O GIVE THANKS UNTO THE LORD FOR HE IS GOOD.
Youth's Temptations

The tempter said, "O come my son, Life for you has just begun. If time you spend on Scripture's truth, You'll waste a lot of precious youth.

You're only young but once, you see, And now's the time for gaiety— For movies, parties and such things, Church is sober—my world sings!"

And son was faced with problem grave: Was he to superstition slave? Are Christians all filled with false hope? And does the world in darkness grope?

But what did Jesus do, he thought, When thrice before temptation brought? "Get thou behind me", then he said, "For I prefer the living bread!"

The tempter said, "O come my daughter. Though Scriptures speak of living water— I'll give you cocktails and champagne To cheer your heart and thrill your brain!

There's time enough when you are old, To learn those doctrines hard and cold; But now's the time when you should play, And not on bended knee to pray!"

And daughter thought, Should I give heed And enjoy life with Serpent's seed? Is Scripture wrong and Satan right? Is there much time ere death's dark night?

But what did Jesus do, she thought, When thrice before temptation brought? "Get thou behind me," then she said, "For I prefer the living bread!"

G. T. E.
It is amazing how quickly one becomes accustomed to insane ideas.

What is essentially foolish and, at first, appears absurd, is repeatedly brought before our attention as really good and expedient and practical and indispensable and necessary and very desirable: gradually it turns our head, changes our judgment, our valuation of things and soon has captivated us entirely.

One of these insane ideas, that have gradually but quickly and surely turned our minds is that our covenant-young-people need amusement.

Think seriously, think again, and you will agree that it is only a crazy notion.

Only refuse to believe all that is presented to you and to be dragged along with every new movement under the sun, only maintain that you have the unction of the Holy One and that you have no need that any teach you, and then judge of the statement: young people must amuse themselves, and you will agree in the light of Scripture, that the notion cannot have its origin in the Church of Christ, but must have originated in the world, that its source is not to be traced to Jerusalem but to Babylon.

Surely, in the world, where God’s covenant is unknown, one expects such a view of life. Life is brief! One lives only once! And youth is the springtime of life. In his youthful days one cannot be expected to look serious all the time. It is the time of joy and pleasure and hilarity! The time of fun and amusement! Soon enough comes the more serious time of life. Let the young folk, therefore, eat and drink and be merry. And especially the youth of today, in the modern world, needs enjoyment and amusement.

One is not surprised at such
language from those that seek the things that are below.

But in the Church?

Among the people of God?

How come that similar language is heard among them today and that the problem of the amusements of the young folk has become a very serious one?

Well, you see, it has been constantly preached.

Social reformers, pedagogues, wise men and learned and even divines look very serious and profound, learnedly speak of the special characteristics and needs of modern youth, of the Problem of the Age of Adolescence, etc.

People begin to listen. Who is bold enough to reveal his ignorance by gainsaying men of learning with D.D.'s Ph. D.'s, and other mysterious tokens of wisdom and learning behind their names?

Solutions of the serious problem are offered.

Seeing that young people are naturally full of life and surely will have fun: seeing further that the world beckons them on every side and provides all sorts of much wanted enjoyment for them: seeing finally, that they will surely be led into the world if we do not introduce something into the life of the Church that will counterbalance the tempting power of the world, we must provide for them amusements ourselves.

Thus, gradually the Church begins to practice the precepts of the wisdom of the world.

First, instead of edifying and instructive programs, silly socials and hilarious banquets are introduced, where one fairly bursts with laughter, opened with prayer and closed in the same manner, to ask the Lord for the forgiveness of premeditated sins, for which the participants prepared themselves weeks in advance!

Next come very imperfect imitations of the theatre, pageants, dramas, moving pictures and the like, carefully introduced by some specimens that present a religious appearance, not to give the more serious-minded in the Church too sudden a shock.

Soon it is argued that the body of our young people must have careful attention and athletics, ball-games, swimming-pools, bowling alleys and pool-tables are introduced, all for the development and enjoyment of the covenant-youth.

And presently you will find that people have accustomed themselves so thoroughly to the notion that young people must amuse themselves and fun of some sort must be provided for them, that the Church in its largest gathering, the Synod, sits wise and discusses the very serious problem: how can we provide wholesome amusement for the young folks?!

And it is, by then, forgotten that the whole idea is insane, never
BEACON LIGHTS

originated in the Church of Jesus Christ, finds no item of support in the Word of God, but was originated by the powers of darkness to lead the youth of the covenant straightway into the world and to hell!

I would appeal to our young folks not to listen to this false philosophy.

If you will think again, you will deem it an insult to your Christian young manhood and womanhood, that the Church actually considers your chief ambition to follow after vain amusements.

Do not misunderstand me.

I do not mean that you must pass through the world with heads bowed low, eyes closed and faces so long "that you could eat oatmeal out of the end of a gaspipe," as Billy Sunday has it.

There is undoubtedly a place in our life for means of relaxation, for real enjoyment.

But I mean in the first place, that it is surely contrary to the Word of God to present matters as if amusement and fun were the chief thing in your young lives, so that it becomes a serious problem how to satisfy the craving for entertainment. That is not true. It is certainly contrary to Scripture, contrary to your calling as covenant-children of Jehovah, contrary to your relation to Him and to the world in which you have been placed to be children of light.

And I mean in the second place, that our joy must be Christian, that even in moments of entertainment and relaxation our calling remains to be children of light. Our pleasures must be able to stand the unchangeable test of the Word of God.

Young men! thus Scripture says, you are strong! You have overcome the evil one!

