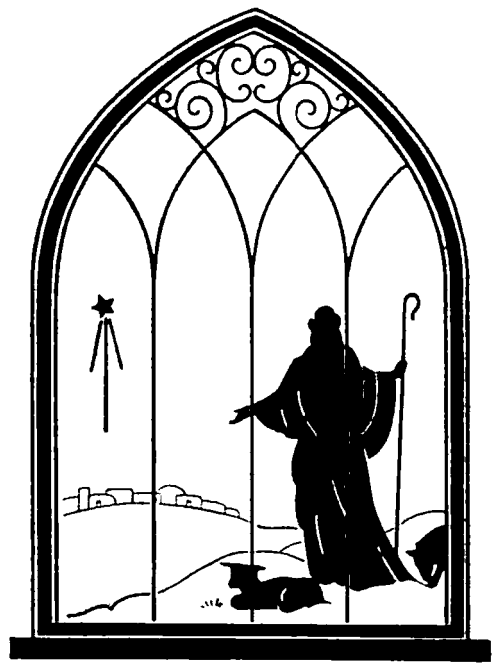
BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME V DECEMBER — 1944 NUMBER 3



"And there were shepherds abiding
in the field . . ."

"Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and
the Glory of the Lord is risen upon thee"

EDITORIAL STAFF

Editor-in-Chief.....Mr. Geo. Ten Elshof
Business Manager.....Miss Alice Reitsma
Managing Editors.....Dick Vd. Wal—Edw. J. Knott

Beacon Lights is published by the Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

All matter relative to contents and the Open Forum should be addressed to Mr. Geo. Ten Elshof, 642 Naylor St., S. W., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Subscriptions may be sent to Miss Alice Reitsma, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. All subscriptions will be continued unless notified to the contrary

All copy must be in the hands of Mr. Dick Van Der Wal, 1100 Sigsbee St. S. E., Grand Rapids, Mich. on or before the fifteenth of the month preceding date of issue.

Beacon Lights is published Monthly except July and September.

Subscription Price $1.25 per year.

Entered as 2nd Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Mich.

Seasons Greetings

to our

Friends and Readers

Everywhere

The Staff

Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME V | DECEMBER — 1944 | NUMBER 3

He Came Into His Own

by Rev. Wm. E. Korn — Menno (Kassel), S. D.

According to the church calendar we shall "celebrate Christmas" pretty soon. But one, unto whom the promise of the gospel: "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord," is not given, does not know what Christmas means, even though he or she "celebrates Christmas". One of the great Christmas texts we find recorded in the gospel of St. John 1: 11-14 (reads)! God grant us blessed eyes that we might see the wonders of His grace.

In the fulness of time —according to God's eternal counsel and providence —God fully revealed Himself in His only begotten Son, God in Christ, the Eternal Word, who was with God, was made flesh. He humbled himself and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh (Phil. 2; Ro. 8). The babe in swaddling clothes looked like His brethren in all things, sin excepted. The Son of God was made flesh, means: God made Him to be sin for us, note, God did not make Him a sinful person, but *the vicarious Sin-bearer of His chosen communion.*

Where did this take place? In the world which was made by Him and belonged to Him, and still does. God governs his creation, his own, the world into which He came, and, particularly, into Israel! But His own—the world and Israel — did not receive Him. Though He tabernacled among them, —the tabernacle of the old covenant was a prototype and a foreshadow of Jesus Christ —, they, His own, the vessels of dishonour the potter had formed, did not and could not receive Him!

But this is not all! If it were, we would not be able "to celebrate Christ-mas" in the true sense of the word! Our text has *"a great But"*. And in this connection it means: *good pleasure and grace!* When He came into His own, there

were many, though only a remnant in comparison with others, who received Him, and who saw His glory! Were those who received and believed on His name different from the others who did not? By no means! The sons of God were not born as such of blood, because they too were born and conceived in sin. Were they born of the will of flesh? No! For that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and our flesh is prone by nature to hate God! "For the flush lusteth against the Spirit" of God! (Gal. 5). Nor of the will of man became they sons of God! "For there is none that seeketh after God, no, not one" (Rom. 3). *There is no free-human-will-gospel! Our text gives clearly and emphatically a threefold denial of any human source of sonship and salvation!* Those who received Him and believed on His name — and this is still true today because God and His word never changes, He is the unchangeable, with Him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning —, were born of him. *Of His own will begat He us* with the word of truth! (James 1:18). He who by His eternal counsel governs and upholds his own, gave unto them, whom He had chosen in Him before the foundation of the world, the power, because He has both the authority and ability —, to become according to the good pleasure of His will the sons of God, the adopted children of God, by grace, for His sake (H. Cat. 33; Eph. 1:5).

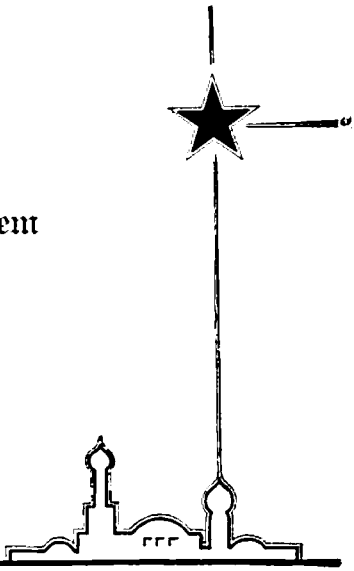
To believe in His name, means: to believe in His sovereign authority! To believe in His name, means: that in Him we find and have all things necessary to our salvation. For there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12). And as the sons of God, His adopted children, they beheld the glory *as— not like* — of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. He is the only truth (John 14:6), and everyone that is of the truth, everyone that is born of God and not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man (see above), will hear the voice of the only begotten Son of the Father in whom the whole fulness of the new covenant dwells! And as covenant-children they and we sing with the multitude of heavenly host: Glory in the highest to God! And peace (not as the world giveth, John 14:27) on earth in men of His good pleasure! (Luke 2:14 must thus be translated!) This the true Christian "celebrates" not only once a year, at Yuletide, but he or she rejoices in it always!

We take pleasure in introducing to our readers the Rev. Wm. E. Korn, pastor of the Kassel congregation of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, which is located near Menno, South Dakota.

Let Us Go Even Unto Bethlehem

by

REV. P. VIS
Rock Valley, Iowa



THUS spake the shepherds of old in the fields of Ephrata. Having heard the glad tidings of the Saviour's birth they could not refrain from going to Bethlehem in order to see the thing that was come to pass. And well may we, too, exhort one another today saying: Come, let us go even unto Bethlehem!

For the time is again at hand that we are about to celebrate Christmas. And again it will be a Christmas in a world at war. Undoubtedly, most of us had cherished the hope that before another Christmas rolled along the war would be won. But such, however, will not be the case. Our nation is still at war and as yet the end is not in sight. Therefore, many of us still have another strange Christmas to say the least. In view of this and all the suffering and bloodshed, misery and grief in the world today, we cannot help but ask: but can we truly celebrate Christmas during a war such as this? Is it not foolish in such times to wish one another a "merry" Christmas? Is the true joy of Christmas possible today?

In answering these questions it all depends what our conception is of a happy Christmas. And we may say immediately that if our conception of a happy Christmas is the enjoyment of the things that are seen such as tinsel and tree, banquets and friends, prosperity and earthly peace, then to be sure, we will have a sad Christmas indeed, and that not only this year but every year. For I am sure that if those things must make us happy then we shall never be happy. In reality, they have nothing to do with the true joy of Christ-

mas whatsoever. Real Christmas joy is independent of them altogether. From a certain aspect, therefore, the true joy of Christmas is always triumphant.

