposes that you were applying a skeleton of a sea animal? After the sponges have been harvested, they are buried in the warm sand or exposed to the sun until the flesh is dried and the process of decomposition is complete. Only the framework remains, and this consists of numerous bony structures called spicules. Varied and peculiar are their shapes, for some are like stars or crosses, others appear as arrows, pick-axes, spools or snow-crystals. These skeletons may be divided into three groups, depending upon the composition of their framework; some consist of lime, others of horny-like material, which still others are made of a silicious or glassy substance.

It might be interesting to note that only two parts in every one hundred thousand parts of water are silica, and that a sponge must imbibe one ton of water to produce
one ounce of silicous spicules. Some sponges rise to the height of several feet and there is one recorded which weighs over 150 pounds after the removal of the liquid.

Sponges reproduce asexually by forming small beads which break off and attach themselves to some object on the sea bottom, and thus a new organism begins existence. Another method of propagating the species is the sexual form of reproduction. Minute eggs are produced within the jelly-like mass of sponge tissue. Within the same sponge sperm cells are also formed and these fertilize the eggs. Then the fertilized egg is ejected from the body of the sponge and is carried by the current. After the egg reaches maturity it produces a free swimming larvae equipped with a tail.

It was customary for the Romans to carry sponges on their long marches as a means of quenching the soldiers' thirst. The sponge has great powers of absorption and thus could supply the necessary liquid for the trip. (In the New Testament, there are at least three references to the sponge at the time of Christ's crucifixion). In addition, the Romans also used them to erase the errors made in writing. One example is cited of a Roman Martial who sent a poem to Caesar Augustus and accompanied it with a sponge so that he could obliterate any phrases which would not be favorable. In those days, as well as today, sponges were used largely for bathing and cleansing.

Some species of sponges surround or engulf the shells of oysters and dissolve the entire contents. Another species known as Cliona Sulphurea has the ability to eat into hard marble, dissolving this substance as it continues to bore its way and attaches itself firmly to this foundation.

Current high prices of sponges are explainable in view of two factors. In the first place, the sponge beds have been carelessly exploited and thus the supply has unnecessarily been exhausted; and secondly, a certain fungus disease made its appearance in 1938 and within two years destroyed approximately 75 percent of all sponges off the coast of Florida and in the region of the West Indies. Fortunately, this disease disappeared just as rapidly as it came, for there is no human method of control.
To Our Boys In Service

Grand Rapids, April 3, 1944

Dear Fellows:

In a few days from the date of this writing it will be Easter.

Of all the names that are given to the Christian holidays I like Easter least of all. Christmas, Good Friday, Ascension Day, Pentecost,—they all express some Christian meaning. And among them all the name Easter sounds strange, incongruous, absurd, heathenish. No wonder one can speak of “Easter eggs” just as well as of “Easter joy”.

Don’t tell me that the name occurs in the Bible, for it shouldn’t. It is true that in our Authorized Version it occurs once (Acts 12:4), but there it should have been translated Passover, as happily it was rendered in the Revised Version.

Why not call it Resurrection-Day, or The Lord’s Day, or Victory-Day?

Yes, indeed, Victory-Day would be very suitable. And it may be well for us in these days, especially also for you fellows in our armed forces, to think of it in that light.

Not, you understand, as if this Victory Day has anything in common with the present world conflict, or with the boasting of the mighty of this world that they shall gain the victory over their enemies by an arm of flesh, by means of guns and tanks and bombers. The victory of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ marked, indeed, the end of a very serious and terrible conflict. But it was a battle diametrically different from the wars of this world. Christ fought the battle, not against flesh and blood, neither for carnal and worldly ends, for power and aggrandizement, or even for everlasting peace and prosperity in this world, but for the righteousness of God, and against the powers of darkness, to overcome the devil, sin, and death, and to establish His own eternal kingdom of perfect peace and everlasting glory. He fought the battle, and He won. His victory is complete. Sin is blotted out. Death is swallowed up in victory. Eternal righteousness is established. And His resurrection is God’s testimony from heaven to the fact that He won the battle, and that He, and that, too, at the head of His people, as the Captain of their salvation, the Author and Finisher of their faith, is worthy to enter into the glory of immortality, eternal life. And by faith we enter into His victory, and have righteousness and eternal life in Him.