That means, that the world is no theatre and no playground, but a battlefield, and that we have our fight not against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers, against the spiritual wickedness in high places. That means, not that you are strong in body and have a well-developed muscle. That is very good. I like to see a young man that is also in the physical sense of the word strong. But it is not the main thing. Physical exercise is for that reason worth but little. It can have but a small place in our lives. It does not prepare you for the main battle. You cannot fight the devil with your powerful fist. But it means that you are strong in spirit. It signifies that the fear of God is in your hearts, that the love of God is poured forth in your souls, that your minds are enlightened by the grace of God, that you are well founded in the truth, in the principles of the Word of
God, that you understand the world in which you live and are well able to discern between the powers of darkness and the light in Christ, that you have put on the whole armor of God and are able to stand in the evil day.

Young women, you must adorn the truth! It is your calling, in the light of the Word of God, not to follow after the vain fashions of the world, to become transformed according to the manifestation and form of this world, but to be an example of true Christian modesty and beauty and virtue.

What do you need?

Not chiefly amusements, but edification. Instruction in the Word of God. Being well-founded in the truth, you will be able to fight the good fight unto the end that no one take your crown.

You need the Word of God.

By giving heed to your way according to that Word you will cleanse your way.

The times in which we live are serious, in many respects more serious than any former age. The world develops in its own direction. It opposes the light not with open persecution, with sword and fire, but it introduces itself to you in many of its forms as Christian. We have Christian plays and Christian movies, Christian ball teams and Christian athletics. There is a good deal of Christian devilry in our day which is deceiving.

All the more reason, why you must be strong.

Youth is above all the time for preparation. The thing you must prepare yourselves for is not to be able to win in a game, but to have the spiritual victory in the battle of faith.

Hence, instead of giving your chief attention to amusements and fun, I pray you, search the Scriptures!

Development in the truth of the Word of God must be the chief aim of your societies.

Study the Word!

Study it for Catechism. Study it in your societies. Study it at home. You need it more than ever.

And free yourselves from that insane amusement-notion that is in the air and keeps thousands under its spell.

Then, by the grace of God, you will be able to stand.

And to gain the victory.

The above article is taken from the March 1, 1928 issue of The Standard Bearer. We are indebted to a friend from Holland for the suggestion that we reprint it and wish to thank Rev. Hoeksema for his willingness to let us reprint this material. My only comment is that it is remarkable or rather striking that many of the truths found in that gem are so applicable to the conditions of this generation as well as they were some seventeen years ago. G.T.E.
Before our next issue is published, Thanksgiving day will have come and gone. And since this holiday will also be observed by services in our churches, it is perhaps well if we turn our thoughts for a few moments to this subject. We shall not recall for you its origin since that was very ably done in a feature article which was written for us in an issue which appeared in this publication approximately a year ago and which, I am sure, you have all enjoyed. Rather, we should like to treat the subject under the title which appears as a caption for this article. If you will bear with me for a few moments, we should like to call attention to a very common misconception and seek in our own way to define thanksgiving in its true meaning.

As we see it then, the prevalent error with which we deal when speaking of Thanksgiving, be it as a special day or as an everyday term, is that we are always going back to the ruts of being thankful by comparison. And especially will this be noticed if you observe the current expressions of this year. For events have transpired which so easily lend themselves to this misconception and if we employ the general terminology, we too shall be liable to the same error. Shall we look at just a few of these?

First and foremost is, of course, that during the course of the year, the war has come to an end. Immediately, then, we are thankful by comparison for we set peace and war over against each other and express gratitude because the pain, anguish, terror and death of this great conflagration has ceased. Sons and daughters are being returned to their native land and hearts of parents and loved ones are filled to overflowing with gratitude because of that fact. And we thank God. And that in itself is also proper for He maketh wars to cease. But what if such were not the case and that we were still busily engaged in the conflict? Would we then have to say that we would be thankful if only this terrible war would end? And what about those who will never again see their sons? Would they be able to express their gratitude? And how about our brethren who were on the “losing side”? Can they share with us in our Thanksgiving?
And again, we are thankful by comparison when we think of the misery and wretchedness and poverty of those in foreign lands many thousands of whom, without our aid, would die of starvation, be frozen to death or, who in despair, would take their lives by their own hand. And as we view our condition in comparison with their state, we are grateful that we may enjoy food, shelter and clothing and not only the necessities but also many of the luxuries of this life. But let us suppose that we were the ones who had been pillaged, whose lands had been devastated, whose crops and natural resources had been destroyed? Would we then say we could be thankful if only our material conditions were improved and our distresses relieved?

For purposes of illustration, it should not be necessary to cite more examples. I am sure that you must understand by now what our meaning is when we speak of "falling into the ruts of being thankful by comparison." And if that is all we understand by being thankful, it would not well if we as churches discontinue the practice of observing this day by means of special services! For the essence of such thankfulness is material and terrestrial though not necessarily sinful. It is still of this earth earthy. We are stooped with our noses to the ground and the clods of this earth are sweet to our nostrils! We have no need, of lifting our eyes to a higher horizon or rather, let me say, to the horizon and to express and stress in our gratitude that which only the redeemed can visualize. And there is no optometrist who can fit or prescribe spectacles for the eyes of those who cannot see these things. And those who are afflicted with a type of nearsightedness which permits them only to look down and observe the earth which lies a few feet beneath their eyes, they, I repeat, who are thus afflicted, will invariably find their thankfulness only by comparison. They will find their blessings in things and in so doing will do violence to that which is greater, or rather, to that which alone is great. For, remember this, that war and peace, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness are conditions of this life only and if we have seen nothing more we are terrestrial termites seeking life by masticating the things of this earth and will find, to our dismay, that they perish and we with them!