For that reason it is not a question first of all whether we are rich or poor, whether we dwell in a land of war or peace. But rather the question is whether by the grace of God we have the faith of the shepherds and whether we exercise it by going to Bethlehem. For true Christmas joy consists in this that we go to Bethlehem and in living faith behold the marvelous thing which God has brought to pass. Not out of curiosity, not to change the stable to a palace, but to marvel, worship and adore. For there in that humble stable lies the Saviour, who is Christ, the Lord. There lies the Prince of Peace, who brings forth life out of death, grants riches for poverty, and gives peace while the battle still rages. Yes, there in that lowly manger lies Immanuel, in whom heaven and earth meet and in whom God and man are forever united. Therefore, to stand in that stable in living faith, to behold the humble manger and the swaddling clothes, to feed upon the amazing love which they display, — that is life. To stand in Bethlehem upon His grace, — that is the joy of Christmas.

Well may we sing of the beauty of Bethlehem. She may be small to be numbered among the thousands of Judah, yet to us she is the greatest and most beautiful of them all. Especially today, when on the dark background of sin, destruction and war, her beauty is seen as never before. For even as the darkness of night brings out the beauty of the stars, so too the beauty of Bethlehem becomes apparent in the measure that the night of sin becomes dark. Today, when the night of sin is exceedingly dark and Bethlehem shines in splendor and glory, where could the

christian better go than to Bethlehem. What could be more blessed and glorious, for there in Bethlehem is the only haven of rest and fountain of peace. However, he must go in faith, otherwise Bethlehem will be foolishness to him and the outcome will be utter disappointment.

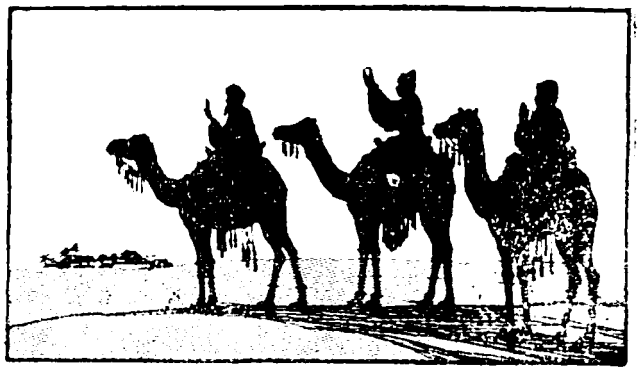
Thus it becomes evident that, on the one hand, in the final analysis the true joy of Christmas depends on God and His grace. For without faith the true joy of Christ-

mas is impossible and faith is a gift of God. But for this very reason, on the other hand, we may say that for the people of God's good pleasure this joy is sure. For we know that to them He gives grace to believe and that His grace is sufficient for them in every circumstance in life. Wherever they are and whatever their way may be, He enables them to live by faith and to seek their salvation in Bethlehem. And thus they enjoy His favor and peace.

Therefore, dear reader, it is evident that as far as a truly happy and blessed Christmas is concerned. it is not a question first of all whether your way is smooth or rough, whether you are on the homefront or on the battlefield, whether you sit in an easy chair or in a wet fox-hole. True, we all look forward to the day when peace shall be restored and when we can again celebrate Christmas as in the past. But the main question for the present is whether we go to Bethlehem. That is always essential, not only in peace and prosperity but also in war and adversity. And by the grace of God it is possible in both, however, as a rule it is most difficult in the former. Whether it be in war or in peace, whenever we go to Bethlehem in faith we receive the peace which surpasses all understanding.

As the Christmas season again approaches, may it be true of you and me, that by the power of God's grace we seek our comfort and peace in Bethlehem. In the measure we do, in spite of the suffering and agony of war, we shall sing with the angels: Glory to God in the highest, for on earth there is peace in the people of His good pleasure. With the shepherds of old we shall return praising and glorifying God, not because we enjoy suffering and war, but because we know that in the Babe of Bethlehem we are more than conquerors.

Come, let us go, then even unto Bethlehem!



The Baby's Name

By Mr. Geo. Ten Elshof — Grand Rapids, Mich.

Those of us who have children or are responsible for naming of children know how difficult it sometimes is to do so. We lack the intuition to name them according to their natures or individual characteristics so about all we can do is either name them "after" someone or select a name which "sounds well".

But Joseph, the husband of Mary, had no such problem for the angel of the Lord appeared unto him " . . . thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins".

Let us briefly look at that Name and more especially its significance. Jesus — Jehovah Salvation! A beautiful name especially since it expresses the purpose of Him who bore it. And as we read, "for he shall save his people from their sins" let us pause to emphasize that he is not a *general* Saviour, not a *potential* or *possible* Savior. His name does not imply a *general* offer of Salvation or a weak and helpless and pleading Savior for mankind in general.

Let us stay by the words of the angel. Surely the explanation which he gives should be our only guide! Let us in this day and age especially and with renewed emphasis say, "He *shall* save *His people* from their sins!"

Regardless of all the pious talk and regardless of your terrible accusations of injustice in God regardless of your sickly sentimentalisms and your own depraved "reasoning" and "logic", He is JESUS! And nothing you can say or do will ever change that Name or its meaning. That Name must be preached not to see how many converts, not because He is a well meant offer of salvation, not because of the fear lest heaven be empty but because He is Jesus who shall save His people from their sins.

Please think on that Name my fellow pilgrim. It is unique, it is a name which is named "after" His Father and it "goes well" with and is the basis for all our redemption, life and walk. It is a powerful Name which divides flesh and blood ties and reaches deep into our hearts and in principle causes us to crucify our old nature and walk in a new and holy life.

RESTRICTED AREA

For Christians Only

There are such a multitude of thoughts which could be expressed concerning the Christmas season that it is difficult to make a choice. We could, for instance, write about the longing of servicemen to "be home by Christmas" of "other Christmases" when there was no open hostility and warfare among the nations, or, we could raise our voice in protest against the commercialization of this very significant Christian Holiday and many many more such thoughts.

However, I have chosen to use a familiar sign, especially in and around defense plants and military installations, namely, "Restricted Area" and add thereto "For Christians only" and with this as a topic and central theme, express a few thoughts in regard to Christmas.

Sometimes it's difficult to see that the world does not celebrate Christmas and they would even deny this fact and look askance if you calmly informed them of their inability and even lack of desire to do so. Look around and see them and hear them on the radio. Singing "stars" who but a moment before had the songs of the world on their lips — now singing beautiful carols proclaiming the Savior's birth. And the hosts of "Merry Christmas" wishers of all classes. Worldly philanthropists donating a fraction of their excess to relieve the distressed only to let them struggle for themselves as best they can when the holiday is over again. But are they celebrating Christmas? You and I know better and their maudlin sentimentality and superficial piety is nauseating.

But why can they not join us? Is there not "another plane" or "another sphere" or "another area" where we can meet apart from "special grace"? Is there? So some have and still do contend but, remember, the Christian lives in a "restricted area" whose bounds are as firmly set as the tightly woven fences and the carefully guarded areas of defense plants or military installations. And only with the proper credentials can you enter and your credentials must bear the words "Child of God" and must be sealed with the blood of the Cross!

But do not misunderstand. For this restricted area is not of such a nature that it fetters us and we

are bound while those outside can roam where they will and do as they please. Oh no, the very opposite is true for we have been liberated and they are bound, we have security and peace while they have fear and trouble. For we walk in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free while they walk in the bondage of sin and death. And in that restricted area we calmly view the tumults and upheavals of the world for we know the end of all things and their purpose. For in the measure that we live in that area we, allow me to so express it, have a bit of heaven on earth. And don't be disturbed if those on the other side of the fence murmur "poor fools" for they have the right label on the wrong box! And if they would seem to weep over your state and think that your life is a desolate one, turn to them as did our Savior and say ". . . weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children". For truly the blind are leading the blind into the ditch of everlasting destruction. And there are no temporary bridges across that ditch. Only one bridge made by the Son of God whose birth we now celebrate.

