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.
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MASS MEETING

The Young People of Grand Rapids and vicinity are invited to attend another enjoyable and profitable get-together.

Song Service
Combined Bible Discussion
Interesting Program
Good Speaker
Pleasant Fellowship

are promised to those who attend. Our last meeting was crowded—come again and enjoy a Young People's Federation combined meeting.

PLACE—Creston Protestant Reformed Church
       (Leonard near College)

TIME—Tuesday, April 3, 1945 at 7:45 P. M.

Bible Discussion—Paul Before King Agrippa. (Acts 26)

Who Is Going To Be There? ??

E—V—E—R—Y—B—O—D—Y—! !
Contrary Winds

By Jeanette Wiersema — Grand Rapids, Mich.

The disciples of John had come to Jesus with the tidings that Herod the tetrarch had beheaded the Baptist. Jesus, feeling the need of solitude, had departed by ship into a desert place apart. The people, however, hearing of it and being thoroughly absorbed with their own needs and desires, followed Him afoot.

It was a huge multitude who sought the Lord. Many of them had come a long way, bringing with them their sick, the maimed, the deaf, and the blind, and Jesus, moved with compassion, had healed them. Then, when evening had come—and there was no bread—Jesus had miraculously fed them; five thousand men, so we read, beside the women and children. How wonderful!

What a glorious achievement! How elated must have been the people, but especially that little inner circle—His chosen twelve. They too still looked for an earthly Messiah, who would banish forever this hated Roman yoke. In this mighty leader they saw the fulfillment of all their fondest hopes and dreams. Could anything be more simple than the ascension of Jesus to the throne of Israel—the earthly throne of David? The people were ready and eager to proclaim Him King; and with Christ on the throne there would never again be famine, sickness, or want of any kind, for could He not call into being the things that were not as if they existed? Were not all things subject to His will? All these things He had so plainly manifested. What power, glory and influence would be theirs in that new Kingdom! How lofty must have been those airy castles and what bitter disappointment to have them all crumple in utter disillusionment, when contrary to all their plans, Christ puts a mighty damper on their enthusiasm and snuffs out every vestige of their high elation! From this time on they are to battle against a series of “Contrary Winds”.

With a spirit of authority Christ
BEACON LIGHTS

sends the multitudes away, commands them to depart by ship, while He Himself sadly leaves them to go up into the mountain to pray. There must have been a storm within the hearts and minds and souls of the disciples, for oh, they were still so very much of this earth earthy and had no conception of the spiritual, neither did they understand that the Saviour’s hour was rapidly approaching. There were still to be a great many “contrary winds” before they would finally understand their significance and worth. Until that time, they badly needed their Master’s cheering and assuring words: “Let not your heart be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me”. Yes, indeed, they needed that when all things seemed to go so hopelessly contrary to the Saviour’s success.

Confused and somewhat bewildered, we can almost imagine the trend of their conversation as listlessly they embarked for the opposite shore, perhaps wholly oblivious to the ominous signs of an approaching storm. But soon stark fear wipes out all other emotions, for we read that when they were in the midst of the sea they were tossed with the waves, for the wind was contrary. And when faced with contrary winds the struggle really begins. Their little ship is now tossed about on those mighty billows as easily as if it had been a tiny nutshell and every wave threatens to obliterate them.

Isn’t it a beautiful and comforting picture that when the storm is at its wildest and there seems no way out—no hope, no future but to be hopelessly engulfed—that the Lord comes with His “Peace be still”? How beautifully typical of a Christian’s life! O how those storms can rage—and how at times they do rage!

“But, when the storm beats loudest and I cry
Aloud for help, the Master standest by
And whispers to my soul,
“Lo it is I”
Above the tempest wild I hear Him say
Beyond the darkness lies the perfect day,
In every path of thine, I lead the way.”

And when we hear that whisper in our souls, it is quiet, very quiet, and we begin to understand what the apostle Paul means when he speaks of the peace that passeth all understanding. Still, how true, too, that one of the greatest disappointments in a Christian’s life is the fact that he so frequently disappoints himself and that he must over and over again hear those words of rebuke: “Oh ye of little faith”. For like Peter, when we see the mighty billows and hear the roaring of the winds, we are
afraid, and our trust and faith all too often falters and fails, and from the anguish of our souls we cry: "Lord help me!" Sweet comfort, that when we really turn to Him He never puts us to shame for He knows and understands how weak and frail we are.

Many have been the storms during the history and development of the Church. Sometimes it seemed as if the little ship must surely perish. The odds seemed too great. But God miraculously preserved His people and His truth. There has ever been a remnant to raise the standard high; a little flicker of light in a great darkness. Always under great difficulties and tempestuous storms, storms which from a human point of view seemed to hinder God's work and cause; and yet we know differently. It pleased God that through struggles and storms His truth should ever be kept pure and thus develop deeper, firmer roots, while much of the chaff in the same process should be swept away.

Just previous to the Reformation, it surely seemed as if the blessed Gospel would be engulfed by ritual, superstition and utter wickedness. God used a Luther whose inward struggles and outward storms were so hellish in violence, so fierce indeed that often it seemed to him that both body and soul must succumb. Yet out of this man's bitter experiences and agonizing struggles, the Reformation was born. "God works in a mysterious way His wonders to perform".

And we could easily go on, beginning with that little group in Jerusalem right down through the ages and up to this present day. It is true, there are times when the storms somewhat abate and there is comparative quiet and calm, but these periods are never conducive to real growth. Outwardly the Church may thrive but there is no depth, and when the fierce winds and raging storms again begin to blow, only that which is founded on that solid rock will remain.

Of course we know that a Church need not be wholly corrupt to warrant a Reformation or to justify a separation. Such was the case in 1924 and in many previous separations. How contrary seemed the winds to the always small minority group. The winds were never in their sails, but they ever had to face them and the going was hard and long, and their progress so very, very slow. Then, as is usually the case, questionings arose; for isn't it true "that conquer we must if our cause it is just"? Or much better still, "If God be for us, who can be against us"? Listen: "Fear not little flock!" It is the Lord's work, but also the Lord's way. In that we must rest while fighting the good fight of faith. May it ever be a source of comfort to us
when encountering disheartening winds, which seem to retard our progress, that “contrary winds” are characteristic, especially in the measure in which we will be called upon to stand for our precious Reformed truth.

Often, in retrospection, we think of the “contrary winds” which crossed our individual paths. Not many of us have escaped facing them. There are all kinds of storms and all kinds of winds and one was called upon to face this and another that; but they all meant struggles and oftentimes tears.

God, in a very specific way has again sent storms and judgment upon His earth. Have we, looking on, and suffering too, calmly rested in the knowledge and assurance that our Father was at the helm and would safely see us and our loved ones through? Perhaps He didn’t always follow the course we would have chosen, but it was the best and only way; of this we may be sure. He can make the greatest trials a blessing—teaching us the lesson He means us to learn, working in us His Grace.

Were we to face the future in our own strength, we would surely tremble with nameless fear, for the clouds overhead are threatening and the way ahead looks dark! Shall we grope around along with the world, vainly seeking light? No! By grace we will put our hand into the Hand of God. That shall be to us better than a light and safer than a known way.