Let us then rather cast our eyes heavenward and our first cause for gratitude will be found in the redemption which has been wrought for us by our God through His only begotten Son. And then we find our gratitude primarily in our having been redeemed from sin. And behold! This gratitude may be expressed and shared not only by us but also by our brethren in foreign lands regardless of their material state! And all other reasons for gratitude fade into insignificance and will be evaluated in their proper proportion and relation to the things which are eternal.

Think not that we would despise a comfortable state. Think not that we
would rejoice in misery. Not at all! But let us not find our thanksgiving in the first instance, by comparison with those who are in a miserable state (and which thanksgiving would be at their expense), but rather let us look up and doing this we shall gain a true and reliable measure for then we shall see that we, too, by nature, are poor, naked, hungry and filled with war, bitterness, malice, greed and envy from which we can alone be delivered not by a declaration of peace, not by full employment, not by bountiful crops, not by an abundance of material resources but only by the grace of Almighty God, a washing by the blood of Christ, a being clothed with righteousness and a being filled and satisfied with the Bread of Life.

It Is Not Enough

Almost inevitably, at this time of the year, the thoughts of those who love the truth, as it is clearly set forth by the Protestant Reformed churches, turn toward the origin of this denomination and focus themselves sharply upon those issues which have caused us to be taken by the scruff of the neck and very literally to be ousted from the communion of those who in former times had not soiled their theological hands with the God-dishonoring doctrines which are so repugnant to us.

And, lest some would presume that we are so naive that we are not acquainted with the fact that the doctrine (?) of common grace is not new but was found also among theologians and pseudo-theologs long before 1924, let us hasten to assure you that we do not labor under any such delusion. Errors and untruths are not innovations. They are as old as the promise of the serpent—"Ye shall be as gods . . ." But, it was not until 1924 before anyone had the brazen audacity to elevate this theological brain-child to the rank of a dogma of the church. Many had heretofore toyed with this theory and had even somewhat "developed" it and to their own satisfaction, we suppose, had found the "solution" to many difficult problems.

And this child, which should have been dashed against a stone, found favor in the eyes of many. Sentimentalists and misguided zealots fondled and nurtured that child and "oh-ed" and ah-ed" about its comeliness. Such beautiful golden curls! Such innocent big blue eyes and such a winsome guileless smile! And yet, to employ the words of the apostle in his letter to the Hebrews, it is a bastard son! Better had it been for the church if it had been stillborn or that it had died in the womb of her who had conceived it. For it is the offspring of an illicit love between Jerusalem and Athens. And its mother has tenderly nourished it and attempted to defend its
name and position in the family of the church. And those who protested against living under one ecclesiastical roof with this dogmatic monstrosity have been ruthlessly cast out and called "one-sided, stubborn and stiffnecked".

And the onion tears of those who pitifully weep and express dismay that that has happened, yet, who do not cast this child out from them and drive it into the wilderness, avails but naught. For you love that child of adultery and clasp it to your breast and deliberately refuse to recognize it for what it is! You will rise to the defense of your ecclesiastical coition with the world and will extol the "virtues" of the unregenerate world and will give as your answer for the "certain regard for decency and order" this concoction which you have so highly elevated some twenty-one years ago!

And yet, it is not enough, yea rather, it is not even proper that we exist solely for the purpose of calling attention to the ecclesiastical and dogmatical errors and heresies of others. If that is our reason for existence we cannot and should not live! We profess to be the Church of Jesus Christ — not anti-other denomination-society.

The time must come, and indeed it may even be close at hand, that we spend less and less time and effort in the refutation of sundry errors. For, even as that which is false progresses, so too must we progress in the positive truth which is our precious heritage.

Think not that we would beg of any-one to altogether cease from mentioning the errors of others. Neither are we stirred to a certain maudlin pity when those who have deserved such attacks are mercilessly placed under the knife of rebuke. They have very truly brought it upon themselves and the defensive whine that "there is so little difference between us" will in no wise cause us to drop our guard and seek a compromise peace. But, we repeat, it is not enough.

There are many reasons why it is not enough to always and forever busy ourselves with the errors of those outside our circle. Let us look at just a few and we shall perhaps be able to somewhat visualize the magnitude of our task.

There is, of course, first of all the fact that positive truths serve to build us up. Surely no dietician would consider handing his patient a long list of foods which he should not eat and explain in detail the reason why these foods are harmful. Rather, the reverse is true and generally a few notes of caution suffice.

Secondly, we must bear in mind that simply because we are members of a certain denomination we are not therefore automatically and magically, as it were, immune and not susceptible to error. It is well to remember that we too are men of clay and even the best among us must daily strive against sin and the lie and are subject to vanity and find it oh so difficult to live and behave as a peculiar people in the midst of the world. Our flesh would not have
it thus and it also would find it so much easier to adopt a world and life view which is broader and more tolerant toward those whom we know as the world. We in our foolishness complain that our place is too small and that we must change our thinking and theology in order to adapt ourselves and make ourselves more acceptable to this present age. It is not at all difficult to understand that nominal Christianity has taken just exactly that step some to a lesser and others to a greater degree, of course. And let not our position ever make us proud or cause us to be filled with vain-glory. Let it rather cause us to be humbly grateful and prayerfully watch lest these same errors creep in and implant themselves even before we are aware of their existence.