So if you are in that restricted area — rejoice with us in the birth of Jesus but if not — woe be unto you! G. T. E.

Winter's Ermine Cloak

By Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

"The speckled sky is dim with snow,
The light flakes falter and fall slow;
Athwart the hill-top, rapt and pale,
Silently drops a silvery veil;
And all the valley is shut in
By flickering curtains gray and thin." *J. T. Trowbridge.*

A striking change, indeed, to find when morning breaks a blanket of crystal white enshrouding hill and dale! Is not the first snowfall of the season always a welcome surprise? The black plowed fields have become transformed and glisten in the sunlight, while the barren bleak trees sparkle in the morning rays, and the white neighboring roofs

magnify the smoke curling from the chimneys. Enchanting, yes, a winter fairyland!

"Nature is beautiful always beautiful! Every little flake of snow is a perfect crystal, and they fall together as gracefully as if fairies of the air caught water-drops and made them into artificial flowers to garland the wings of the wind."—Mrs. L. M. Child.

Approximately four centuries ago, 1555, Olaus Magnus—a Swedish Archbishop of Upsala, commended studying snow crystals with a magnifying lens. He made several drawings of snow crystals which he carefully described. Today, they are considered crude, but we must not forget thta his work was accomplished prior to the invention of the microscope. Some excellent drawings of snow crystals were made by a Scotch Arctic explorer named William Scoresby about three centuries later.

Very little scientific effort has been expended in this direction until recently when it was discovered how to make snowflake prints. Perhaps, some of you readers might be interested in this as a hobby. Obtain a piece of black velvet about two feet square, a knitting needle, a glass slide (small piece of glass), and a solution of farmvor (available at a local drug store). The best time to collect them is at a temperature slightly below 30 degrees. Make sure that your collecting equipment is the same temperature as that outside when you are ready to make your print. After you have spread your velvet on the ground, dip your knitting needle into the formvar solution and touch the glass slide to deposit the drop suspended on the needle's point. Proceed by selecting a snow crystal and transfer it to the slide by touching it with the needle's point. (Enough moisture remains on the tip of the needle after removing the drop to make this transfer possible). Soon the crystal and the solution will evaporate leaving an outline of the snowflake on the slide which one may examine at leisure under the microscope.

Consider for a moment the millions of flakes descending in a local snowfall — then, reflect on the amount which falls throughout the

universe, especially, in the polar areas where snowfall is almost a daily occurrence. Observations have thus far shown that no two flakes are alike. Is it possible?

One is overwhelmed with the very thought of such variation! However, all of these flakes are either six-sided or six-pointed figures, but this in the first place, greatly limits the possibilities of design and secondly, reveals a divinely uniform plan according to which each one is made. What a great evidence of God's divine providence and Master mind in creation — infinite diversity within the limits of one pattern!

What is snow? Superflous though the question may seem, it nevertheless is frequently answered incorrectly. Many consider it to be frozen rain, but frozen rain is called "sleet". When rain freezes upon contact with the cold earth it is termed "glaze" (not sleet). *Frozen water vapor* is called snow. The minute moisture particles freeze upon contact with the cold atmosphere, and when these particles unite and become large enough, they descend in the form of snow. The air always contains moisture (water vapor) which, in cold weather, freezes and falls as snow. Large flakes, which are more common in mild winter weather, are in reality a collection of several crystals loosely banded together. Occasionally, snowflakes strike a warm layer of air in their descent causing a partial thawing and then freeze again as they near the earth resulting in a white "sugary" or refrozen flake which the Germans call "graupel". As the American meteorologists have no substitute term we also use the word "graupel" for refrozen snow.

Generally speaking, the appearance of the crystals is indicative of the weather thru which the flake passed. Altho there are no definite types of flakes, nevertheless, there are two general classifications: on cold dry days the crystals are small straight-sided plain figures formed high in the air, while on mild moist days the flakes are large feathery six-pointed stars shaped in the lower atmosphere.

Strange to say the average rainfall of the U. S. is 28 inches which coincides perfectly with the annual average snowfall—also 28 inches. However, twenty-eight inches of snow is the equivalent of two and eight-tenths inches of rain, since 10 inches of snow when melted equals one inch of water. In other words 10 percent of our average annual rainfall descends in the form of snow. In the winter of 1906-1907 a record snowfall of 73 inches fell in Tamarack, California. During a four-day period at Vanceboro, Maine, it is recorded that eight feet descended.

During the last decade a Hungarian scientist working on a Smithsonian fellowship investigated reports of red and violet snows present in the Arctic region. After personal research she found to her amazement vast fields of these col-

ored snows. Soon she discovered that the color was due to microscopic plants, called algae, which grew in profusion on the snow receiving their nourishment from the dust settling on the snow. She found approximately fifty different varieties of this plant. Later she endeavored to grow them in her laboratory high in the Swiss Alps.

In Scripture we find several references to snow as a symbol of purity and a standard of whiteness. The prophet Isaiah acknowledged it as a source of moisture to the ground (Is. 55:10) and Solomon mentions it in Proverbs 25:13 as a means of refreshment in the heat of harvest, while in Job we find a reference to it as useful for washing and cleaning. Various other verses mention it, and we know that the summit of Mount Hermon is crowned the year 'round with white, while Mount Labanon often retains its carpet of snow late in summer.

"He sends His swift commandment,
And snow and ice enfold
The world, and none are able
To stand before His cold.

Again He gives commandment;
The winds of summer blow,
The snow and ice are melted,
Again the waters flow."

Christian Living

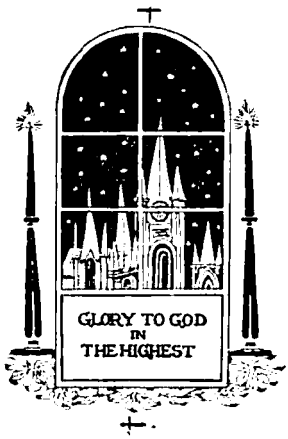
Rev. H. De Wolf — Grand Rapids, Mich.

Christmas in the Heart. . . .

It will soon be Christmas again. Simply as such there isn't anything unusual about that and we surely don't have to announce the coming of Christmas as though there were any danger of it passing unnoticed. It is hardly conceivable that there should be anyone at all in our country who could be unaware of this important day. Long before the day comes we are being constantly reminded of its coming. The reason for this constant reminder is not to be found in the true significance of the day itself but rather in the commercial value which it has, as well as the superficial sentimentality which is connected with it. Christmas is the one time of the year when everyone seems to become loving and charit-

able. But what a hypocrisy! What a mockery is all such "brotherly-love" in the midst of a world that is torn by the hatred and enmity of its inhabitants! What a contradiction of the true Christmas!

In the face of all this corruption with which the world has contaminated the day, we may well ask ourselves, what is the true significance of Christmas? We have need of being reminded of its true meaning.



Is it merely a day to extend our best wishes to one another? Or a day to give gifts to those who give them in return? Or is it perhaps a day to send and receive greeting cards? Could it be a time to weep crocodile tears because a sweet little child was born but not received by men, as tho we would have received Him had we lived at that time? Is it perhaps a time to gain the sympathy of wicked hearts for the poor and helpless little baby Jesus as One Who still begs to be received of them?

No! It is none of this!