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**EDITORIAL**

**Hobbling To Heaven**

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

It is indeed a serious matter to face life with a handicap which cripples one and impedes his progress and thwarts desires which may be dear to his heart. And, especially now, as we stand at the threshold of a new year and hear of the promises of better days to come and see the hope, which as the poets say, “springs eternal in the human breast,” the thought of being crippled is vexatious.

Even at its best this natural life is a struggle and requires that we exert ourselves and employ all our faculties in order to gain our livelihood and, if so may be, make some material progress in this
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world. And then—crippled! Even the thought seems hard to bear.

It is also to be expected that we will see more physical cripples. For man with all his cunning and ingenious skill, inventions and scientific devices has unleashed these powers and turned them upon himself. The world again has been bathed in blood until both the so-called victor and the vanquished are well nigh exhausted either materially or economically or both.

Your soldier friend, son, husband, or father perhaps, returns, and tears of pity fill your eyes and your heart sinks within your breast for he has lost an arm or a leg or is crippled and disabled in some other fashion. If he is her true love perhaps his questioning eyes ask if “she” will love him “this way” or he may ask himself if he has the right to expect that she shall. The husband or father comes home to a wife and children and, perhaps, his paramount problem is to seek such employment where his crippled body will not be too much of a handicap. And there are the inevitable dark days when he feels that he is “no good this way” and when he almost wishes that that bullet had struck just a few inches more to the right and pierced through his heart. Of course, we back home have been carefully instructed and know that we must behave in such a way that we never call attention to their defects either by word or deed.

These, my friends, are some of the pitiful aftermaths of man’s highly vaunted “progress” and it almost appears that those “glimmerings of natural light,” which some would seek to fan into a veritable flame, have well nigh been extinguished.

But wait, one moment please! These physical cripples, those deserving our sympathy and aid, are not alone in their misery. For we too are crippled even though our physical body be perfectly sound. And it is only the Christian who knows how truly crippled and handicapped he is.

Perhaps the most prevalent source of grief to him who has lost a leg is the memory of the time when he was sound in limb. He used to run up those steps two at at time. He used to climb those hills and trees with the other neighbor boys but now—let’s not speak of it. For it isn’t as though he were born that way and hence never knew the joy of having two sound limbs. So too with the Christian. He was in Adam created good and upright, he was slain by sin, restored in Christ but he still walks with a limp. And it is a limp which he will never outgrow or overcome until this tabernacle falls away and he receives that new body in life everlasting. He must always be aware of his handicap and must know that he is liable
to fall if he begins to gain confidence in self or feel that he has even one good leg upon which he can stand. And, rather than laugh, scorn or gossip about that cripple who has fallen, we should with compassion seek to instill in him again the confidence that those Everlasting arms are about him; that he is not alone in his affliction but that we too are crippled and hobble along, sometimes very painfully and slowly, on the highway to heaven.

However, as with nearly all figures, conclusions may be drawn which are erroneous. One such would be to assume that this crippled Christian had at least a small part in his restoration. That he can at least say that he of himself and of his own free will went to the Physician’s office to seek aid in his calamity. Or that he, either emotionally or logically, deduced the fact that he needed restoration. To place such a construction upon the matter is to fail to understand that he was slain by sin and to that same extent minimizes the work of the Physician who has healed him. For it is not as with the physical cripple. You were not well except for that one leg. You were slain on that battlefield of rebellion against God.

You were spiritually dead! But now a new life works in those old members but those old members have not as yet been renewed, hence, you limp, stumble and sometimes fall and that sin-scarred body oftimes finds it very difficult to travel that road. It complains that the path is too narrow, rugged or steep and looks with longing eyes at that four-lane super highway that leads to—hell!

And now one last note of caution which we may draw from this figure. Namely this, that we must be very careful upon what or whom we trust. The physical cripple spares no effort or expense to make certain that he obtains the very best artificial aids to help him overcome, in a measure, his affliction. He abhors all makeshift and incompetent devises. But, strange as it may seem, incompetent and makeshift devices are employed and hawked and widely advertised to aid the spiritual cripple. And instead of being raised from the dead by a sovereign God through a crucified Christ, we behold such caricatures as “character development”, “moral rearmament”, “high ethical standards”, or a pleading, helpless, glorified carpenter who offers you his arm upon which you may lean if you but will!

Also in our practical every day life we are very easily inclined to employ crutches and lean upon them so heavily that we forget the source of our only strength and comfort. The laboring man is oppressed and the just recompence of his labors is withheld and, in-
stead of remembering that his cries are entered into the ears of the Lord of Hosts he sets out to avenge. He will lean upon his labor organization and seek at least his material salvation therein. The employer leans upon his capital and associations, which effectively boycott and kill his fellow-employer who will not stoop that low. The soldier leans upon his rifle, trench-mortar or machine gun. The men of medicine lean upon their skill and scientific discoveries. And so we could continue.

We see then that each class has its crutch to which it clings. But, my friends, these are all as smoking flax and a bruised reed.

Away with those crutches, props, artificial limbs and helpless charlatan devices! While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.

But be of good cheer, Christian! And as you hobble along that highway remember that we, and all His Redeemed, are hobbling with you and praying for that time when we shall be delivered from these handicaps which cause us to hobble on the way to heaven.

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HELL

Among the curse words which are so abundant especially in this day and age one which has “enjoyed” perhaps the most popularity and which apparently lends itself to such a multitude of occasions and circumstances is the word “Hell”. And, unless you are virtually cloistered in your home and never contact the husk which surrounds you as a kernel of wheat, you must also be aware of its prevalence. It is so popular and versatile a word that it is used by all ages from the lisping child to the gray-beard, who, above all, should be thinking of that place rather than carelessly using the word as an expletive!

The word is prefixed to such simple statements as “yes” and “no”. In carnal wrath one directs another to that place. (I’ve never heard anyone say “Go to Heaven!”) Even remarks about the weather are filled with the word and the weather is referred to as being as hot as or as cold as that place! And some, even among us, feel that we have a little right to use that word especially when speaking of war. If we don’t literally say that war is hell then we do it a little more slyly by saying that war is what Sherman said it was which is the same thing.

We think that we perhaps may quote others without becoming guilty ourself and we say “Hell hath no fury like a woman scorn-
ed” or “The road to Hell is paved with good intentions!” Or perhaps we use the substitute “Heck” to give vent to our emotions. And why?

Well, one reason, I believe, is because we do not think of what we are saying and have lost consciousness of the awfulness which is to be found in the place called “Hell”. And all these expressions are untrue even when we seek to describe war.

For war is not hell! Describe its terrors, pain, death and destruction in whatever way you will but please do not say it is hell! For war is very, very limited. It is physical and material and temporal. And we can have no more a man-made hell than a man-made heaven. For its pain and anguish cease when you draw that last breath. Hell, on the other hand, is eternal. Its fire is not quenched and its worm dieth ne’er! And if we are to believe that the awfulness of hell is to be forsaken of God then certainly no man-made agonies or distresses may be characterized by such a term. And thus, with all due sympathy for our brethren on the battlefields of the world, let us never express our description of troubles by the use of this word in any of its forms. It is a dire evil which, even apart from spiritual conceptions—which are of course the weightiest of reasons—denotes a sore lack of our limited means of expression. It is uncouth, vulgar, ill-mannered and reveals an ignorance of a true knowledge of the spiritual realities of hell.