And finally, although this by no means exhausts the subject, it is not enough because even as we need positive truths and even as we are ourselves liable to fall into error, we must never become so puffed up that we think that our own house is always so perfectly in order that we can fritter away our time by criticizing our neighbor's housekeeping. Now it is not my intention to "tell tales out of school" but a few hints should be sufficient for those who care enough for the church to be concerned about her welfare. It would perhaps be well for us to be just a bit more consistent about such things as labor organizations and remove also the dust which lurks in the corners and escapes detection. Let's have no "untouchables" in the Church of Jesus Christ!

For, even as children in the home are quick to notice inconsistencies in the actions of the parents, so too will the young people in the church be quick to notice our inconsistencies and as a result will lose respect or become indifferent and will find it not so difficult to take the next step and affiliate themselves with those of other beliefs or wink at some of the ways of the world. Let's remember that, please, for these are the future parents, pastors and office bearers of the church!

And now, to mention but one more item, it would be well to strive and seek by every possible means to attain and maintain a united front in regard to our own Christian schools. Upon another occasion we may write concerning this but even this one line should suffice to make us stop and think and realize that we are not beyond improvement in this respect.

Let this then suffice for the present but let it also be enough to make us remember that when we call the former years to remembrance that we maintain a balance which does not rob us of any of the truth of the precious heritage which God has entrusted to us and which we will retain only by constant vigilance.

G. T. E.

Last month, due to the abundance of convention material, it was necessary to omit some of the items which were submitted. We trust that any who noticed that their material was missing will be patient with us. We will place it as soon as possible.

—Ed.
My steadfast heart, O God,
Will sound Thy praise abroad.
With tuneful string:
The dawn shall hear my song,
Thy praise I will prolong,
And where Thy people throng
THANKSGIVING bring

Thanksgiving Day, that happy Christian festival, is again at hand. We look forward to it, young and old.

What a Thanksgiving this will be! We have such abundant reasons for gratitude, more than we had in several years. God certainly has blessed us. The field and the orchard yielded their increase in rich measure. Above all, that horrible war that oppressed and depressed us for so long is now a thing of the past and peace is with us once again. True, the skies are not yet perfectly clear: they never will be. Even before we can begin to forget the terrors of this last war we hear the distant rumblings of another. The nations of the world are even now speaking of and preparing for other and bloodier conflicts to come. Another storm is brewing, more terrible by far than the last. Nevertheless, for the present at least, there is peace on earth. For the first time since 1941 we shall celebrate a peaceful Thanksgiving. Think of it! Gradually our boys are coming home again. Yes, we shall go to church and thank our God as we have not been able to do in several years. After that we shall go home or visit relatives and friends and eat and drink and be happy. A wonderful Thanksgiving Day is in the offing.

A wonderful Thanksgiving, friends, in the spirit? Is it really true, that we are more blessed now than we were one year ago: when the nations were still being lashed by the scourge of war? Do we really have more to be thankful for now than we did then, or does this entire attitude betray a very carnal view of gratitude? Is it really true, that we shall thank God this year as we have not been able to do for a long time, or does this very language, this very discrimination between years and circumstances reveal that actually our gratitude is not genuine
at all, that we are grateful for mere carnal things and that temporal prosperity is for us the measure of gratitude? The latter is the truth, is it not? Fluctuation in gratitude, if such fluctuation is due to the objective content of our thanksgiving, is a poor symptom, for it shows, that our gratitude is not in the unchangeable God Himself but in the fluctuating things of the flesh.

Thanksgiving is Joy, real spiritual, enduring joy. It is joy in God, for it recognizes the Lord of heaven as the Giver of all perfect gifts. Thanksgiving is joy for God, for it apprehends that the Lord is not merely the Giver of all good, but He Himself is the essence of all good. In all things He gives Himself in all His love and blessedness, and it is that, after all, for which we thank. Therefore Thanksgiving is spiritual joy in and for all things, for all things bring God to us and represent the working of the grace of God toward our salvation. And so, thanksgiving is joy in God for all things, and joy in all things for God. That only is genuine gratitude that has the living Jehovah for its content as well as object.

Are you really grateful, covenant friends, in that true sense of the word? Are you ready thus to celebrate Thanksgiving Day?

The answer to that question will depend on the answer to another: Are you really content, whatever be your circumstances and way? Between thanksgiving and contentment there is the closest possible connection. Without the one the other is impossible; with contentment you must and do give thanks.

* * *

Contentment, that indispensable prerequisite for all thanksgiving! Christian contentment! What is it?

With a view to every inclination of the natural heart we may well ask: What is it not? There are so many counterfeits on the market. So easily our subtle hearts deceive us. Contentment is in no sense of the word indifference or mere fleshly submission. It is not the mere determination not to grumble, though we might feel that we have plenty to gripe about. It does not mean that we have become calloused through much tribulation and have learned long since to keep our troubles to ourselves. It is not the mere resolution to make the best of things, in the carnal hope that next year will be different. All these are only sinful imitations. Such people are not content at all. Things are not as they want them to be. In their hearts they curse God's dispensations with them. Neither is contentment mere and all satisfaction. There is a type of satisfaction that is nothing but carnal joy in temporal goods, that has its sole explanation
in the fact that the flesh has all it desires, that is nothing more than the contentment of the hog that is filled to capacity with corn. It should be obvious that such contentment brings us no closer to the real than the carnal indifference of a moment ago. Nor can such contentment lead to true thanksgiving. How perfectly odious to God it must be when carnal men come to Him, presuming worship, to tell Him how happy they are, — with God? No, of course not! With mere things. Genuine, Christian contentment is something altogether different. It is a free gift of the grace of God. Therefore the natural man does not and cannot know what it is. To him it is silly, impossible, for he does not love God, he minds only “the things of the flesh”, and his contentment depends solely and entirely on the natural prosperity which he enjoys. True contentment is a state of the heart, a heart regenerated by the almighty grace of God. In that reborn heart it is perfect peace with respect to all God’s ways, regardless which they be or where they lead. It is the grace of complete submission of the mind and will and heart to the living God. It is the state in which we always realize, that ours is the victory over all things, that God is always near, and that all things, adversity as well as prosperity, sickness as well as health, war as well as peace, work together for our good. It is restful joy in God. It does not rest on the fact that all things are as we want them to be, but in true contentment we want all things to be just as they are. It is sublime, enduring comfort in the assurance, that Jehovah is our Sun and Shield, the living and eternal source of all blessedness, and that He will give grace and glory, now and forever.