Of course, when most of you read this letter, “Easter” is already a thing of the past. But the victory we have in Christ is sure and everlasting. It never will be a thing of the past. No power of the world can ever disannul it, or take it away from us. May you fellows with us continuously celebrate this abiding Victory Day!

Be assured of our constant remembrance of you all in our prayers.

As ever your friend,

Rev. H. Hoeksema.
Dear Christian Friends:

I just received the February issue of Beacon Lights, and, having some free time I've already read most of the inspiring articles. The arrival of Beacon Lights is always most welcome with me and I know it is with all our service men.

I've been stationed at Westover Field, Mass. since the first week in November. Before that I travelled over much of the U. S. The field is situated on quite a large table of land and is almost completely surrounded by mountains. Although our eastern mountains are neither as high, nor as majestic as the Rockies (which I've also had the privilege to see), they are very beautiful. According to the inhabitants here, this is even more true in the Spring and Summer. Truly, we must marvel at the handiwork of our God in His creation.

Upon arrival here, with a Bombardment Group we continued our training for overseas duty, which was begun at Davis Monthan Field, Arizona. Shortly before the Group left I was placed in the Hospital with an eye ailment. Had it not been for this stay in the Hospital I undoubtedly would be somewhere in the European Theatre.

Due to my many changes in location the Beacon Lights have gone the long way in finding me. I cannot say that Beacon Lights was "off the beam" as it was all my fault for not informing you.

Again I want to express my appreciation for Beacon Lights and to all its staff and its contributors, for all they are doing to keep us in good, spiritual reading material. I think I here voice the sentiment of all our Protestant Reformed young men in the Service.

May God bless you and your labors and give you grace to carry on.

Yours in Christ,
Cpl. Ted Howery
Westover Field, Mass.

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Dear Friends:

I have been receiving the Beacon Lights for some time, and I appreciate them very much. It sure has some very good reading material in it.

I have been in the Army for over five years and I have also been overseas, and wherever I go I always receive the Beacon Lights. I hope I will continue to receive them. I let other fellows read them, and I want to thank you very much for sending them.

Sgt. Wm. De Graff,
Camp Van Dorn, Miss.

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Dear Friends:

I have been in the navy for 19 months now and I haven't been on board a ship as yet. I had my boot training at Great Lakes and after a nine day leave I was sent down here to Norfolk. There really isn't a thing to do in town here so I stay on the base all the time. When I do go into town for just a short time the things one sees are really disgusting. I have been attending a Presbyterian
church most every Sunday, but the services don’t amount to much.

When I first came here for duty I had two months of compartment cleaning. Cleaning up the barracks after some fellows come in from town isn’t a very pleasant job. After two months of that I was put on the beach crew which was a better job. I spent 11 months at this and I was rather tired of it by then. We had to go out in the water and put wheels on our big flying boats after they came in from patrolling the coast. During the winter months this was a rather tough job because we were always getting wet. It was a lot of fun during the summer because we were in swimming all the time. Now for the last four months I have been working in the metal shop and I like this work. We patch holes in the planes and make changes on the planes. This is all I will write for this time, and thanks for the Beacon Lights. Keep up the good work.

Gillis Vanden Berg.

** dear Friends:**

I have been receiving Beacon Lights for quite some time now. I have never come around to thinking you for it, something I’ve been wanting to do for some time. I enjoy very much the articles published in this magazine and am thankful that I can be somewhat connected with the Church through the Beacon Lights, although I am many miles from it. I also receive the Standard Bearer and it is a comfort to be able to read a good sound doctrine, something which is hard to find in this man’s army.

I don’t think there is much need in my saying anything about my life in the service because life in the service is practically the same wherever you go. I know some boys have it tougher than others, but as far as army life itself goes, it is practically the same, at least I have found it to be that way and I have been from coast to coast while in the States.

Where I am now church services are held in the post theatre, a very inappropriate place, but after all it isn’t the place but what is taught there. Naturally the sermons are not like ours, but more or less to satisfy everyone present. I surely do miss our type of worship and I hope before long we’ll be able to enjoy them together again.

As ever,

Cpl. Wm. Swart.
A Reformation In Bellflower

Some time previous to the year of 1933 a Protestant Reformed Church was organized in Los Angeles, California.