But surely it is the time to commemorate the birth of the holy Child Jesus? Yes, it is. But not as the birth of a helpless little child who has need of our pity, who even today must beg for entrance into the hearts of men but rather as the birth of the Almighty Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh, as the fulfilment of the promise of God, as the Redeemer, the Savior, the Lord of lords and King of kings.

What is Christmas?!

It is the dawning of the day of salvation!

For on that day God begins the manifest realization of the mighty work of our eternal salvation. On that day God begins to lay in time the foundation for the true temple of God in which we may dwell as those whose sins are forgiven, whose hearts are cleansed, whose righteousness has been established in that righteousness which endureth forever.

Yes, on Christmas the Almighty God begins the realization of the impossible and declares that the things which are impossible with man are possible with God!

And we behold Emmanuel!

We see the Lamb of God, Who taketh away the sin of the world, for we see Jesus, Who saves His people from their sins.

And on the far horizon we see a cross and, what is more, an empty tomb, a risen and ascended Lord. And thus beholding, we seem to hear the sound as of a rushing

mighty wind and we wonder at the tongues as of fire. And then it all becomes clear to us, we understand and we rejoice.

For we have Christmas in our hearts!

So let us celebrate it!

For so only can we truly celebrate it with joy unspeakable. Then our celebration will not be dependent upon any circumstance and conditions. It will not require a multitude of gifts or the company of all our friends and loved ones, for our joy will be in the fellowship of Him who dwells within our hearts. And our joy will be complete.

Then also you, my friend, who are far away from family and friends, though your music be the frightening whine of bullets and the maddening roar of battle, yes, even there you will find Christmas. And we, whose hearts yearn for you, are comforted to know that, though widely separated, we may join with you in that true celebration. . . .

Because . . .

It's Christmas in our hearts!

NEWS FROM THE FIGHTING FRONT

Pfc. Bernard J. Miedema, from our Fuller Ave. Church, who was previously wounded in action in Italy, now has been reported missing in the same area since October 10.

v v v

Pvt. Andrew Voss expects to be released from the hospital in England where he has been convalescing since August, sometime during the first part of December. He has written home that at present he is doing a little work at his old trade, painting.

In Memoriam

Pfc. Ben Weessies, member of our church in Kalamazoo, Michigan, was reported missing in action in France since October 1. However, Tuesday, November 28, his family received another telegram stating that Ben died November 5 in a German prison camp. He died thirty six days after the date the War Department disclosed him missing. The wounds which he received while in action were apparently of a serious nature and were the cause of his death.

v v v

ALL NEWS regarding our fighting men will be appreciated by Beacon Lights. Let's keep our readers informed with NEWS FROM THE FIGHTING FRONT. Send all news to:

BEACON LIGHTS
706 FRANKLIN ST., S.E.
GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

9
10
11
12
13
14
15
21
22
23
24
25
26
34
35
36
37
45
46
47
48
49
50

To Our Boys In Service

Dear Friends:

Sometime ago I talked with the father of one of the boys in service. He related to me an incident which his son had written in one of his letters. While on the battle front in France, the son had found a copy of "The Banner" and "De Wachter" in one of the fields and was pleasantly surprised.

Anxious to know who the original owner had been of those American church papers, he went to search for that person for a couple of days, but did not succeed in finding him.

Now to me, who has served in the Netherlands Army for almost four years and know a little of the position of a Christian young man in the Army, it was a revelation that this young man of our congregation probably served in a unit where he had not found any confessing Christian soldier, and that he felt lonesome and forlorn in the midst of all the sin and corruption around him. Finding these churches papers on foreign soil aroused within him the longing for fellowship with a brother of like faith; for evidently the soldier who lost them must have come from a Christian Reformed family.

What was it in him, that he put forth such an effort to find that other soldier? But you have the answer ready, my dear friends, that are by the grace of God true to your confession and walk in the midst of all that wickedness that surrounds you day and night as Christian soldiers, for you must have experienced that same loneliness that he did many times. It was the longing for Christian fellowship of which we do not think often nor appreciate enough as long as we are at home in our own church and society and amongst our own friends, but which you have been missing so much since you entered the armed services.

Oh, yes, some of you have been quite fortunate and have been stationed near a place with a Christian Reformed or Reformed Church; and the members of those churches have taken you into their homes on Sundays and on week-day evenings when you were at liberty. And those brethren and sisters have done a splendid work, for in so doing they gave you an oasis in the midst of the wilderness wherein you must walk. I know from experience how you looked forward to those Sundays and evenings when you could flee from all that corruption and sin and would meet some of God's people and have fellowship with them. How good were those Sundays and how inspiring those evenings and how thankful you were to your Heavenly Father who gave you all this out of His hand. But most of you boys have not been that fortunate. You've probably had to spend most of your Sundays and evenings within the camps and barracks where the very air is filled with vile cursings and blasphemy from the mouths of the children of this world—a place where I have seen many a young man

from a Christian home go astray and take the way of least resistance by going along with the world.

No, not one of you, dear friends, we hope and pray, for in that way you will never find the peace of mind for which you are seeking.

Show your colors and walk as children of light in the midst of the darkness that surrounds you, and the God of all grace shall give you strength to go on to the glory of His Name.

Sincerely Yours,
Gerrit Koster

NAMES OF SERVICEMEN WHOSE PICTURES APPEAR ON PAGES 16-17

1. Sgt. Cornelius Vander Tuin — Fuller
2. Cpl. Jay Pruis — Fuller
3. T/Sgt. Henry Koster — Fuller
4. Marvin Paauwe, Bkr. 2/c — Roosevelt Park.
5. Pfc. John Vos — Fuller.
6. Gerald Van Solkema, S 2/c — Roosevelt Park.
7. Pvt. Harold Van Overloop — Hudsonville.
8. Pfc. Andrew Van Voorthuysen — Redlands.
9. Sgt. Richard Boomsma, Fuller.
10. Pvt. Henry Faber — Fuller.
11. Gillis Vanden Berg, A.M. 2/c—Fuller
12. Sgt. Wm. Doezema, — Bellflower.
13. Pfc. George Flikkema — Manhattan.
14. Cpl. Lawrence Heys — Manhattan.
15. Pvt. James H. Offringa — Roosevelt.
16. Walter Decker, S 2/c — Fuller.
17. Henry W. Van Weelden, F 2/c — Pella.
18. Pvt. Luke Timmerman — Roosevelt.
19. Raymond Schaap, F 2/c — Fourth Church, Grand Rapids.
20. Pvt. John Haak — South Holland.
21. Martin Hoekstra, Em. 1/c — Hull.
22. Robert G. Pastoor, S 1/c — Fuller.
23. Cpl. Cornie Yonker — Fuller.
24. Pfc. Gerrit Van Solkema—Roosevelt.
25. Cpl. Paul Van Dyken — Manhattan.
26. Pvt. Arthur P. Wassenaar — Orange City, Iowa.
27. Pvt. H. Dekker — Bellflower.
28. Pfc. Kenneth J. Ezinga — Fuller.
29. Pvt. Gerrit J. Vis — Hull, Iowa.
30. T/5 Bill Swart — Fuller.
31. Sgt. Jim Swart — Fuller.
32. Pvt. Arie A. Van Weelden — Pella.
33. Sgt. William Wierenga — Fuller.
34. Cpl. John Veltman — Fuller.
35. William Koster, S 1/c — Fuller.
36. Pvt. John Den Besten — Doon, Iowa.
37. Albert Offringa, S 1/c — Roosevelt.
38. John H. Bouma, Cox. — Redlands.
39. Pvt. George Hoekstra — Hull, Iowa.
40. Cpl. Gary Byker — Hull, Iowa.
41. T/5 Fred J. Katsma — Roosevelt.
42. Pvt. William Offringa — Roosevelt.
43. Cpl. William Korhorn — Fuller.
44. Pfc. Arthur Sytsma — Fuller.
45. Pfc. John Dykema — Hudsonville.
46. Cornelius P. Kuivenhoven, E.M. 3/c —Kalamazoo.
47. Cpl. Melvin Piersma — Fuller.
48. James Dykstra, A/s — Fuller.
49. Pfc. William Douma — Fuller.
50. Pvt. John Vander Weide — Creston.