That peace, that spiritual rest, that assurance of victory in all things,—that is contentment.

That contentment we must know, personally and experientially.

Then we shall celebrate Thanksgiving as we should. Then our joy will be in the Lord Himself. Then we shall be thankful in and for all things. Then this Thanksgiving will be no different than any other, and no other will be better than this, for our joy will be in God Himself, the same yesterday and today and tomorrow; the same last year, this year, and forever.
The Apostolic Fathers

When the work God has prescribed for a certain saint is finished, God calls him home to glory. Thus the time soon comes when each one of the twelve Apostles is called home to glory. God has just so much work for each one to do, some more and some less, but each one a definite prescribed amount. We can expect then to find a moment in the early history of the New Testament Church when the last of the Apostles is called home and the Church is without their instruction and leadership.

There were, however, men whom God had brought in contact with the Apostles, either through personal contact or through their writings, and whom He had chosen to continue the work of the Apostles. As God has given disciples to Christ that they might spread abroad the truths they learned from Him, so He gave to the Apostles disciples that they might teach the church the truths they learned and might exhort the church to walk in that way. These men are generally called The Apostolic Fathers, having lived in part in the same period of Church History as the Apostles did. There were six such men whose names we know. They are Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Barnabas, Hermas and Papias.

We must not expect these men to be the equal of any one of the Apostles. The Apostles were special ambassadors of Christ, the New Testament prophets who received special revelations from the Spirit and were guided infallibly by Him in their writings. This cannot be said of any one of the Apostolic Fathers. They were sincere men and revealed an amazing insight into the truth that the Spirit revealed through the Apostles, but their writings reveal the fact that they are man’s work and not God’s.

From their writings we obtain an insight into the condition of the Church in the period shortly after the death of the Apostles. Taken all together, these writings show us that it was a period of doctrinal dullness; that is, a period wherein there was no positive development of the truth. In their writings these Apostolic Fathers merely repeated what the Apostles taught and made little attempt to explain the meaning and implications of these truths. Their writings can be characterized as a series of Confessions of faith and
exhortations to holy living. There are also manifestations of the fact that they did not always understand the teachings of the Apostles correctly. We shall speak of this presently.

The second thing in regard to the conditions in the church that is to be noted from their writings is the fact that it is a period when the struggle between the true and the false church is fairly strong. Heresies were beginning to lift up their proud head with greater boldness. In Paul's day they were by no means silent, but infallibly guided by the Spirit, He was able to lay them low with the truth. We are thinking for example of the heresy which Paul condemns in I Corinthians 15 namely: that there is no resurrection from the dead. Paul proves this contention to be contrary to God's word and therefore a lie. Now that the Apostles were all gone home to glory the various heresies begin to reassert themselves and make a stronger bid for recognition. This undoubtedly accounts for the fact that the writings of these Apostolic Fathers is so full of admonitions to walk holily and of confessions as to what is the truth.

Clement wrote an epistle to the Corinthians which makes the above facts very plain. You will recall that in I Corinthians 1 Paul condemns the division in that church. Some said that they were of Paul, some of Cephas and some of Christ. Paul rebuked them for this schism and sectarian spirit in the church. Very plain it is from the letter Clement wrote to the Corinthians that this division reasserted itself after Paul's death. For Clement in it again rebukes them for this sectarian spirit. Barnabas warned the church against falling back into Judaism. His epistle is comparable as to its purpose—not its content—to the Epistle to the Hebrews, wherein the author also warns the recently converted Jews against returning to their Judaism.

Comparing the works of Clement and Ignatius a teaching is found which reveals an existing difference of opinion on a principle so important that centuries later it brought forth a great split in the church. It had to do with the matter of offices in the church. Clement knew no ruler in the Church above the elder. According to him the elders ruled, and no one in the congregation or in any other congregation was above them. Ignatius maintained that the bishop was above the elder. For this he is considered to be the father of hierarchy. We have here the beginning of the form of church government exercised and maintained by the Roman Catholic Church. Ignatius would never subscribe to all the elaborate system wherein the Pope has the last word in all things and is considered to
be infallible in his decisions. Yet his ideas of church government lead to that system. We have always followed the view of Clement, for that is the teaching of Scripture.

One other interesting point about this period is that during this time we read definitely for the first time that the Church worshipped on the first day of the week rather than on the Jewish Sabbath of the last day of the week. The form of worship was twofold. In the morning worship there was the reading of Scripture, preaching of the Word, singing and prayer. The evening service consisted in a common evening meal followed by the celebration of the Lord’s Supper. This was done already in Paul’s day as you may conclude from I Corinthians 11:17-22. although here it was corrupted.