Soon after that there were also people in Bellflower and vicinity who were dissatisfied with the doctrine as preached in the Christian Reformed Church. However, the distance to Los Angeles made this impractical for dairy folk. An attempt was made to rent a building somewhere between Bellflower and Los Angeles, but this failed to materialize as some families still would have to travel too far.

Shortly after that an attempt was made to organize a church in Bellflower. Rev. Hoeksema was asked to come and lecture and preach for us. This attempt at organization failed, however, because of lack of support.

However, the few families in Bellflower did not lose their zeal. Meetings were still held during the week in the rear of a church in Bellflower and the pastors then at Los Angeles preached for us. This was kept up until the year 1935. We had the privilege to hear the following ministers: Revs. Veldman, H. Kuiper and A. Cammenga.

In the year 1935 Rev. Hoeksema was again asked to come and lecture and preach for us. Another attempt was made to organize and this time it was successful. Nine families joined together to form a new church.

An old building on Bellflower Blvd. was rented and we held our services there.

If I remember correctly our first call for our own pastor was successful in the person of Rev. A. Petter at that time a candidate. This all gave us new courage and grateful hearts.

We held our services in this building for a year or more, although we realized it was very unsuitable with its old floors, low ceiling, and old leaky gas heater. I am sure when Rev. Petter reads this it will revive old memories.

At last an opportunity presented itself in which we could rent a Seventh Day Adventist Church, a very commodious building and certainly a palace compared to what we had been used to. Again we were grateful. We rented this building for $30.00 a month and used the building for our services on Sunday. Although we were allowed to use it two evenings of the week we found it more convenient to meet in the parsonage for the weekly meetings and catechism classes.

In 1939 our beloved pastor, Rev. Petter, received a call from Oska.

(Cont. on page 32)
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Bible Study
Outlines

REV. GEO. LUBBERS
RANDOLPH, WISCONSIN

Outline XXIV
SAUL CALLED UNTO APOSTLESHIP
Acts 9:1-19

By Whom Called. 1. Without a doubt the one who here calls the apostle unto the apostleship is the predominating figure in this portion. He is none other than Jesus, the Exalted Lord! Matt. 28:18. He is Jesus! He is the historical Christ Who suffered and died upon the tree, whom heaven must receive unto the times of the restitution of all things. Twice this is emphatically stated in this chapter. Once in vs. 5 where Jesus says: I am Jesus! And this is repeated by Ananias to Saul. vs. 17. That He is the exalted Lord is also very much on the foreground. a. This appears first of all from the name LORD. Names in Scripture have significance. This is the case both with the names of God and with those of His Son in the flesh. It makes some difference whether we read “Son of God” or whether we read “Son of Man”. Whether the text reads “Jesus” or whether it is “Christ”. Here, as was said, the name “Lord” is on the foreground. In fact in these first 19 verses no less than eleven times. b. This also appears from the fact that Christ appears to Saul in a brilliancy which outshines the noonday sun. Acts 22:6. It brings to mind the picture of the Son of Man standing between the seven candlesticks as we read this in Rev. 1:12-17. In fact this appearance has the same effect. And in its effect it also reminds us of the Lord’s appearance to Daniel. Confer Dan. 10. Indeed this is as it should be.

2. In the capacity of the one who subjects all things under His feet, He here appears. Had not Saul received orders from the authorities of the temple in Jerusalem, the earthly? Now from out of the heavenly Jerusalem comes the Lord of the temple, who had stripped the earthly priesthood and all earthly powers, and, heavenly satanic powers of all their might and had put them to an open shame on the cross! Col. 2:14, 15. Compare Heb. 1:1ff. This Jesus is the one Who later appears to John on Patmos with preaching orders, putting His right foot upon the sea and His left foot on the earth. Rev. 10:2. And before Him every tongue shall confess His Lordship. Phil. 2:11. Had He not powerfully been
revealed to be the Son of God in His resurrection from the dead? Rom. 1:4. And had not this unclothed the temple authorities of every last vestige of power? And was this not becoming evermore evident in all the preaching of the Name of Jesus?! 