Letters From Our Boys

Belgium, Europe

Dear Friends:

Just a few lines to express my appreciation for the past issues of Beacon Lights and hope that my notice of change of address reaches you in time to keep my copies on the shortest route to me. I surely appreciate them and especially now when we don't have any place to go to hear at least a real sermon other than our chaplains' services. I won't say a word about this because I notice most of the boys have written on that subject. They are of some value though in this world conflict, even though we all wish for one of our own ministers. Many thanks again.

Sincerely, Ralph Baas,
(Sgt. from Kalamazoo, Mich.)

v v v

Sioux Falls, S. Dakota

Dear . . . .:

Now that I'm shoveling coal into a bucket and then into the stove to keep warm instead of turning a radiator that is busting with steam on and off, the situation is quite different from that which I enjoyed for two and a half years at Chanute Field, Ill. I'm here at Sioux Falls waiting to start a school for radio. When and if I graduate, I should be able to repair and operate a radio in a bomber. It is hard to get used to being a student again after being permanent party so long, but I'll be able to take it if the others can.

One good thing is that we will have Sundays off. I'll be able to attend a Christian Reformed Church in town, a privilege for which I am thankful. To be in the army where everything tends to take away the principles you have always held dear and to be with men who care nothing about God's Word and His Kingdom, is not easy, but with God's Grace and Almighty Power upholding me, I'll go on and do my best to live as He would have me. It does not matter where we are, we need Him, don't we? How good God is.

Yesterday we went out into the field and had a four hour exhibition of the various gasses and incendiaries that the army uses in combat. It was interesting although too cold out to enjoy it to the fullest. I'm wondering just what winter will be like out here. From what they say around here we will really be in for it. I'm glad that my time will be spent mostly in a heated building.

I'm enclosing a small donation to help carry on the work of Beacon Lights. I certainly do appreciate receiving it. And I always like to receive mail from home. It's a long way out here, you know, from Michigan.

Sincerely,
Al. Dekker,
(Cpl. from Fuller Church)

v v v

Central Pacific

Dear Friends:

At eight o'clock, one foggy morning, we sailed out of Frisco Bay into the blue

waters of the peaceful Pacific. It was a strange feeling, I was leaving so much behind. Even while in the states it was difficult to be away from family and friends, but now it seemed to leave such a feeling of loneliness and the memories of those back home was enough to cause a lump in your throat. I wondered how many months or perhaps years would pass before I would again see the mamoth steel structure of the Golden Gate bridge, which was slowly fading in the distance.

Traveling on a troop ship isn't very pleasant. The food is poor, water for bathing is very limited, the troop compartments are crowded and smelly. Although the weather was favorable, the first few days I didn't have a very good appetite. The beautiful sun-sets were indeed a manifestation of the marvelous works of our Creator.

We arrived in Hawaii on the fourth of July. It was a hot summer day, the humidity was very high, as it usually is on an army island in the Pacific. But to me Hawaii wasn't the land of beautiful palm trees slowly swaying in the summer freeze, there wasn't the soft music of swinging guitars. Undoubtedly it is different in peace time than what it is today. It was crowded, overflowing with men and girls of all branches of the armed services. While on pass in Honolulu it was difficult to find a good place to lunch at. It was crowded with cheap places where people could satisfy their fancy for liquor and dancing, where they seemed to enjoy themselves in worldly pleasures.

We didn't stay in Hawaii very long, about ..... censored ..... All I saw for weeks was sky and water, actually thought I'd never get there, wherever we were going. After being at sea for approximately five weeks, we set foot on dry land by making an amphibious landing on Anguar Island. No doubt you've read about our assault in the daily papers. It was on that day, the seventeenth of September, that I received what we called, baptism of fire. To my surprise I wasn't afraid, the previous night I had slept well, had a hearty breakfast, and was really glad to be on solid ground.

A little better than a week after I had landed, I was privileged to be a member of an honor guard, and was present at the ceremony in which Admiral Halsey and his staff raised the flag of the United States making this island a possession of the homeland. It was a memorable occasion.

These are but a few experiences of mine, after being in the service some 27 months.

I've experienced what it is to live apart from those whom I love dearly. There were hours when my heart was heavy, especially is this true of Sundays. I long to be among those who can gather in God's house on the Sabbath.

Sincerely,

Pfc. Henry Doorn,
(Fuller Ave., Grand Rapids)

SERVICEMEN'S FUND — DONATIONS

We wish to thank all those who have sent in donations for our Servicemen's Fund. We are very grateful for these gifts and want you to know that all these donations toward helping us carry on our work of sending *Beacon Lights* to our Servicemen are sincerely appreciated. Recent donations have been received from:

Mr. and Mrs. G. Zwak, G. R.	$ .75	Mrs. Robert Jelsma, Detroit, Mich.	.75
Mr. D. Pastoor, G. R.	.75	Pfc. Peter Koole, G.R.	1.25
Mr. and Mrs. John Boelema, G. R.	5.00	S. Holland Ladies' Aid Society	10.00
Mr. Wm. Kooienga, G. R.	3.75	Mrs. E. Blaauw, G.R.	1.75
Mr. and Mrs. H. Visser, G.R.	3.00	Mr. John Karsemeyer, Iowa	1.25
Mr. G. Vander Weide, G.R.	.75	Mr. and Mrs. C. Cnossen, G.R.	.75
Prot. Ref. Young Peoples' Convention Committee	100.00	Miss Tena Boer, Illinois	.75
A friend, Hudsonville, Mich.	1.00	Mr. Jacob De Vries, Iowa	2.00
Mr. and Mrs. John Schaap, G.R.	2.00	Mr. Conrad De Vries, Iowa	.75
Miss Alydia Buyert, Iowa	.75	Mr. Wm. Pelskamp, Iowa	.75
Mr. Orie Hamstra, G.R.	3.75	Mr. H. J. Holstege, Byron Center	3.75
Mr. John Velthouse, G.R.	.75	Mr. Leonard Koppenol, G.R.	1.00
Mr. A. G. Van Solkema, Byron C.	.75	Mr. Dick Vander Ploeg, G.R.	.75
Mr. John Wm. Faber, G.R.	.75	Mrs. W. Rottschafer, G.R.	3.75
Mr. Wm. De Hoog, G.R.	.75	Mrs. H. Grooters, G.R.	.75
Mr. Foster Wierenga, G.R.	.75	Mr. Otto Huizenga, G.R.	1.75
Mr. and Mrs. M. Bouwman G.R.	1.00	Mr. Fred Alphenaar, Kalamazoo	.75
Mr. Walter Wybenga, G.R.	1.75	A Friend, G.R.	1.25
Mrs. Albert Talsma, Hudsonville	1.75	Pvt. Wm. Jr. Van Weelden	1.25
Mr. Simon Offringa (G.R.	.75	Mr. Otto Hondema, G.R.	5.00
Mr. P. Bykerk, G.R.	.75	Mrs T. Cole, Coopersville, Mich.	1.00
Mr. S. C. De Vos, G.R.	1.25	Mr. Gordon A. Van Tuinen, G.R.	1.25
Mr. K. Tichchelaar, G.R.	.75	Mr. G. Bergsma, G.R.	3.75
Mrs. M. Sieswerda, G.R.	.50	Bellflower Men's Society	10.00
Mrs. Bouwman, G.R.	.75	Mr. Ceel Vanden Brink, Iowa	3.75
Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Brummel, G.R.	3.75	Mr. Martin Bolt, G.R.	.75
Mr. Tom Elzinga, Holland, Mich.	.75	Cpl. Albert Dekker, G.R.	2.00
Holland Prot. Ref. Men's Society	10.00	Mr. Gerrit Lubbers, Hudsonville,	3.75
		Mr. Henry Wiltjers, G.R.	.75

EDITOR'S NOTE:— It is not too late to send in pictures of Servicemen. We hope to continue having a page of snaps of Servicemen in the Beacon Lights until we have placed all pictures received. Send your pictures to:

BEACON LIGHTS, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

Current Events

Mr. Jack Boelema

Grand Rapids, Mich.