A Vine Grows

in Iowa

It was with eager anticipation that we awaited our copy of “Beacon Lights” for February. And we are happy to note that our high hopes were realized as we read the contents of this Iowa issue.

A Vine grows in Iowa, and it is a goodly branch! The young and tender shoots are well-rooted and nurtured and it is apparent that they receive their nourishment and strength from a fountain-head which is the source of all wisdom and strength.

It should be apparent to all our readers that neither Grand Rapids nor Michigan is necessarily the Jerusalem of journalism!

But, your contributions and those of all other states, as well as other countries and islands of the sea are always welcome. We note that in the reports of your various societies mention is made of the verses, essays and other original work. Why not send them to us that we may all profit?

And so, once again we say, A Vine grows in Iowa and may its fruit be ever sweet!

G.T.E.
"This is the Reformed Witness Hour". At four o'clock every Sunday afternoon these familiar words ring through the air! But why should they? Are there not enough religious programs on the air already? Why should we, such a small denomination, take upon us the additional burden of broadcasting just another religious program"? Indeed, it is not!

In general, the so-called religious programs of today are man-centered, presenting Christ as a pleading Saviour, begging, imploring, beseeching all men to accept Him, to come to Him before it is too late. Soft, sweet strains of music combined with the gentle persuasive words of the speaker endeavor to win souls for Christ. It is very evident that in their fervor for saving souls they are little concerned or interested in the honor and the glory of the God of heaven and earth.

The Reformed Witness Hour, however, is distinctively different. We proclaim the Scriptural Truth that God is GOD and that man is incapable of any good, corrupt to the core, and prone to all manner of evil, so much so that he cannot even desire to come to Christ. If salvation depended upon the will of man, not one sinner would be saved, for it is not man's work but God must and does draw His children unto Him through the operation of the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Not all men who perished in Adam are again saved in Christ, but only those whom the Lord has chosen before the foundations of the world. It is not the beautiful oratory or the persuasive appeal of a minister that leads men to Christ but it is the work of God alone, through the pure preaching of His Word, and to Him must be given all the honor and glory. These are the divine truths which he must proclaim, for whenever the truth of God's Word has been misrepresented or denied, it is our duty as
the true Church of Christ to preach the gospel in all its fulness. The command of Christ "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel" still comes to us today.

And in what way can we better do this than through means of the radio? We do not, at the present time, have a missionary laboring in the mission field or contacting those who do not know the Truth and, therefore, as long as we have the privilege of using the radio we should not neglect to do so but we should make the most of this opportunity.

The radio is also missionary work as it is an avenue of contact with those outside of our Protestant Reformed circle. Take, for example, the German Reformed Churches of South Dakota. If it were not for the radio we probably would never have come into contact with them. This is one of the visible fruits of the preaching of the Word over the air.

Proclaiming the Truth on the radio is undoubtedly an influence for good for God always causes His blessing to rest upon the preaching of His Word. And they, into whose homes we enter by means of the radio, will also be held responsible for this Truth. But let us not forget that God also holds us accountable for what we do with the opportunities He has given us. Are we, as Protestant Reformed people, utilizing the means of radio to the fullest extent? Are we doing all within our power to support this cause? Is there a burning desire within our hearts to make others acquainted with the Truth? Let us then all together, wholeheartedly support this cause of Christ, saying in our hearts "For the love of God constraineth us".

Handicap

He walks on crutches — slow of pace.
And lines of trouble on his face,
Speak plainer far than words can do.
The sorrow that his heart's been thru.

He once could climb those hills and stairs,
And play with boys in secret lairs;
But now he has but one good limb,
With much life's joys denied to him.

But you are not alone, my friend,
For we too hobble to the end;
Although we've never lost a limb,
We do not always voice a hymn.

For sin is our great handicap,
It is our one and great mishap;
And oft we stumble and grow weak,
When only strength in self we seek.

—G. T. E.
A Reformation in South Holland

The beginning of our congregation was unique in many ways. This is the way it started: several people from Lansing, Illinois, not satisfied with the Common Grace position of the Christian Reformed Churches, decided that they wanted to hear the “other side”. So they wrote Rev. H. Hoeksema whether he would come and how much it would cost. Rev. Hoeksema wrote it would cost nothing, and plans were made to have him come. But what happened after that reminds us of Sanballat and Tobias in Nehemiah 4. We had posters printed and rented a hall, but the so-called brethren of the other side, had already started to break down the wall, even before we started to build. We were notified that we could not have the rented Munster Hall for our purpose of hearing Rev. H. Hoeksema. So to Lansing we went, but again Sanballat and Tobias had been there also and so we had the same disappointment with the Lansing Public School which we tried to get.

So, what next?! O, yes, Bock’s Hall, we thought. After all the Ku Klux Klan used to meet there, so we thought we could try also. And sure enough, they let us have that hall. Fortunately for us, however, their word was good, for 5 minutes later the above named “brethren” were there to warn them not to let us use the hall for “that trouble-maker”. But these “brethren” did not realize that they were helping the good cause along. Through all their efforts people got to be inquisitive and the result was that we could not handle the crowds at first. Yes, those were wonderful times, we thought. But the Lord had other plans for us, which if we had known them beforehand, I doubt whether any of us would have had the courage to go on. For gradually the meetings became smaller in attendance and when finally we organized on Aug. 24, 1926, there were but 7 families that proved willing to stick it out.

The Lord’s plans are wise nevertheless. Soon several families from South Holland began gathering with us. We were encouraged and began realizing that God’s blessing is upon His people regardless what happens. Some of the people who we thought were indispensable soon left us, and others whom we expected to join us stayed away entirely. Those were some of the 200 percenters that Rev. Hoeksema wrote about at one time. But several of the South Holland families joined our congregation. And whereas it was so dark for awhile that we only had one elder and one
deacon serving in the consistory, yet God brightened our horizon in the direction of South Holland. It was then decided to also build our own church and it was decided to build in South Holland. This caused great rejoicing for Bock’s Hall was not the ideal place to meet in. While there we were often told to shorten our holiday services in order that a scheduled dance could take place there, besides there were several families living in the same building causing at times disturbances to our meetings.

Our first students served us nearly every Sunday. And they gave of their time and efforts more than we expected. They were sincere and loyal, even though at times comical in their expressions. Our first student thought he had made such a botch of it, as he called it, that he declared we did not have to pay him for the trip. But he did fine and now he is one of our leading ministers. Some of the students were not so good in the Dutch either, and others not so good in the English. One of them spoke of “Voorspoed and achterspoed”. Another talked of “barbieren” (barbers) instead of Barbaren (Barbarians). However they were much appreciated, and the congregation was served by these first students for about 7 years. A long time to be without a minister, yet God blessed us.