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**Book Review**

**JEANETTE WIERSMAN**

Grand Rapids, Michigan

**DO YOU READ?**

Not many of us are afflicted these days with “the terrible burden of having nothing to do.” On the contrary, our life is such a continual hustle and bustle that the general complaint of most everyone seems to be that time is pressing too hard; the burden of “must” leaves little opportunity for things we feel we would like to do.

The delight of throwing one’s self in a comfortable armchair at the end of a busy day and finding relaxation both according to body and mind, often appears to be one of those things for which time is lacking. Yet I believe that any person who truly loves to read, however beset his or her life may be with work and cares, will find a few minutes now and then to surrender himself to “another luxurious reverie.”

Reading offers dividends — rich and plentiful. It is one of the greatest sources of pleasure and one of the best means for a liberal education — providing we remember that no book or article is
worth anything that is not worth much. Live always in the best company when you read. Because the quiet and leisurely hours of our lives are comparatively few, we should waste none of them in reading — speaking negatively — valueless books.

To many of us nothing is more troublesome than the effort of concentration and for that reason constructive reading is too often neglected. It is easier to read light fiction, and although I believe this too has its place occasionally, we should not always read just as our inclinations lead us. Often the book or article which we read from a sense of duty, or because for some reason we must, yields unexpected delight, and we feel well rewarded, while the things we frequently crave leave us feeling inwardly deflated.

It is quite needless, I am sure, to remind ourselves that as Christians we should not absorb all the cheap trash that is flooding the market today. This literature leaves an indelible effect upon the imaginative mind, in spite of anything we might want to say to the contrary. It does not mean that we must of necessity limit our reading solely to our church papers and literature. It does however unquestionably mean that this material should head the list. Here too we can apply the admonition of Jesus when He said, “Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and it’s righteousness.” We surely should above all find pleasure in seeking and delving into the things of God’s Kingdom in its purest most beautiful manifestation.

From a purely natural point of view reading has great value. You can almost invariably spot a person who never reads. It is just as great an impossibility to be mentally developed and to remain fit without exercise as it is a sheer physical impossibility. The lack of either is equally apparent. Good reading will not only broaden the mind and give new ideas but it will also increase your vocabulary. Many people have good thoughts and ideas, but they cannot express them because of the poverty of their vocabulary. They have not words enough to clothe their ideas, and make them attractive.

To many people the struggle for self expression is a veritable battlefield of the mind, and although reading does not guarantee elimination of this dread affliction which grips so many of us, I do believe it will help to develop poise, ease and confidence. We acquire the comfortable feeling that we know whereof we speak. You sometimes meet intelligent people who are dull and uninteresting, while a person with a mediocre mind frequently has a very colorful personality, is clever and good company. I think you will usually
find the latter fairly well read.

Reading tends to broaden the mind in that it develops a deeper understanding of people and things. It quickens our perceptions, sharpens our discriminations, widens our scope of thought, and mellows the rawness of our own personal opinions. To be well read does not necessarily mean that you will always quote someone else in your conversation, although that too is convenient and essential. It does mean that you will weigh various viewpoints and conceptions in your own mind, and be better equipped to draw your own conclusions and to express your own opinions on a given subject. It also means that you speak intelligently on a vast number of themes, but particularly on those pertaining to your religious beliefs and your spiritual life.

We should not be satisfied with the all too frequent lame excuse: "I understand it myself, but can't explain." If you are master of your subject you will no longer need this false shield which in reality is but a poor defense. Make it a point not only to be convinced in your own mind, but be prepared to give others the benefit of your light. That should press more heavily as our God given duty. It means that we also must be acquainted with other people's arguments, and must then be able to refute them; primarily for our own benefit but also for those who would oppose us.

Remember the injunction of the apostle Paul in Col. 4:6: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

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In Memoriam

Pfc Bernard J. Miedema

Monday, October 15, the parents of Bernard J. Miedema received official notice of his death presumably on October 11, 1944, the day he was reported missing in action near Bologna, Italy. Bernard was a member of Fuller Church, Grand Rapids, Mich., and was in service two years.
To Our Boys In Service

Dear fellows:—

It requires but little imagination to surmise that the end of the war caused a momentous change in your daily life. This is true, of course, for those of you who already have returned to this country, some of whom have been discharged, others of whom are awaiting that event.

They are, however, comparatively few as yet. Most of you are still overseas. And it is, especially, those of you that have not returned, that are still in the armies of occupation, that I have in mind just now. I can easily imagine what a change must have been brought about in your every day life, and in your attitude toward life in the army, now the war has come to an end, and actual fighting has ceased. When the war was on, and you were being trained for warfare or were actually engaged in the bloody struggle, discipline was strict, now it has relaxed to a large extent. Then you were under a tension, now the tension is released. Then you were under heavy pressure of duties to perform, now the pressure is lifted. Then you were in constant danger, or in anticipation of danger, now you are living in comparative safety. Then your day was filled with work, now you probably have little to do, and you have a good deal of time on your hands. Then there seemed to be a definite purpose for your being in the armed forces of our country, now your stay in the army or navy may appear rather purposeless to you.

You long for the time that you may come home. And so do we.

In the meantime, if my surmise as to this change is correct, your present position is not without its peculiar dangers. A Dutch proverb has it that "ledigheid is des duivels oorkussen," which means, literally, that "leisure is the devil's ear-pillow," and by which the wise Dutchman meant to convey the truth that idleness is the devil's opportunity to tempt and to lead astray.

Are you making the best of this situation? Perhaps, there are many wholesome recreations and avocations with which you can be occupied when duty does not call. If so, you ought to make use of such opportunities. But, above all, you should not neglect reading your Bible, and as much wholesome Christian literature, as you can lay your hands on. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By giving heed there-to according to Thy word!" Do not forget to take time out for this very purpose, and for daily prayer and supplication. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand in the evil day, and you may be able to quench all the fiery darts of the devil.