The Manner of This Calling. 1. By the direct, personal appearance of Jesus to Saul. For notice: a. That thus it is indeed stated in the text. It was not in a vision as was later the case with Peter (Acts 10) or with John on the Island of Patmos (Rev. 10). It was the glorified Christ whose glory Peter, James and John might behold on the mount. Luke 9:28-36; II Pet. 1:16-18. The Lord says emphatically: I am Jesus! b. This is corroborated by Paul himself in I Cor. 9:1. He had seen the Lord, Jesus! He need not be a follower of cunningly devised fables. He can be an eye-witness of His glory. c. And does Paul not say in Gal. 1:16 that the Son of God had been revealed (uncovered) in him. He had seen the glory of the Son in the flesh. A hasty perusal of these last two Scripture passages will show what great implications it has for Paul's apostleship.

2. By other "visions" which are subservient to this "appearance on the way to Damascus". a. The vision in which the Lord appeared to Ananias, vss. 10-16. Ananias was a disciple of Christ. He was possibly one of the Christians whose very names were known to Saul and to the authorities. He is in need of this vision. (1) In a general way because "the times and the seasons" and, we may add, the "vessels" are in the Father's power. That matters are here directed not from below but from above is very clear. And therefore "revelation" to Ananias in this case is very necessary. (2) But all the more so in this particular case. Did it not all look so paradoxical! This man Saul, God's chosen vessel! And that while his avowed purpose had been to make havoc of the church? (3) Because Ananias must also receive a definite mandate from Christ and must bring glad and momentous tidings to Saul. Of these tidings more will be said presently. b. The vision of the Lord to Saul while he was at the home of a certain Judas, who lived on the street called "Straight". Saul was in need of a message: (1) He is prepared for it in this vision. He had already seen Ananias come, had seen him come in the vision. (Incidentally the curtain is here raised and we see something of what Saul experienced during his three-day blindness). (2) He is told that Ananias will have a message for him, telling him of the future course mapped out for him. c. And so we see that these two visions, although they are two separate visions to two different individuals, nevertheless are in their content one. They belong together. And both again are subservient to the purpose of Christ's appearance to Saul on the way.

A Definite Life Course Mapped Out for Saul. 1. In this connection it should not escape our attention, that the text vs. 15 says: "To bear my name before the Gentiles (nations) kings and the sons
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of Israel." This order is very striking, and, we believe, significant. For notice:
a. That this is a word spoken by the Lord Jesus Himself to Ananias in the vision. He is the same that said in Acts 1:8 "and ye shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and unto the ends of the earth. . . ." The literal fulfillment of the manner in which 1:8 is executed is abundantly evident in the book of Acts. In fact to show how Christ's name was testified of is the very purpose of the book of Acts. b. Now this same Christ says (not of all the apostles in general) but specifically of Saul: he shall bear my Name before gentiles, kings, and the sons of Israel. Also this seems to indicate the literal course of the apostle's work. With Dr. Greydanus we there believe that we can see this in the following chapters. Before the Gentiles Paul preaches, chap. 13-20; before the kings, chap. 22-26; and before the Jews, chap. 28:17-28.

2. Thus we see that 9:15 is a detail fitting in the Lord's revelation in 1:8. There it was very general. To the "Ye shall be my witness" also Paul belongs. However here we clearly see how it is worked out from heaven in Christ. And that according to the council of God's sovereign will.

Questions: How can Christ be persecuted while He is in heaven? Col. 1:24. Was Paul's persecuting of the church also a part of his preparation for the ministry? 1 Cor. 15:9-11. How must we judge about the discrepancy of Acts 9:7 & 22:9?

Outline XXV
SAUL'S PREACHING OF CHRIST
Acts 9:20-30

In Damascus. 1. First of all a word about Saul's temporary sojourn in Arabia. Notice: a. That this fact is not known from the book of Acts. Luke does not record it. Acts is no biography of persons, but the record of the bearing forth of Christ's name along the lines of 1:8 and Gen. 12:1-3. b. How Paul himself tells us this in the epistle to the Galatians. In Gal. 1:15-17 Paul makes clear that he did not immediately after his calling go and confer with the other disciples, but that he went to Arabia. He does not tell us this in this chapter merely as a point of historical interest, but relates it to prove the independency of his apostleship from all other men. His gospel is by direct revelation of Jesus Christ. And in so far this also has value for this outline, as will become evident shortly. c. Although Luke does not speak of this visit to Arabia on the part of Paul, yet he has been there. The question is: where must we place this in Luke's account. The most natural seems to be to think of it as having taken place between the first preaching in Damascus, as recorded in vss. 20-22 and the "many days" of vs. 23ff.