In 1932 Candidate P. De Boer came over to help us and he labored about six years in our midst, being richly blessed throughout his ministry among us. Then on September 28, 1938 Rev. L. Vermeer came to us and has been laboring in our midst ever since. He is very faithful in preaching to us from week to week and instructing our children, in the good old Reformed Truth. He has remained faithful even in the midst of hardships, for we must not forget that the church on earth is the Militant Church and cannot enter the kingdom of heaven without much tribulation. This too has been our experience. But we can speak of God’s blessing on us and through the ministry of Rev. Vermeer, with the ever faithful help of Mrs. Vermeer, who also is always ready to take her part in congregational activities, our congregation is being richly blessed by our covenant God. We now have our own church building and parsonage, which will be debt free before the end of the year. We have a flourishing Ladies Aid and Young People’s Society as well as Men’s Society. Thus we believe God will continue to bless in the future and our hope is in Him alone.

NOTE:—This article was sent in by Mr. Terpstra before Rev. Vermeer received and accepted a call to Pella, Iowa. The S. H. congregation feels that Rev. Vermeer has occupied a large place in its history and growth.
The Hidden Blessing. . .

Jim and Hank, as they were affectionately called by the rest of the family, were brothers and two boys more alike you would probably never find. Being the sons of a farmer they were typical outdoors boys with all the interest and unbounded enthusiasm which any normal lad possesses. Especially did they love the sport of fishing. And since there was a good stream not very far from the house, it was to be expected that they would seek opportunity to indulge in their favorite pastime. And, naturally, there existed a spirit of keen competition between the two, both with a view to who could catch the most as well as the largest fish.

But living on the farm also had its drawbacks, at least as far as the boys were concerned. Because on a farm there are always a number of chores to be done, and, of course, as the boys grew older, more and more chores for them to do. It was therefore not at all strange that father found himself face to face with a serious problem. The boys, in their eagerness to be off to the stream, were not attending to their duties and often left their work undone or did it unsatisfactorily. Something had to be done about it. It wasn't that the boys didn't know what was required of them, for they had been told time and again. But it seemed as though talking did no good. Nor did the boys really mean to be negligent about their work. They just didn't have the right conception of things. All that work seemed so unnecessary and fishing was a lot of fun; moreover, there was always plenty work to do, so much in fact that it never really seemed to be done, and what did it get you? To them work was nothing but drudgery and to be avoided whenever possible.

Now, since talking did but very little good, the father of the boys decided on a plan whereby he would be able to demonstrate very practically the error of their conception and at the same time give them some positive instruction. There was one thing both boys wanted very much and that was a new
fishing rod. So without their knowledge father bought a rod and hid it in the wagon under the corn that was to be fed to the hogs. This was one of the chores which had been given to the boys. It was also the one thing about which they had a great deal of dispute as to which one of them would do it. Each always tried to find some excuse so that the other one would have to do it. It was Hank who finally uncovered the rod. Picking it up he ran to his father. "Whose is it?" he asked. "Yours", was the reply. By this time Jim had appeared upon the scene. Where did Hank get the rod and how come Hank got a rod and he didn't? So father explained. It might have been Jim's if he had not always sought to avoid his duty. Not that Hank was any better because he did the same thing. But now since Hank had found it, he might keep it. "You see", father said, "Every work has its purpose and therefore also its reward. And you never know what that reward may be until you do the work and do it well. Just because you cannot see that reward does not mean that it is not there. Now because you see this reward, Jim, you wish that you had done that chore. Now, I don't want to leave the impression that everything you do will have some material reward, for that is not true. What I want you boys to understand is that the doing of a work and doing it well is a reward in itself. For, whatever we do, no matter how unimportant it may seem, we must do it as unto the Lord. That means that we do it because the Lord requires it of us. And when we do it in that way, the Lord will bless our labors and He will bless us. Yes, and sometimes He gives us an unexpected blessing in a most unexpected way. So you see, it isn't a question of whether we like to do a thing or whether we can see that it is going to pay off: it's a question of whether we are going to do what the Lord gives us to do as doing it unto Him. And then when we have done it that way, we leave the fruit of it to Him knowing that He is going to use it according to His purpose in such a way that we will be blessed through the doing of it. I hope this incident has helped you boys to understand this. How about it?"

Yes, they saw the point; they understood it very clearly.

"Well I'm glad you have learned the lesson and I hope you will remember it all your life", concluded father as he turned away to continue his chores. "And by the way Jim," he added with a wink, "if you'll look behind the door of the tool-shed, I wouldn't be surprised but what you'll find something there".

He did!
Dear Friends:

In my previous letter to you (in the December issue of Beacon Lights), we talked about the terrible struggle a Christian soldier has in the midst of the godless surroundings wherein the Lord has placed him. In this letter we wish to tell you about the Christian Military Homes we had in the Netherlands.

As you probably know, we had compulsory military training for the majority of the young men between the age of 18 and 19 and many years ago the need was felt to do something for the Christian young men in service. First the Christian people living in the places where the camps or garrisons were located took them into their homes, but it soon was felt that that could not go on forever; so out of that grew the Christian Military Homes and which have been since a real haven for many a young man in service.

Those homes were established by a society in such a place and could usually be found close to the barracks just outside of the army grounds and they were supported and sustained by the Christians throughout the country. In these homes we had a father and mother appointed by the board of the society out of a number of applicants, whom were fit and had love for this work. These temporary parents would do everything to make the boys feel at home as much as possible and would create all kinds of activities for the boys to keep them busy; as for instance, a young men’s society, debating club, men’s choir, etc. They also would see to it that the boys would attend their respective churches and catechism classes. In short, they would for a while take over the parental duties.

No wonder then that we would dress up every night after supper and flee from the godless surroundings and go to our home where we would gather around the old organ and sing together, or sit down to play a game of chess or some other game, or write letters or have a talk together. Every night, before we had to leave for the barracks father would gather us together in the large room and would read a chapter out of the Bible and explain it for us and would close in prayer.

Well we were so accustomed to go to our home that when our army became mobilized during World War I and we had to take our place at the Belgian border we felt completely lost without it, so we established our own homes wherever we could get a group together in order to be able to have Christian fellowship together.

Now all this you haven’t got because we were not ready for it, but where we will also have compulsory training after this war in this country according to reports, we hope we will have something like that for our boys in the future.

May the Lord strengthen and sustain you by His grace to fight the good fight of faith to the glory of His name.

Yours truly, Mr. G. Koster.
February 12, 1945

Dear Friends:

I believe it's almost a year ago or more since I've last written you. So I think it's due time that I write again.

First I want to thank you for your efforts put forth in getting the "Beacon Lights" to me and in making it such a fine piece of material of spiritual inspiration.

I am now stationed at Ft. Benning Ga., finishing my parachute training. I've been in the army practically two years now, and have been fortunate enough to still be in the U. S., although it seems quite positive that I'll be on my way over, within a few weeks. I realize that I'll soon have the task before me of jumping by parachute behind enemy lines with all possibilities of ambush or any other type of disaster to my physical being. But I'll always take with me my Lord's words of comfort in Matt. 10:28: He is my shepherd in life so also in death. The enemy can kill my body but not my soul.

I've been unfortunate since I've been in the Army of not ever having with me or even meeting a christian friend to associate with. In the January issue of "Beacon Lights", I noticed a Peter Luyk of our church stationed at Ft. Benning, so I tried to look him up and I ended my search with the information that he had been shipped out. I believe Christian fellowship is one of the biggest sacrifices the boys in the service have to make. I hope all our young people are taking full advantage of the gracious gift of christian fellowship, because they cannot realize the value of this gift until God makes you stand alone.