Here at home, we are praying that our God may keep you in the midst of many temptations, and that soon you may return to us spiritually safe and sound!

H. Hoeksema
Dear Editor:

I have been in the Navy fourteen months now and have never written Beacon Lights so it is time for me to get a letter in. The Beacon Lights came quite regularly to me during the past season and I am looking forward to receiving them again during the following season. I enjoy them very much since our Young People's Society in Hull has followed the discussions as outlined in Beacon Lights every season and by receiving the Beacon Lights I can study the same things that they do back home.

My tour of duty in the Navy up until the latter part of August of this year was on the West Coast of the United States. At that time I was transferred to Commander Cruiser Division Fourteen. That did not last long however, as Commander Cruiser Division Fourteen broke up at the termination of the war. Then I was transferred again to Commander Destroyers, Pacific Fleet. They put me in the Flag Allowance soon after I arrived here and it looks like I will be here until I am discharged, which will not be until next year some time. Commander Destroyers, Pacific is located at Pearl Harbor. There are some Protestant Reformed Servicemen in the Hawaii area and I would like to meet them but haven't their addresses. I met a Poortenga and Postma at the Alameda Christian Reformed Service Home. It was nice to talk with someone of our own denomination.

I receive the Concordia and the Radio Sermons quite regularly and enjoy them a lot. Besides these spiritual missiles from our home churches, there is not very much for us fellows to read and study.

My address is: Charles Stienstra, Y3c, (Box 20), ComDesPac, Flag, c/o F.P.O. San Francisco, California.

Looking forward to receiving the Beacon Lights again this season. I am

Your friend in Christ

Charles Stienstra

Dear Friends:

Just a few lines to let you know that I will soon be discharged from the Army and you can discontinue sending me the Beacon Lights and the Standard Bearer. I also want to thank you for sending them to me all the time I was in the army. They certainly were very encouraging to me when I was so far away from home. They kept me more in contact with the news and views of our churches not to mention the inspiration of reading the articles. It is needless to say that good reading material is hard to get over there. I hope you keep on sending them to the men and women who still are in the services and I wish you God's blessings in your work.

Sincerely,

James Elzinga

Holland Church
"The cattle on a thousand hills and all the forests beasts are mine".

All the creatures of the field are Jehovah's. He hath created them and He sustains them. Interesting it is indeed, to study his marvelous handiwork and observe specific adaptations of the various specimens in the animal kingdom.

Of all the animals He created, the ruminants have been most useful to man. They have provided food, clothing, and transportation for all peoples thru-out the ages. In Leviticus 11:3 we read, "Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that shall ye eat." Now by ruminants are meant animals which chew their cud as the cow, sheep, goat, yak, llama, water buffalo, deer, and the camel. Most of the ruminants fulfill the Levitical requirements for clean animals — the yak and water buffalo being related to the cow, while the llama to the sheep. However, the camel (as is mentioned in the Bible) is an exception because its hoof is not divided and hence considered unclean.

Why are these animals called ruminants? All of them possess a peculiar enlargement at the posterior end of the esophagus (the part of the digestive tract connected to the stomach) which is called a rumen. Frequently, this is merely considered a storage chamber, but it is much more than that, for here the food is thoroughly wetted and mixed with saliva. In addition millions of microscopic animals, called protozoa and bacteria are constantly at work breaking down the otherwise indigestible cellulose (cell walls) and lignin (woody fibers).

Undoubtedly, most of you are familiar with the ordinary diet of these animals. As the grass, hay, corn, or other types of grain and fodder are much too coarse for immediate digestion, they must pass thru a process of predigestion in the rumen which is particularly adapted for this task. As the food passes down the digestive tract, it stimulates the wall of the lower esophagus to enlarge-coussing the slit-like opening of the rumen to expand; thus, allowing the food to enter. Here the food often remains from twelve to twenty-four hours, as it requires a considerable amount of time for these microscopic creatures to break down the cellulose and lignin.

The average cow secretes approximately eleven gallons of saliva daily, which is used in digesting the contents of the rumen. In the process of breaking down plant materials, saliva plays an extremely important role. While the bacteria are breaking down lignin and cellulose they produce acids which would soon kill themselves, if it were not for the neutralizing effect of the saliva which tends to maintain proper
growing conditions for the microbes. About 10% of the contents of the rumen consists of these beneficial bacteria and protozoa. E. G. Hastings has stated, "The transformation of food into microbes is so great that some have been led to say that the ruminant lives not on the material ingested but upon the mass of micro-organisms that have been formed from that material."

Perhaps, some of you readers have the impression that cud is recently swallowed food. However, it has undergone a lengthy process of predigestion. Small quantities are then regurgitated by a reverse process, so that it once again enters the mouth where it is further ground between the molar teeth, which is the process commonly termed "chewing the cud." Again it passes down the esophagus but this time without irritation because of the softness of the bolus (cud) and consequently; the rumen is not opened and the food passes directly into the stomach for further digestion. Thus, members of this group can eat large quantities very rapidly for very little time is taken for mastication as it can be temporarily stored in this pouch — the rumen.

However, the finely ground commercial foods or liquids fail to stimulate the esophageal wall; and thus the rumen opening remains closed and the food enters the stomach without special processing. It is now a well known fact that ruminates do not thrive on concentrates. Recent experiments performed at the University of California, Division of Animal Husbandry, show that finely ground alfalfa results in decrease or failure of cud chewing, bloating reduction in food consumption, and a deprived appetite which is manifested in wood chewing. The "control cattle" were fed regular alfalfa hay and showed none of these symptoms.