China - - -

with one of her many problems is in the news again. But this time the trouble within her own borders is really very serious. For eight years she has fought Japan and has somewhat held her ground; recently, however, she is losing much for Japan has conquered nearly the entire coastal area, causing millions of Chinese to flee from their homes into unknown areas to eke out a living. The coastal area, the Burma road, and many American built airfields are in the hands of the Japs. The Chinese armies, lacking equipment and ammunition, are seriously crippled with no assistance from the Allies in sight; and the only way for them to receive aid is via the long air route over "the hump". Probably the only real assistance that the Allies can now give her would be to enter China by the Normandy invasion method.

To make things worse is the fact that there is internal struggle in China between Chiang's forces and the Communistic forces. In the past these two groups have been constantly quarreling with each other, but today they are at actual war. From this conflict, Stilwell, commander of all American forces in China, India, and Burma, was called home. Knowing China's internal strife one concludes that Stilwell's trouble was more than a clash of personalities, as the President put it. Stilwell was sent to China to train and equip a large Chinese army against the Japs. How could he get cooperation from Chiang when Chiang wants an all-out with the Community first? It is leaking out now that our military supplies have been utilized to war against the Communists and not the Japs. This seems to be the Stilwell situation in China.

Then too the public is being informed that Chiang's government is not what it was cracked up to be. There is corruption in Chiang's government; it is dictatorial to be sure and includes widespread dissatisfaction among his political and military leaders. Then too this government has run into red hot inflation, for a pound of butter costs

$400, one egg $7, one orange $16, one pair of socks $130, pair of shoes $500! Even the people refuse to cooperate with Chiang's government.

Have we 400,000,000 Allies in China? But what can we do? We need her help in an all-out on Japan. Shall we ask the Communist in China for assistance and cooperation? Shall we give guns and war supplies to the Communists which they probably will accept for use against the Japanese? At any rate, China and the Chinese are important to us for our blow at Japan; China could be the place where Japan may receive her defeat.

Holland - - -

faces starvation. Nazi demolition crews have wrecked dykes, locks, and pumping equipment in Holland allowing the ocean water to flow over the fertile lands. More than a million acres of farm land and pasture are already under many feet of salt water. Salt ruins the soil and it will be many years before the land can again be used for production. Amsterdam and Rotterdam are threatened by flood; other cities are faced with the problems of no gas, electricity, drinking water, and sewage disposal.

How destructive war has become! This is just one more deed added to the big list of German atrocities. Was the deed perpetrated to retard the Allied offense? Or does Nazism figure that if Germany has to rise from ruins, other countries must do the same; thus the starting point for recovery would be the same for all?

United Nations - - -

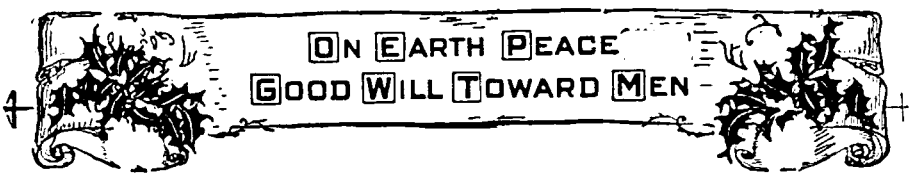
is the new organization to enforce peace. The broad outline of the organization has been formulated by the Dumbarton Oaks conference. It is to include a General Assembly and a Security Council. Membership of the General Assembly will be open to any nation; membership of the Security Council will be composed of the Big Five (United States, Britain, Russia, China, France) and six other nations making a total of eleven members. This Security Council is to have the power to maintain and enforce peace.

One of the most interesting problems of the Security Council is the probable way in which a decision shall be made. It is thot that the majority rule will be followed but the Big Five must be included in the majority. The Big Five must always stand united. It would only need the support of one of the six small countries to make a decision. If one of the Big Five withholds approval no action could be taken even if all the rest of the ten members voted in favor of it. Would

not this procedure give all power to the Big Five? A Big Power's refusal to support would mean no action of the Security Council. Now suppose that one of the Big Five is involved in a dispute, it could prevent action of the Council by merely refusing to vote.

Another problem is concerning the authority of one U. S. Representative on the Council. Can one representative of the U. S. in the United Nations bring the U. S. into war? Or shall Congress keep the Constitutional power to declare war? What authority shall our representative have in the Council?

Naturally there are troubles in peace formulations. Man talks about peace and the enforcement of it, but this is impossible. The Bible teaches us plainly that there shall be wars and rumors of war until the end of time.



Bible Study Outlines

by Rev. Geo. Lubbers — Randolph, Wisc.

LESSON XL

PAUL, SILAS AND TIMOTHY ENTER EUROPE

Acts 16:1-15

I. Paul and Silas Visit The Churches: Verses 1-5.

A. We are introduced to a disciple well-spoken of by the brethren—Timothy. 1. His mother is a Jew and his father a Greek. 2. Paul wills to take this young man (about 17 years old) along. 3. He had not yet been circumcized, so Paul circumcizes him—because of the Jews residing there, who all knew that his father was a Greek. This was in the city of Lystra.

B. The delivery of the decrees of the gathering in Jerusalem. They delivered them wherever there was a church. And the condition in these churches was that of spiritual health and vigor.

II. Paul, Silas and Timothy Directed To Macedonia—Europe. Verses 6-10.

A. The course of their journey as traced by Luke. 1. Through Phrygia and Northern Galatia. 2. Thence to Mysia. They go here because they are not allowed to go to either Asia or Bithynia. They are directed to Troas.

B. By whom directed? By the Holy Spirit. Just how He directed Paul is not told in verses 6 and 7. (Which see) However, at Troas the Holy Spirit came

to Paul in a vision at night. He sees a man from Macedonia which stood and called to him: "Come over and help us".

C. To this Paul gives heed. Immediately they (The Text says "we". Does this mean that Luke was also in the company of Paul, Silas and Timothy?) attempt to go to Macedonia. They conclude from the vision and the other two manifestations of the desire of the Spirit, that God had called them to preach the gospel in Europe. Besides, this vision is a corroboration of, as well as it is corroborated by, the "vision" seen by Paul in the temple years earlier. Compare Acts 22:21. "And he said unto hence unto the Gentiles". Compare furhence unto the enGtiles". Compare further Acts 9:15.

III. Arrival And Initial Labors in Macedonia—Philippi. Verses 11-15.

A. The course taken in traveling thither. A straight course to the island of Samothracia; from there to Neapolis. And from there they went to Philippi, the chief city in these parts. Hence about a three days journey.