I like the weather here in Georgia quite well, it is quite comfortable the year around. And as for the G. I. chow here, it's the best I've had since I've been in the army. As for my work I guess it's only natural that it can't be enjoyed at certain times but otherwise it isn't too bad.

A brother in Christ,
Pfc. Harold Kelderman (Oskaloosa).

Germany

Dear Friends,

I have just received another copy of the Beacon Lights and decided to wait no longer to express my thanks and appreciation for such worthwhile and wholesome literature. Especially over here where good reading material is scarce, it seems to be doubly welcome and I can assure you that every page is eagerly devoured.

There's not a great deal to be said about our activities over here except that we are kept pretty busy most of the time. I was in France, Belgium and Netherlands for a while—the latter proving the most interesting to me because I could carry on conversations with the civilians fairly well despite my limited Dutch vocabulary.
Church services are held every Sunday and usually once during the week. They are conducted in some evacuated building as a rule or else out in the open.

So far we've been able to sleep in buildings of one sort or other and they are much more comfortable than a little pup tent pitched in a cold field or damp woods. Our mail service is very good and the food likewise, so conditions are all right. I surely miss the sermons I formerly heard back home and also the various church activities that afforded us christian companionship and a better knowledge of the real truth. I hope it won't be too long before we can return home again and take our old places, but we must constantly pray that God's Will may be done and that we may be gratefully submissive. For after all, we are but pilgrims on this earth and we look forward to that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

It is my prayer that this work may be richly blessed and that it may continue sending its rays of light all over the world.

Cpl. Cornie Yonker (Fuller).

Southwest Pacific

Dear Friends,

As usual I received my Beacon Lights again. It was somewhat late due to my constant moving around. However late or not I'm still glad to receive them. Besides our letters from home they are the only religious guidance and help we get. As usual us Marines are constantly moving about. I am now located on a tropical island which is the same as all the rest of them, hot sun, palm trees, natives, and not much to do. It is only a few days till Xmas, it certainly won't seem much like Xmas without some of that Michigan snow. This will not be a very merry Xmas for us fellows, but then the true spirit of Christmas seldom comes out in a merry one. We expect to have a few days off for Xmas and I plan on exploring the parts of the island that I haven't seen. There is much I could tell you about this island but we are under strict censorship so I guess it will have to wait.

This is rather short but it covers just about all I can write on. Thanking you for the Beacon Lights I have received and those I hope to receive.

Pvt. David Meulenberg (4th Church)

England, Jan. 17, 1945

Dear Friends,

I enjoyed the three issues of Beacon Lights I received recently very much. I really appreciate this link with the home church and the young people of the various societies. It helps to relieve the worldly atmosphere of an army barracks to have something worthwhile to think about. I only wish our magazine were larger.

I've been in the E. T. O. for six months now and have almost completed my combat tour. A few more missions and I'll be homeward bound with the possibility of a short leave at home. It'll be a real treat to be able to attend our own church services again.

John De Vries (Roosevelt)
Current Events

Mr. Jack Boelema

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Turkey

is no longer neutral. Ever since the beginning of this conflict, Turkey has maintained a so-called neutrality. During this time, however, she has sold her minerals to the Germans and at the same time manifested certain leanings toward the Allies. Had she joined with the Axis she would have aided Germany greatly in invading and conquering the Middle east and Africa. Had she joined the Allies earlier she would have been of great value to them because of her strategic location and with her modernly equipped army of one million.

Turkey's neutrality has come to an end. She has gone thru two stages in so doing: one of giving assistance to the Allies and the other of actually declaring war upon the Axis.

Some time back Turkey began to assist the Allies by giving permission to send war materials to Russia via the Dardanelles. As map reading will show, the Dardanelles, Sea of Marmara, and the Bosphorus connect the Black Sea with the Mediterranean. This waterway is 175 miles in length. The tiny part of Turkey in Europe is separated from the Turkey in Asia by this strategic waterway. Up until this time the Turks had closed these straits to both Germans and Allies. Now since the Germans are out of the Black Sea area and the Russians are in control, the permission to use this route greatly cuts distance and time in bringing supplies to the Russians. This route is at least 3000 miles shorter than the one previously used by the Allies.

Turkey has followed this assistance to the Allies with the actual declaration of war upon the Axis. Turkey evidently thinks this a wise move seeing that victory appears near for the Allies. This action will also give her permission to have a voice in the United Nations' planning of peace and the post-war world. One can see that Turkey had that in mind when she came thru with this assistance and declaration. She is thinking of her own future. Yet, it is clear too, her future is tied up with Russia since Russia will emerge as a
strong power on the European continent. Russia has long been looking for an outlet to the Mediterranean Sea. The question of Russia using this strategic waterway remains a problem yet to be solved between Russia and Turkey.

The Pacific War

has been in the headlines of late. The tough battle on Iwo, with casualties running around 6000, has raised the question of the method used. The conflict on this isle has been characterized as “worst of the worst”, and the loss has been “greater than that of Tarawa”. The first quotation may be true; but in comparing the loss with that of the Tarawa conflict, we must remember that a far greater number of marines are being used in this battle.

As one looks at the map of the Pacific, he is at once impressed with the greatness of the area—with its thousands of islands. The grouping of these islands have been familiarized by publicity: Netherland Indies, Carolinas, Mariannas, Philippines, etc. One must conclude too that the Japs held a great area, nearly all with the exception of Australia.

Now it goes altogether without saying that it is impossible to gain control of every island in that area. Instead the United States has followed the method of gaining control of strategic islands and passing by the others. This plan was followed to get nearer to Tokyo and at the same time to cut the supply line of the Japs to the other Islands. This plan of island hopping has worked: the U. S. has been able to cut the supply lines and now on Iwo we are at the door of Tokyo.

The question arises: what or where next? Invasion of the Asiatic continent at China and cut that land’s supply route too? Remember the Jap’s land strength is great in China. Probably French Indo China would be the place to invade? Then we must not forget the island of Formosa. It has been said that Formosa must be had. Is that next?

Recent events bring out the possibility of invading the Japanese island of Honshu direct. This is based on the fact that our naval power is so strong that it can lead us into Japan proper.

Berlin

Is the goal! On the West, Marshal Runstedt’s counter offensice is history. The Allies now have the initiative and are on the move. The first and ninth armies have started the offensive toward the Rhine and it is believed “that the fate of the Germans will be de-

Continued on page 26
A Reformation in Hudsonville, Mich.