2. His preaching Proper. The content of the apostle's preaching was: That Jesus is the "Son of God", vs. 20. Emphatically: This Jesus who had been crucified in Jerusalem and was now being proclaimed in His resurrection from
B E A C O N L I G H T S

the dead. Hence: a. The pure and unadulterated gospel. The only foundation that can be laid. If any should preach another let him be "anathema" yea, even though he were an angel from heaven. Gal. 1:6-9; 1 Cor. 3:10-12; Rom. 15:20.

b. In this he was an independent preacher—dependent from the apostles. They did not need to lay their hands on them as was the case with the seven deacons and with the evangelists. Acts 6:1ff.; 8:17. How was this possible? The direct revelation of Jesus Christ without the intervention of men. Gal. 1:15-24.

3. His preaching terminated in Damascus. a. Occasion? The council decided to slay Paul. Damascus, a walled city with gates, was closely watched. But Paul is left down the wall in a basket through a window and escapes and goes to Jerusalem. b. How to judge of this fleeing. (1) Indeed this was not cowardice. It was the very thing that Christ Himself did when the Jews would kill Him and when his "hour was not yet come", and which He also prescribed for His disciples. Matt. 10:23. (2) And that he must flee for the sake of the "Word of God and the testimony of Jesus" that is a tribute to this servant of Christ. He becomes one of the "souls under the altar" Rev. 6:9, and ultimately one of "those beheaded for the word of God" 20:4. And in this he comes under the benediction of Jesus. Matt. 5:11, 12. Given out of grace to suffer for Christ. Acts 5:41; Phil. 1:29.

In Jerusalem. 1. Saul's need of credential papers. a. I think it was to the congregation of Corinth that Paul writes from Macedonia that he needs no credential papers to them (see II Cor. 3:1), but he is in dire need of them when he comes to Jerusalem whither he had gone to see Peter and where he had remained for fifteen days. Gal. 1:18. Not only are the people afraid of Saul but also the apostles. Here comes Paul, a man feared by the believers and hated by the Jewish leaders! Does not heaven need to explain what has happened!? b. It is Barnabas who comes to the rescue. He relates three matters concerning Saul—matters which constitute the ground of credence in the church. They are: 1. How Saul had seen the Lord Jesus in the way. This is the first and most important point. (2) How the Lord had spoken to Saul. (3) How Saul had spoken boldly in Christ's name in Damascus.

2. Saul's Controversy with the Grecians. a. The point of controversy was no doubt the same as that of Stephen's. Acts 6-7. Compare how keenly Paul was aware of Stephen's controversy. Acts 22:17-20. b. What was Paul's motive? The laying of the foundation was not possible here any longer. What then? Paul would gladly and earnestly have these Grecians see what he now sees. Had he not been blind himself with their blindness? Acts 22:19. c. But the Lord appears to Paul as he is "in a trance" telling him that it is both useless and dangerous for him to attempt the conversion of these Grecian Jews. His mission is recorded in Acts.
9:15. Confer 22:18, 21. d. He leaves Jerusalem by special revelation of Christ and under the accompaniment of the brethren as far as Cesarea. From thence he embarks to Tarsus. The curtain falls.

Questions: Is it important what Paul did during the years at Tarsus? If so, why are we not told? Did the Lord think this a wasting of time? If so, why did He send him thence? Or does He have another standard of measure than we?

Outline XXVI

PETER PASSING THROUGH THE CHURCHES IN PALESTINE

Acts 9:31-43

The Favorable Condition in the Churches Generally. 1. The churches here referred to. a. They were undoubtedly those in the territory of Judea, Samarea and Galilee. Hence well-nigh all of Palestine. The entire region which Jesus had made His field of labor while on earth. (Of course it is still His field of labor. Is this not continuation from out of heaven? Acts 1:1, 2). Incidentally this indicates: (1) That the church had spread geographically quite a ways since the persecution under Saul at the occasion of Stephen's martyrdom. (2) How many churches there were we are not told. The writer paints a picture without too much detail. b. The writer says "the church". To be sure this is not dogmatics. But the explanation is warranted that the writer insists that all these several churches in different communities is still the same church. All still of "one heart and life" 4:32. Nothing of its unity is lost—of the spiritual unity in Christ, the Lord. (Still the Bible does sometimes speak of this one church as churches. See Rev. 1:20; 2:7-11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.) Geographic separation no obstacle to unity.