B: Their initial labors here in Philippi. 1. The general situation seems to have been that there was no synagogue here. The conclusion is warranted that there were few or no Jews here. The persecution that befalls Paul and Silas here does not come from Jewish quarters. They labored here for some time. The text speaks of "Many days" Verse 18. And whereas there was no synagogue here where Paul "according to his custom" could go and teach, they looked for and found a place outside of the city near the river where men were wont to worship. 2. As to the fruits of Paul's labors here we can say: a. Lydia was the first convert. She was a woman, a seller of Purple from the city of Tyratira. b. She feared God, and believed and was baptized. And invited—(yea insisted;) Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke to lodge at her home.

Questions: - Was the circumcision of Timothy by Paul not contrary to the very decree which Paul was delivering to the churches at this time? Did Paul do contrary to his boast of Gal. 2:1? Can we legitimately infer from Acts 18:24 and I Peter 1:1 that churches were organized during the visit related in Acts 16:6? Why does Luke relate so little of this? Was Luke a relative of Silas? If so what? Does God's eternal plan of redemption determine what course the preaching of the gospel must follow geographically? Which cities did Paul visit on this journey which he had also already visited on the first journey? Which did he omit? Does the church still receive visions as Paul and the prophets did?

Lesson XLI

THE SHAMEFUL TREATMENT ACCORDED PAUL AND SILAS

Acts 16:16-40

This is a rather long lesson. It shows how Paul and Silas suffered for the sake of the gospel. They are persecuted for the good deed of having cast out a demon from a young damsel. There are in this lesson three matters which you should especially take notice of. We will state these matters under the following headings:

I. What Occasioned This Shameful Treatment: Vss. 16-18.

A. Paul and Silas go to the place of worship. A damsel with a spirit of divination sees them and cries: "These men are servants of the Most High God, which preach unto you a way of salvation". This she did for many days. And Paul is displeased, worked up, worn out by it. He turns and rebukes the spirit—not the damsel. Evidently these two are in Paul's mind not identical. And Paul says: "I say unto you in the Name of Jesus Christ go out from her". The cure is instantaneous. The evil spirit left her that same hour.

B. This young woman was the property of some men in that city. In the service of superstition and in the midst of a gullible public they were making much money through her in this wretched condition. When they saw that their means of gain was gone they slander the apostle and his companions and drag them to the magistrates.

II. The Shameful Treatment: Vss. 19-24.

A. Paul and Silas were taken hold of violently and dragged to the open market-place and thus placed before the magistrates of the city. And here they are slanderously accused of:

1. Disturbing and bringing unrest in the city, being Jews. (How untrue in every way).

2. Teaching customs which a Roman citizen might not receive nor do. Hence they are accused of treason.

B. The magistrates are no Gallios. (See Acts 18:11-17) They are filled with the same mad frenzy with which the hypocritical owners of the delivered damsel would have them be. No inquiry is made. The apostle and Silas are forthwith commanded to be beaten with rods here in the market-place and then they are put in prison. We have here a very clear indication that even though Paul saw the man on Macedonia in a vision at night and heard him say: "Come over and help us" that this does not imply that all heathendom is anxiously waiting for the deliverance of the gospel in Christ Jesus. There is more than one Demetrus the silversmith in the world. Confer Acts 19:23 f.f.

III. The Victorious Outcome: Vss. 25-40.

A. God came to deliver his servants. At midnight. Paul and Silas with bleeding backs do not murmur, neither are they faint-hearted, but they pray and receive strength to sing Psalms. And God shakes the strong doors of the prison, causing the stocks to fall from their feet. The same God, who in Christ Jesus delivers the prisoners from the evil spirits, also delivers his servants from the prison of evil men. And thus a seem-

ing defeat is turned into a real and lasting victory.

B. Here are some of the particulars of this victory:

1. The jailer is saved from taking his life and is placed in the body of the redeemed church with his house. They are all baptized. Captivity is taken captive.

2. The erstwhile persecuting magistrates come prostrated at the feet of the apostle; beg him to leave. They are in great fear. And they must upon Paul's demand escort him honorably, publicly from the city, even as they had publicly ill-treated them.

3. The accusers are twice put to shame: a. Once in the seeing of their shameful gain being taken from them in the deliverance of the damsel by Paul. b. And now this second time and seeing both points of their accusation proven to be the very lie of Satan. Had they not said: We are Romans; we may not accept these customs. And here this Paul, a Roman citizen leaves the city in triumph. The triumph of the glorious gospel. Read: II Cor. 2:14-17. Indeed Paul is a Jew, but he is also a Roman citizen. Questions: - What was offensive in the testimony of this damsel with the spirit of divination? Is it the same offense as that recorded in Mark 1:24? Did this come from the same course as that testimony? Why would an evil spirit speak of God as the Most High? What is the idea of this name? Does James 2:19 cast any light on this point? Is an evil spirit a personal, created being, belonging originally to the angel-world?

Lesson XLII

IN THESSALONICA AND IN BEREA

Acts 17:1-15

We were rather in doubt as to what might be considered the proper division in this lesson. Considering that each society is at liberty to treat as much of a lesson as is convenient, and not wishing to make the lesson too small, we will include in this outline both the visit and ministry of Paul in Thessalonica and in Berea. Consequently this outline is divided into two parts:

I. In Thessalonica: Vss. 1-9.

A. The general situation here:

1. There seem to be many Jews here. There is a Synagogue. And Paul did not need to go with his companions to the riverside to preach the Word.

2. Paul spoke in the synagogues for three weeks, i.e., three sabbath-days.

B. The Theme And Method Of His Preaching:

1. Theme: The Death and Resurrection of Christ. Vs. 3.

2. Method: Reasoning from the Scriptures. And bringing home his arguments with great power and force. It was exegesis of the Scriptures. It was proving from the Scriptures that the Christ (Messiah) must die and must rise again. Both are according to the Scriptures. This method Paul employed for both Jews and Greeks. Compare I Cor. 15:3, 4. Further Luke 24:26. 27, 45, 46. Here not a trace of the Armenian whosoever will gospel; nor of its method!

C. The Success Of Their Labors: 1. What it was: Some of the Jews believed

and stayed with the apostle. The rest of the Jews did not. This small group was given grace to follow Christ. Not a few of the Grecian women; even some of the women of honor. In fact "not a few".

2. This caused the Jewish Rabbis to be mad with jealousy. They take the following measures: a. They go to the city-square and get all the bench-warming "bums" they can find, and so get ready for a real lynching party. With this party they assault the house of Jason where Paul and his fellow-laborers were lodging. (Paul and the others went into hiding elsewhere in the city). They search the house of Jason and fail to find him for whom they were looking. b. So they drag Jason and others to the public square where they accuse them of being men who turn the whole world upside down. They raise up a great howl, "yelling as if the house was on fire like the mob in Jerusalem. Acts 21:18" A. T. Robertson. These Jews had serious accusations and little proof. Jason had to give security that Paul would no longer molest the city. At least this seems to be the implication of I Thes. 2:17. The old Accusation which the Jews brought against Jesus before Pilate the Roman governor is here brought against Paul before these magistrates of the imperial power. Paul and his companions flee by night to a city 50 miles to the S.W. Berea.

II. In Berea: Vss. 10-15.

A. The general situation here seems to be that there was a synagogue here. The apostle loses no time to avail himself of the opportunity to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation.

B. The Attitude In General: 1. It was more noble than that of the Thessalonicans. Reference is here evidently had to that of the Jewish leaders. They did not withstand Paul. There was here a certain open-mindedness". 2. This "more noble-mindedness" revealed itself in that here the Jews and the others searched O.T. Scriptures in order to see whether the matter which is proclaimed by Paul had the backing of the Scriptures. This little notice here concerning these Berean brethren indicates that Paul also here followed the same method of "doing missionary work" as in Thessalonica. See above.