It was in the summer of 1924, the same summer of the infamous synod which adopted the "Three Points" of "common grace", that the Rev. H. Hoeksema was invited to speak at a school rally, which was to be held in the Jamestown woods, four miles south of Hudsonville, by the school board of the Hudsonville Christian School. He spoke on the subject, "De Strijd Aller Eeuwen" (The Battle of All the Ages). It was an inspiring and heart stirring address, by the then outstanding minister of the Christian Reformed Churches. At the conclusion of the address, the Rev. Krohne, who at that time was the minister of the Hudsonville Christian Reformed Church, made the remark, "Wiens hart door deze rede niet vertederd wierd, moet wel een hart van steen hebben", (Whose heart was not touched by this stirring address must have a heart of stone). Was it any wonder that there were many hearts that were touched, when, but a few months later, the news flashed through the community of Hudsonville, that this same Rev. H. Hoeksema was deposed, together with his consistory, by the classical authorities. Soon after, several families went to hear the Rev. H. Hoeksema preach in his own congregation in Grand Rapids, and after having heard him extol the truths of God's sovereignty, of man's depravity, and of God's sovereign elective grace, they went again and again. Because of this several families were banned from the Lord's supper by their consistory, and as a result of this some seven families severed their relationship with the Christian Reformed Church of Hudsonville, and affiliated themselves with the then known Protesting Christian Reformed Church of Eastern Avenue, at Grand Rapids.

Early in the spring of 1926 the Rev. H. Hoeksema was asked to speak on the "Three Points" in the village of Hudsonville. Whereas no other place was available for the occasion, this meeting was held in the old Spoelman barn on Main Street, which was located on the same spot which is now adorned by the Town Hall and Fire Department. In this improvised meeting place, standing alongside the cow stables and hore's manger, this same fiery orator, who but a little more than a year before had given such a stirring address on the "Battle of All the Ages" was battling against the heresies contained in the doctrine of "common grace" as it was embodied in the "Three Points" adopted at the synod of 1924. There was a mixed audience. As stated above, there were some who had already severed their rela-
tion with the Christian Reformed Churches, and were members of the congregation of which the Rev. Hoeksema was pastor. Others were still members of the Christian Reformed Churches, some of which after having listened to the address, could not understand how it was possible that their synod had adopted such corrupt doctrines as were expressed in the "Three Points", and that such men as Reverends Hoeksema, Danhof and Ophoff were deposed from office, together with their consistories. Still others, although they could find no fault with the truths that were set forth, neither with the manner in which the heresies of the "Three Points" were exposed, said that they would have nothing more to do with this new movement. Those that were interested requested that meetings be held each Friday evening, in order that they might know more about the matter. Soon it became evident that there was quite a group who were more and more convinced that the Christian Reformed Churches, in the adoption of the "Three Points" had departed from the faith of their fathers, and were desirous of being organized into a Protesting Christian Reformed Congregation, and that services were conducted each Lord's day. This was realized on the 26th day of August of that same year, namely 1926, when 22 families were organized into a Protesting Christian Reformed Church. At this meeting the Rev. H. Hoeksema presided, the Rev. G. M. Ophoff preached the sermon, and the Rev. H. Danhof installed the three elders and two deacons into their respective offices. The rest of that summer the services were continued in the old Spoelman barn. It was far from an attractive meeting place, especially during the hot and sultry summer days, or during the cold days of late autumn. Soon after having been organized into a congregation it was decided to build a church building. The pledges for the building fund were made readily and cheerfully. The response was a very generous one. Three large corner lots were purchased at the corner of School and Main Streets. On the corner lot there stood an old house, in the which the congregation had from late in the fall until the following spring when the church building was completed. On the 8th of April, 1927, just a year after the Rev. H. Hoeksema had first addressed us in the old barn of Spoelman, the new church building was dedicated. How the hearts of the congregation were filled with gratitude to God when they might take their places in the pews of their new place of worship, their voices of thanksgiving when ship. How the air resounded with they might sing the songs of Zion accompanied with the musical strains of the organ.
The Earth's Satellite

By Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

The seasons are fixed by wisdom divine,
The slow changing moon shows forth God's design;
The sun in his circuit his Maker obeys,
And running his journey hastes not nor delays.

In THE last issue of "The Beacon Lights" various aspects of the moon were discussed. Perhaps, other questions may have arisen; for example, "Why does the moon appear larger when it rises than when it is over head?" Actually, it is further away from us when it makes its appearance. A current explanation is that it appears greater in size at the horizon because it is in juxtaposition with trees or buildings with which its size can be compared, while when viewing it overhead there is nothing visible near it only the endless expanse of the heavens. According to recent reports Harvard psychologists discovered that the moon appears larger overhead than at the horizon when one is in a reclining position and visa versa when one stands upright. This effect, they claim, is due to a very peculiar property of the brain and eye, which makes objects directly in front of one appear larger than when on an angle. Try both—the upright and reclining positions the next time you observe the full moon and note the difference in size.

Frequently the question arises, "Why does the moon change its shape?" Surely, we all have observed at one time different phases of the moon—new moon, full moon, quarter moon, etc. The continuous change in the moon's appearance to us who inhabit the earth is due to the moon's revolution around the earth. Perhaps, you recall that the moon does not give light as the sun and stars do, but only reflects light. It is a spherical mirror.
only one half of which is exposed to the sun's rays at any one time and, consequently, the other half is continuous darkness. When we observe the full moon we see the complete half which is exposed to the sun. The new moon, of course, is invisible—the other half not exposed to the sun. When the moon is between the earth and the sun, we see the "new moon" phase. It is invisible because we see the unlighted side. However when the moon is on the reverse side of the earth, we have a "full moon", which reflects all the rays toward us. We see the moon pass thru a continuous cycle of phases (faces)—commencing with the new moon, crescent, first quarter, gibbous (meaning hunched), full moon, gibbous, last quarter, crescent, and the new moon. This cycle requires approximately 29 days and 13 hours. When it increases in size it is called a waxing moon , and when it recedes it is called a "waning moon".

A third question sometimes asked is: "What effect has the moon upon the earth?" The most striking, perhaps, is the relationship between the moon and the tides. The attraction of the moon is chiefly responsible for the rising and falling of tides. Water is moveable, whereas land is stationary; hence, although the force of attraction is exerted on both, only the water rises. Not only the water on the side nearest the moon rises, but also the water on the opposite side, while the two sides at right angles experience a low tide. Every 12 hours and 25 minutes there is a high tide, in other words, two high and two low tides per day.

Tides are not only interesting phenomena, but of great significance to the seafaring people. In the Bay of Fundy off the coast of Newfoundland, the difference in water level between high tide and low tide varies as much as 60 feet per day. However, on most of the Atlantic Coast the rise is only one to three feet, depending on the ocean bed and the irregularity of the coast line. Mariner's Charts have been provided which list the time and rise in tides for every day of the year for all important harbors.

In the Old Testament the new moon was relied upon to mark off the months of the year and aided in determining the feasts. During the days of patriarchs many of the heathen nations worshipped the moon. In Egypt it was customary to sacrifice a pig at full moon. During these times it was also a common practice to predict important political events on the basis of the moon's rising or appearance.

Since the months were determined by the moon and began at the time of the new moon, the Israelites set aside this day as a holy day. Watchmen were assigned to the heights around Jerusalem, and
when sufficient evidence had been gathered that it was “new moon” the Sanhedrin pronounced the word of consecration. If cloudy weather prevented careful observation, the thirtieth day after the previous new moon was celebrated. A beacon fire was then lit on the Mount of Olives, which was followed by similar fires built on other high mountains throughout the land. Thus, the entire population would know when a new month had begun. Later the appearance of the new moon was announced by messengers, because the Samaritans started fires prematurely to purposely upset the Jewish time table. Thus we can realize that from the beginning of time, the moon has played an important role in the history of mankind. 