2. Conditions at this time are described as favorable for the church. a. Externally there is peace. Saul, the great persecutor has come "out of the synagogue of Satan" and has come "to worship at the feet" of the church, has come to acknowledge that God loves her in Christ. The church indeed had an "open door". Rev. 3:8, 9. Is not that description applicable to Saul prior to the Lord’s appearance to him? Had He, who had stilled the stormy sea of Galilee, not also stilled the stormy and restless sea of persecution? b. But notwithstanding this "peace" life had not returned to the status quo of the "mother church in Jerusalem". The believers did not return to this city. For notice: (1) Edification is possible and a reality also outside of this city in Jerusalem. John 4:21-24. The Lord’s table of the "New Testament in His Blood" was where the believers were. And the Word was there administered. And the Holy Spirit comforted through these His means of grace. (2) These Jewish believers were learning the implication of what it means "to have here no abiding city of worship". Compare Heb. 13:14. All eyes must henceforth be turned to Jerusalem which is above. Gal. 4:21-31; Heb. 12:18-29. Peter Passes Throughout the Whole Region. I. Peter in Lydda. Vss. 32-35.
a. The miracle performed there through his hands. There was a man here who had been the victim of paralysis for eight years. That this man is thus paralyzed is not by chance. As far as Peter was concerned it can be said that he found this man in this condition. God had prepared this man for His own purpose. John 9:3. The work of God which God has worked hitherto (John 5:17) must continue spear-headed in and through this bed-ridden mortal. As far as was in the power of man there was no hope for cure in this case. Now may the power of the wonder of grace break thru.

b. For it is: Jesus Christ heals thee! Not I, Peter! Acts 3:12. And he walks, makes his bed. He is proof material of the healing that is in the leaves of the “Tree of Life” in the heavenly paradise, the New Jerusalem. Rev. 22:2. Power went out of Christ. Mark 5:3. c. The effect? A corresponding power of healing in the hearts of men and women in the whole region. “All believed and turned unto the Lord”. It must have been extraordinary. Could it be ordinary? Was it not the power of the coming age breaking through in this present age and plucking the Saviour’s sheep out of this evil world? Heb. 6:5; Gal. 1:4.

2. Peter in Joppa. Vss. 36-43. a. The circumstances under which he arrived here. He was summoned there by a committee of two men. A certain much beloved and well-known woman had become ill and died. Instead of burying her they ask Peter to come without delay. Evidently in trusting faith that he would raise her from the dead. The tidings of the healing of the paralytic must have penetrated even into Joppa. b. When reading this narrative of Luke we are reminded of what we read in Luke 8:11 where he records that Christ raised Jairus’ daughter from the dead. But this is not strange. Was not the same Jesus now going to perform a miracle through Peter who had then performed it in Peter’s presence? c. Result? Many believed.

Questions: How do the Premillenarians construe the relationship of “Jerusalem above” and “Jerusalem which is now”? Would they give the interpretation of the trend of the gospel as we have attempted in the above? Is it important to see this distinction? How many reasons could you give for this?

Outline XXVII

REVELATION TO PETER CONCERNING CEREMONIAL INSTITUTIONS

Acts 10:9-16

Just a word of explanation is here in order. Chapters 10:1 through 11:18 can all very well be treated as a whole. This we first contemplated doing. But space would not allow for adequate treatment. Besides, even though it is rather difficult to gauge the stride of our various societies, I believe there would be too much material for one meeting. I therefore will treat this material under three headings. 1. As written above this outline. 2. The Revelation Confirmed and Illucidated Before Cornelius. 3. Peter’s Apol-
ogy Before Those of the Circumcision in Jerusalem.

The Circumstances of This Revelation.