C. Result? 1. Positive: Many believed. And not a few Greek women of honorable estate. 2. Negatively? The evil Jews from Thessalonica also come here to stir up the people against Paul and his companions. Paul leaves immediately. He is escorted as far as Athens in Greece. Silas and Timothy remain in Berea until Paul summons them to come; which he does as soon as he reaches Athens. They did not arrive until after he had left Athens for Corinth in Achaia. A parallel instance of Jewish persecution we have recorded in Acts 14:19.

Questions: - Was there an element of truth in it that the apostle's Kingdom was a turning upside-down of the world? What does Daniel 2:44, 45 teach about the relationship of Christ's Kingdom to that of the kingdoms of the world? Did the church in Thessalonica

need further instruction, as to the real nature of the future Kingdom, after Paul had gone from them? Which is the first letter of Paul written to a church? What doctrinal question does it particularly speak of. Did Paul meet the power of the "fourth beast" here in Imperial form?

* * * * *

Lesson XLIII

PAUL ALONE IN ATHENS

Acts 17:16-34

Paul is for the first, and quite likely for the last time, in the city of Athens. Athens is the city where the philosophers lived, met and imparted instruction. Here is the concentration of all the learning of men—yet without God! Here is the wisdom of the world, that is foolishness with God. Here is the finite mind reaching out to try to touch the Infinite (Who is very near) without ever being able to do so. And thinking himself to be wise he changes the glory of the Incorruptible GOD into the likeness of corruptible man. fourfooted beast, flying fowl and creeping things. Rom. 1:22. And he calls his idolatry religion; his many graven images "productions of Art"; his philosophy which is but "vain deceit", (Col. 2:8) though it be ever so old in the annals of tradition, he dreams of as giving him the desired Utopia of serenity of mind. And, that too, while the very wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness of men. who keep the truth under in unrighteousness. Had Paul met the first beast of Imperial power in Philippi, Thessalonica and Berea, (Rev. 13:1-10) here he will meet the second, the false-prophet. (Rev. 13:11-18) There he must flee for he has not sword of steel to protect himself, neither to lay low the power of Rome; here he will unsheathe the Sword of The Spirit and lay low the enemy! Here is the Scriptural perspective to keep in mind in following Paul as he is alone in Athens.

This lesson can most readily be divided under two headings:

I. Paul Coming in Contact with The Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers: Vss. 16-21.

A. The General Situation: 1. There seem to have been some Jews also. Luke mentions a Synagogue. Here Paul reasoned with the Jews and the God-fearing people. What was the "Theme" of his preaching? It is: "Jesus and the Resurrection". Ve 18. Also in Athens Paul will preach nothing but Christ and Him crucified! And the text gives the impression that Paul performed this task on the Sabbath-days. 2. But during the week, Paul walked about the city. And everywhere he went he saw idols. The city of Athens was full of them. And his spirit was provoked and irritated by it all.

B. So he opened his mouth and spoke to anyone he might meet and that would listen. This he did day after day. And so the word was soon passed from mouth to mouth that this stranger preached new goods, or at least so it seemed to them. For he preached two new gods: Jesus and the Resurrection! And thus is it that the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers

desired to know more about this. They were rather skeptical about it; their expectation was not too high of this "babbler", this "Seed-picker" who probably had picked up a few ideas, but who really was not a "first-rate" man of learning. But at any rate they are curious.

II. Paul's Speech In The Areopagus. Vss. 22-34. The "Theme" of this speech is: God. Who is UNKNOWN to the Athenians. Of This God Paul in a masterful way brings home three matters: A. God In His Relationship To The Creature. Vss. 24, 25. 1. He is the Creator. He made the cosmos, the world as it is one harmonious beautiful whole. And nothing is to be excluded from this work of creation. As such he is Transcendent above the creature. He has an existence apart from the Cosmos. Therefore also apart from temples made with hands. God dwells in Himself. This had been changed by foolish man. Rom. 1:23, 25. Unless this is understood no one can serve God in spirit and in truth. John 4:21-24. 2. This God, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not need to be served because that without the creature's service He would lack. He is the FOUNTAIN! Therefore he is not like the heathen gods (in the heathen imagination, for an idol is nothing Ps. 115:1 f.f.; I Cor. 8:4) who needed the offerings of men for full happiness. The proof of this is: Creation and Providence: Paul brings forward the following truth of Revelation: a. God, as the Fountain, giveth life, breath, all things. In Gen. 2:7 we read of "the breath of life". God gives us existence. He upholds all things by the word of His power. Heb. 1:3. This was the fundamental blow at all the idols of heathendom; and that of these Athenians in particular! b. Indeed they (these Athenians) did not know GOD! And their whole philosophic conception and foolish religion topples with this one mighty cut of the Word of Gen. 1. It lays bare the hidiousness of sin.

B. Man's Position In The World's History And His Affinity To GOD! Vss. 26-29. 1. God made all nations of man out of one blood! Not each nation with a separate god, and separate genesis, as the Athenians taught. And this God has determined: a. How long a nation shall live and at what time in the history of the world. b. The place where they shall live (the bounds of their habitation). Here is food for thought for a Calvinistic interpretation of Geography and History! Here is shown the need of maintaining the organic unity of the human race, and the council of God over all. 2. Therefore all men are God's "offspring". Even the heathen poets gave utterance to this in their Hymn to Zeus, Jupiter. "For we are also His Offspring". It was Cleanthes the Stoic who wrote this Hymn. It can be found in "History Of Philosophy" by Ueberweg. Page 197, Vol. I. Not that this being God's offspring is correctly interpreted, but even the truth of God's workmanship and His constant "Immanence" cannot be erased from man. In the ruins of man's fallen nature the original nobility of man can dimly be detected. And as a masterful teacher Paul here lays the bridge be-

Mr. John J. Zandstra
R. #1, Southeast of Ditch
Hammond, Ind.

tween the Stoic's conception (that is in conception) and that of the truth as it is by virtue of Creation. And here is the inconsistency of sin, and folly of unbelief: Instead of living in affinity to God, being His offspring, they seek their affinity to God, and yet think of this "Godhead" as consisting in sculptures of gold, silver, stone—by the art and invention of man. God, Who is so very near they cannot find! God who was very near in all the history of the nations!

C. The Present Dispensation Of The Judgment Of The World. Vss. 30, 31. 1. Formerly God "overlooked" the times of the ignorance of the heathen. 2. Now he expressly comes and calls all men to repentance. And that not in some isolated country but everywhere. For God has appointed a day in which He will judge the whole inhabited world in righteousness. 3. Proof: God Raised Jesus from the dead unto this very end. And this resurrection is the assurance. And when this is brought home the Athenians laugh Paul to scorn. Paul leaves Athens —never to return.

Questions: - Must one believe that God created the world to be a Christian? What is Pantheism? How does it differ from Pan-Cosmism? What is God's Transcendancy? His Immanence? What is God's Self-sufficiency? Does the lesson, Paul's address speak of these virtues in speaking of God's relationship to the creature? Did the prophets also have to warn Israel against thinking of the Godhead in terms of gold, silver, etc.? See Is. 66:1-4. Do we often live as though God needed our worship to be really happy? And why does He still desire it then? In how far did God "overlook the times of the ignorance of the Gentiles"? Does Rom. 2:5-16 allow for this expression? Do we not read something similar to it in Rom. 3:35?

Suggestions: - Do not too soon think you understand Paul's speech in the Areopagus, neither should you say: it's too "deep"! If you understand just a little of it you understand more than if you had not tried at all. And if you see that you do not understand—then you are quite a ways along already. At least, you then see the problems! By all means read the lesson carefully. Here lie some underlying truths which are the reason for our being a Protestant Reformed Churches. An Essay: "History and Geography According to Acts 17:26".