“The sun with royal splendor
Goes forth to chant Thy praise,
And moon-beams soft and tender
Their gentler anthem raise;
O'er every tribe and nation
The music strange is poured,
The song of all creation
To Thee, creation's Lord.”

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**CURRENT EVENTS**

(Cont. from page 21)

decided in this battle”. We must not forget that the Siegfried line must be crushed before the way to Berlin is open for the Allies.

On the other hand, the decision of the conflict may be made in the moving in advance 10 to 20 miles a day along a front from Budapest on the south to the Baltic on the north. Posen, third largest city in Poland, has been taken.

But—Berlin will fight to the end! The cost of lives will be undoubtedly great! If the casualties come in as they do now, the million mark will be reached within two months!
LESSON LII
Paul's Defensive Testimony In Jerusalem
Acts 22-23:11

His Testimony Proper. vss. 1-21. The following points of importance Paul brings forward.

1. A sketch of his own life prior to his meeting and seeing Christ on the road to Damascus. vss. 1-5. In this relates: a. His identity and birthplace. b. His early training here in Jerusalem at the feet of the great Gamaliel. And that in all the strictness of the tradition of the fathers. (This must not be identified with Mosaic ordinances. Matt. 15:1-9). c. His former boundless zeal for these traditions in opposition to the Way in Jesus. Of this way he says: (1) That it was the same zeal that they had manifested on this occasion of mobbing him. (2) That he had also persecuted this Way even unto death.

2. The appearance of the glorified Christ to him near Damascus. vss. 6-16. a. Here he relates what we already studied in Acts 9:1-29. See outline XXIV. "Saul Called Unto Apostleship". b. This vision is Saul's great court appeal here and always. Compare: Gal. 1:10-25; 1 Cor. 9:1.

3. Paul's vision received in a trance in the temple. a. This was the occasion recorded in Acts 9:26-30. However Luke there does not record this trance. b. At that time Jesus appeared to him telling him to leave quickly. They will not receive your testimony. Paul had demonstrated that he too had been thus—but the Lord had said: I will send thee far hence to the gentiles. c. To see the power and sting of this testimony compare: Matt. 23:34-39; Matt. 21:33-46. Was it not the same "Jesus of Nazareth" speaking to Paul that spoke these words recorded in Matthew?

The Outcome: vss. 22-29.

1. In the case of These Jews. vss. 22, 23. They are blind with rage and madness. Cast dust into the air and rend their clothing crying: Away with such kind from the earth: it is not fitting that he should be living.

2. As for the Chiliarch, Claudias Ly-sias. vss. 24-29; 23:1-10. a. He takes Paul into the Castle. Orders him to be scourged to find out the truth. They are to tie him to the scourging post, and then Paul asks: Is it lawful to scourge a Roman and that uncondemned? b. The centurion in great fear relates this to the Chiliarch says: What are you about
BEACON LIGHTS

to do—this man is a Roman. The Chil- iarch is a fearful, bewildered man by this time, having indeed acted the part of a rash fool. c. Hence upon his initiative the next day Paul is brought down and set in the gathering of the chief priests and the elders. Claudius Lysias wished to know more about this strange prisoner. He is not that Egyptian, 21:38) and he is a Roman, (22:27). Twice he had been jolted. Now he brings Paul before the Sanhedrin: 1- To be sure not to have him tried for a crime. There was none as far as this Chilarch knew. (21:34). Certainly a strange procedure. Claudius Lysias appears more erratic all the while. 2- But to learn the certainty of the reason for the rage of the people against him. Will he understand? 1 Cor. 2:14-16. 3- The whole meeting proves most abortive: (a) Paul here declares that he has walked in a good conscience. Ananias the high priest orders Paul to be smitten on the mouth. Paul rebukes him. God is about to smite thee, thou hypocrite, sitting to judge me according to the law and ordering me to be smitten contrary to the law! Here Paul is reminded, by those standing by, that he might not thus address the high-priest. Paul says that he did not know that he was the high priest, and immediately acknowledges his fault. Compare Ex. 22:28. (b) Paul seeing that this Sanhedrin was composed of Sadducees and Pharisees cries: I am judged, brethren, of the hope of the resurrection. And the meeting is at odds. And the Pharisees say: what of it if this man has seen an angel, etc. So disorderly does the meeting become that Claudius must order the soldiers to get Paul and bring him into the Castle again.

Paul Encouraged by Christ. (23:11). The following we are told:

2. For this way of coming into the hands of the erratic Claudius leads to Rome. There Paul will testify to the Jews as He had here in Jerusalem. Paul was here not on trial but the Jews. Compare Acts 28:23. See in this connection Is. 6:9, 10; Matt. 13:14; ohn 12:40.

Questions: 1. How must we judge of the "being zealous for God" of Paul prior to meeting Christ? (22:3) What does Paul say of this zeal in Rom. 10:2. 3? What is his evaluation of this in Phil. 3:4-10? 2. How must we understand the "in all good conscience" in which Paul claims to have conducted himself? (23:1). Does this include his zeal in persecuting the church? Or must this be admitted to the charges made against him by the Asiatic Jews (21:28) and his whole conduct toward the Mosaic institutions subsequently to his meeting Christ near Damascus? Compare 21:20-26. 3. Who is the central personage in this entire process here in Jerusalem? Paul or Christ? See 33:11; 19:21; Rom. 1:13-15. Is Paul a prisoner of Claudius Lysias, Felix, Festus, Julius, Nero, or is he the prisoner of Christ? Eph. 3:1.

Note.—If this is too much material for one meeting treat it in two meetings.
LESSON LIII
Paul Taken To Caesarea
Acts 23:12-35

The Jewish Plot To Kill Paul, vss. 12-21.
1. The Plotters. They are some forty men; haters of God, Christ and Paul. They came together and bound themselves with an oath not to eat or drink till they had killed Paul. They could not live long without eating and drinking so they certainly meant to dispose of him in short order. And they go to the chief priests and elders and order them this welcome service.

2. The Plot. a. They would have the Sanhedrin request Claudias Lysius to once more be permitted to speak to Paul, and that, under the pretense of wishing to ascertain a certain point better. They would lay by the way and kill Paul. b. Just how they would go about this is not certain, but they meant to ambush him is quite certain.

The Plot Discovered, vss. 22-35.
1. By whom? By Paul's sister's son. He was no doubt a young man who had access to the inner secrets of the Sanhedrin, and who had address enough to enter the Castle of the Chiliarch. This is the only place we meet with him in the book of Acts. He comes to bring this message to Paul himself. He possibly came here after nightfall.

2. Paul has the message relayed to the Chiliarch, Claudias Lysius. This one: a. Tells Paul's nephew not to tell anyone that he had told of this plot to him, Claudias. b. Takes the utmost precaution and measures to insure the safety of Paul, a Roman citizen. In the third hour of the night 200 footmen and 200 spearmen and 70 horsemen are to be ready to escort Paul safely from Jerusalem. This entire band of 470 men bring Paul as far as Antipatris. From there the horsemen alone accompany Paul to Caesarea. There was small danger that they would be molested from here on. c. Writes a letter to Felix informing him: as to the status of this man. In it he is careful to so misstate the facts as to cover up his own blunders.