1. In general we should bear the following in mind: a. That the time was ripe for the gospel to break through into the Gentile world. Thus the gospel course had been foretold to the disciples by Jesus on Mt. Olivet. Acts 1:8. This was not something entirely new. It was the word of God already spoken in the O. T. prophets. Acts 16:14-18; Amos 9:11, 12; Jer. 12:15 and Is. 45:21. b. Had the Lord not given a more detailed account of this in the vision to Ananias? Acts 9:10-11. And was Paul not awaiting the signal of the Lord to go far hence unto the Gentiles? Acts 22:21. Then peace would be preached not only to those who are "near" but also to those who are "afar off". Acts 2:39 (Joel 2:22; Is. 57:19). Without bearing this in mind the vision to Peter makes no sense. It is the "time element" in Scripture!

2. The Particular Circumstances of Peter. a. He is in Joppa at the home of Simon the tanner, beside the seaside. It is mid-day. The hungry Peter while he is praying (What was he praying for? It was not the set hour of prayer was it?) fell into a visionary trance. The time of this vision is controlled by the Lord Jesus. Was Peter not when old to go where another would send him? John 22:18. b. This vision is synchronized with the visit of the men sent hither by Cornelius, a centurian of the band called the Italian. Jesus had also appeared to this Cornelius. Both visions, to Peter and Cornelius respectively are from the Lord Jesus. A parallel case we have in Ananias and Saul.

The Form and Content of the Vision.

1. We notice the following as to the form: a. That Peter is in a trance. He is oblivious to the surroundings commonly perceived through his sense organs. Temporarily the tie is cut. He is transported into another field of experience. b. In this state he beholds the following: (1) A large sheet as it were full of all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth and wild beasts, and creeping things and fowls of the air. (2) Peter is told to slay and eat—to eat these animals of all kinds. c. And in this state of a trance there is a dialogue about the question of "clean and unclean". Peter will not eat the unclean. Yet God says: the distinction of clean and unclean is taken away.

2. As to the content of this vision we can state the following: a. That this vision had reference to the ceremonial laws. The law of clean and unclean animals is no longer in effect. It is nailed to the cross. It was a handwriting against us. It belonged to the heavy yoke. It belonged to that which had merely a pedagogical purpose, to serve as a taskmaster to Christ. It is one of the ceremonial laws (clean and unclean) representing the entire O. T. (covenant) revelation. b. It forms a middle wall of partition excluding the Gentile world. It belongs to a temple which could only house the children of Abraham out of the Jews. But Christ's blood had abol-
ished it all in the perfect obedience to the moral law. And thus the promise was fulfilled. And this law of clean and unclean coming 430 years after the promise could never make the promise of none effect. This truth is so fundamental and important that fact alone makes the Bible a closed book. The following Scripture passages: Matt. 15:1-11; 5ph. 2:11-15; Col. 2:13-15.

3. That this revelation was necessary follows: a. From the fact that according to the Lord’s appointment at Sinai the law of clean and unclean really was of effect. Think of it for more than thirty five generations! Just think how difficult for us to get over small habitual customs in our church life. b. This change was to occur according to God’s purpose in the dispensation on the fullness of times. Eph. 1:9, 10. It was the mystery of God in Christ which one could only know by revelation. Eph. 3:1-13; the mystery that Paul in particular was to preach. c. And it was to be the great bone of contention in the early church. All sorts of practical and principle questions are grouped around this theme. The entire epistle to the Galatians is devoted to it. A meeting in Jerusalem. Acts 15 etc.

A REFORMATION IN BELLFLOWER

Loosa, Iowa, which he felt duty bound to accept. Our hearts were saddened but it was the Lord’s will that we should have a name and place among the Protestant Reformed Churches.

Before the Rev. Petter had left us a call was already extended to Candidate Doezema who accepted and came to us in December of the same year. Again we gave thanks to our Lord who gave us another shepherd in so short a time.

All this time we had been renting a home for our pastor and we considered that in the long run it would be cheaper to build our own parsonage. This materialized the following year. Two large lots were purchased on the corner of Monterey and Grand on the outskirts of Bellflower the corner lot being reserved for a church building possibly in the future. And the Lord also gave us success in this undertaking so that we now have our own Church building and parsonage. Had we not done so at the time it would not have been possible today on account of war restrictions.

Numerically we have not grown much, but a fine spirit of unity prevails. Societies are well attended and a constant desire is shown to increase in the knowledge of the Word of God by the larger part of the congregation. The Lord give us His grace that not only in these times but also in days of adversity we may persevere unto the end that no one take our crown.

H. A. Brunsting.