3. Paul is placed in the custody of the governor, Felix. a. Governor is informed upon request from what province he was. b. Paul is kept in Herod's palace. (Pretorium). c. There he will stay until the accusers have come down to the trial.

Questions.—How must we judge of the great number of soldiers and horsemen that Claudias orders to accompany Paul? Is this some more foolishness of Claudias, or does it reflect past experience on the part of Claudias as to what lengths religious zealots will go? Does it also reveal the loving protection of the Lord of lords over His servant Paul? Is this a "case study" of the duty of the magistrate toward the protection of the ministry of the Word, or is it merely toward the minister of the Word? 2. Had Paul been escorted to Caesarea before? Acts 9:30. How long had Paul been in Jerusalem? Acts 34:11. Who was living here in Caesarea? Acts 21:8. Was this experience in Jerusalem and in Caesarea the fulfillment of Acts 9:15? Is II Cor. 2:14 true in this case too?
LESSON LIV
Paul's Trial Before Felix
Acts 24:1-27

The Accusations Against Paul, vss. 1-9.

1. The accusers. vs. 1. a. Ananias and some of the elders, who had come down from Jerusalem to Caesarea. b. With them had come a certain Tertullus (Tertius), an orator who was to prosecute their case against Paul for them. He was not just a public speaker, but an attorney at law who knew the technical procedure of the Roman court.

2. The accusations. vss. 2-9. a. First Tertullus speaks a word of flattering commendation in honor (?) of the governor Felix. He tells Felix how much they appreciate and how grateful they accept in every place all the benefits that accrue to them under his able regime. Of course this “liar” has an axe to grind. Felix had suppressed a riot, but Tacitus (Ann. XII 54) declares that Felix secretly encouraged banditti and shared the plunder for which the Jews finally made complaint to Nero who recalled him. But it sounded well to praise Felix for keeping peace in his province, especially as Tertullus was going to accuse Paul of being a disturber of the peace.” Robertson. b. Tertullus presents the following matters against Paul: 1- That he is politically dangerous. We found him to be thus. We found this man a pestilent fellow, a mover of insurrections among all the Jews throughout the inhabited world. However, he does not offer one wit of proof, not even specious. 2- That he is a sacriligeous renegade.

Two matters are here underscored by Tertullus. (a) They had caught him in the act of attempting to profane the temple. (b) He was a ring-leader, a front-line man in the Sect of the Nazarenes. c. He ends with a sweep of the hand, that if Felix will take the trouble to examine him he will find these things to be true. Ananias and the elders chimed in with Tertullus that these matters are thus. As always, the less proof the more oratory.


2. The points Paul touches upon: a. He denies: (1) That he is politically dangerous. He has done nothing of the kind while in Jerusalem. Defies anyone to prove it. (2) Neither had he attempted sacrilege to the temple. He had come to worship, bring alms for the poor. All this could be checked up on. b. Gladly confesses that he is a ringleader of what is called the Sect of the Nazarene. But it is not sacrilege, for in this Sect the central tenet is the glad tidings of the Resurrection of the dead. And the only preaching of this he had done in Jerusalem was before the Jewish council in the presence of this Ananias and the elders. And so Paul rests his case, having made a good confession before Felix.

The Outcome of the Trial. vss. 22-27.

1. The verdict is postponed by Felix. a. Pretended reason. That he, the gov-
error, stood in need of more light on the case. b. Real reason. Felix saw in Paul a great personage with friends throughout the world. He had ample light both here in court and from the letter of Claudias Lysius. But he loved money. See the item quoted above from Tacitus. He hoped to get money out of Paul to procure his freedom. vs. 26.

2. Paul is placed here in the “King’s Court” to preach to kings. Think of John in Herod’s court, or of Daniel at Belshazzar’s court, or Joseph in Pharaoh’s court. Paul preaches to Felix and his wife Drusilla on the theme: “The faith of Jesus Christ.” He preaches repentance and that on the theme: Righteousness, temperance, self-control—and the coming judgment. (Think of Enoch, Jude 14). Result of this preaching? Felix is terrified! Sends Paul away. Felix is a low character.

3. Two whole years Paul is kept a prisoner.

Questions:—Is there a hint of the presence of the 40 men who placed themselves under the vow? What about the Asiatic Jews? 24:19. Why did the high-priest come down here and the elders? 2. How must we judge of the “virtues of the heathen” in the light of what we see of both Claudius Lysias and Felix? Is here much from which God’s children can learn? Or is it true what we read in Canons of Dort. III-IV, Art. 4 “that he is incapable of using (the glimmerings of natural light) aright even in things natural and civil. Nay further, this light, such as it is, man in various ways renders wholly polluted.
testimony was against him. And it was done by the chief priest and the leading men of the city. The play-up to the new governor as men interested in justice:
b. They desire that Paul be brought to Jerusalem and there tried. Not because they desired justice, but they planned to lay an ambush by the way and kill Paul. The plan of the 40 men on a larger scale!
c. Festus does not acquiesce. His judgment seat is in Caesarea and there the prisoner is also kept, and he is no doubt suspicious of these Jews. But he acts carefully not to offend them. Erelong he will again return to Caesarea and then those in power can bring their accusation formally in court against him if there is something amiss in the man. Just a governor, until pressure is put on.

The Trial Proper. vss. 6-8.

1. The scene: the day after Festus returned the trial is held. Festus ascends the judgment-seat. He commands Paul to be brought in. The accusers are present. This time without an attorney (Tertullus) and minus Ananias, who was no longer high priest. They group around Paul being ready to bring their complaint against him.


3. Paul's Defence: a. Flatly denies that any of these charges are true. b. He claims not to be guilty in the least.

The Outcome. vss. 912.

1. Festus' Decision: a. He does not say: "I find no fault in the man". Although he did think so, as he later says to Agrippa. Cf. vss. 18, 19. He thought they had different charges against him. But he sees that it is merely a question of their religion and about a certain Jesus who they deny that he arose and Paul asserts to have risen from the dead.

b. Festus does some quick thinking. He seeks self. He must ingratiate himself with these Jews. He is on the spot. It is unjust to condemn Paul and disadvantageous for his popularity to absolve him. He doesn't want to do either.

c. So he asks Paul: Would you be willing to go to Jerusalem and there be tried before me? 2. Paul's reply: a. Reminds Festus that he is now in this court standing before Caesar's tribunal. And that is the only legal court in existence. Cf. Rom. 13:1ff. And this Festus knows very well. Why then this proposition? Festus had no right to demand this and therefore asks Paul: Are you willing? b. Paul appeals his case to Caesar in Rome: He offers the following: 1- If I'm guilty I'm not unwilling to die. But I'm innocent. 2- No one can give me a Roman citizen ove rinto the hands of these bloodthirsty Jews, not even Festus. I appeal to Caesar . c. This appeal accepted: 1- Festus spoke with his counselors briefly—possibly as to the legality of it. He had received a hard jolt in his plans to use Paul as bait to gain the favor of these leads. He says rather boldly: To Caesar thou shalt go.