In mature animals the rumen when filled is estimated to make up one fifth of the total weight of the animal. The capacity of the rumen of a 1000 pound cow is approximately 25 gallons.

It might be of interest to note that although Leviticus 11:5, 6 mentions the hare and the coney (rock badger) as cud chewers (which from all appearances is true due to the peculiar movement of the jaws while chewing), nevertheless, they cannot be classified as true ruminants (cud-chewers) as they lack the rumen and have not the power of regurgitation.

The ruminants have two definite advantages, they can eat coarser foods because of their special process of predigestion, and they can go without food for a longer period of time.

What animal offers a more realistic picture of contentment than a ruminant lying in the shade of a tree leisurely "chewing his cud"?
Current Events

Mr. Jack Boelema

Grand Rapids, Mich.

The Secret - - -

Shall we keep it...? Shall we reveal it? Now that we, the U. S., Great Britain and Canada, have the secret of the Atomic Bomb, know of its great destructive power, know too that within a few years other countries will discover the formula, and having in mind the objective to keep the Atomic Bomb from being used in sudden destruction — what is best now to keep or to reveal the secret?

Our President favors secrecy. A leading atomic research scientist answered "I'm afraid so" to the question of the possibility of having one atomic raid wipe out 40 million of the U. S. population. Probably a good reason, therefore, to keep it a secret and also to keep ahead or maintain real leadership in the development and production of the product, and at the same time prepare for proper methods of defense against the bomb: then in this position the U. S. will have the leadership that will cause a nation to think twice before using it. Furthermore, this is surely not the time to reveal such a secret. It goes without saying that there is suspicion, strife, and bitterness among the nations today. To release atomic information would put us in danger at once. We at least should wait for a more propitious time, or wait for a so-called cooling off period.

President Truman advocates the policy of U. S. leadership. Evidently he figures there is safety thru strength and the manifestation thereof, for an all powerful U. S. would check an aggressor. In keeping with this policy the President has recently asked for compulsory military training of all youth which means there will be a display of militaristic strength and other preparedness including scientific leadership in modern warfare. This seems to be his formula to keep the world at peace. The old saying of might makes right is switched to might will stop the fight. Hence, the longer we keep the bomb secret, the better in forming the power we want to display and the more time we will have to prepare a counter defense for the weapon. Power and more
power is our answer to peace.

The question of giving the information to the United Nations, the "league of nations" formulated by the Frisco conference, and to let them control the use of the Bomb is brought up time and again. Would it be wise to give the control to the Big Five where one vote will check the rule of the majority? Would it be wise to give to an imperfect organization the power over life and death? Can we take the risk to rely on this imperfect and as yet untried organization? The answer of course is negative.

On the other hand, the revelation of the bomb would give the U. S. an international stamp. We entered this war not for territory or gain but to rid the world of tyrants; let us now manifest that we really are peace-loving, and the best way is to reveal the secret formula. That would create the proper good will and cooperative spirit among nations. If we kept it, other nations will gather or come to a conclusion that we will use it for our own purpose. This would create fear. Then too, it is true that nations will get the formula sooner or later, if they haven't it already. It has been said that it is only the manufacturing difficulty that remains in the production of the bombs. Thus, American leadership is only temporary. Hence, reveal it.

President Truman recently informed an inquirer that a race is already on in the development and production of the bomb. The revelation of the secret now would put an end to that race which everyone knows will bring disaster in the end. And remember, in this race it is not an all out industrial cooperation that is necessary, but rather it means a science room and a few scientists. Secret competition between nations is dangerous.

Leadership of the U. S. in the development and counter defense of the Atomic Bomb, the suspicion and rivalry among the nations today, a lack of a strong organization to control the power cooperatively, and the basic reason that there is safety in the manifestation of strength are the leading arguments for keeping the secret; a display of international good will and cooperation, the fact that our secrecy will only be temporary, plus the truth that it would prevent a secret competitive race in the development and production of the Bomb are the arguments raised for revealing the secret.

I. The power Satan receives: 1. We believe all power is of God, the Almighty. Power is ability to perform. 2. However, we also believe that God gives power to creatures. He gives power to plants, animals, man, and devils. All these creatures have different powers. Man and devils are responsible agents of the power they receive. God has given much power in the hands of man. Apparently man is becoming more powerful. He has had for some time power over powers of nature, plants, animals, steam, electricity; now he has power over atomic force. Man in the service of Satan will have power to do wonders. What powers has Satan? 3. Here it is given that he has power over: a) people, the Sabeans and Chaldeans, to incite them. b) Fire out of heaven. c) A great wind.

II. Satan's method of destruction: 1. He uses speed. He is swift. a) The Bible explains that in each instance destruction takes place suddenly in one day and in a moment. For example, the oxen and asses while they were ploughing. b) And each destruction follows immediately upon the other; Job hears of another while the messenger is telling him of one. 2. It is total destruction. Job's entire household and possessions.

3. It is planned from the least to the dearest. Notice how the order of destruction is reversed from the order of relating his possessions in vss. 2 and 3. 4. It is in imitation of God's destroying power. Compare the plagues of Egypt and the judgments of Revelation. Satan does so seeking to impress with his power. And he can do no differently for he is always unchangeably filled with instant lust to kill and destroy, and war against God.

III. His success: vss. 20-22. 1. He certainly accomplishes a most effective destruction which touches Job as no experience he ever had. Cf. 20a. 2. Yet his purpose is not reached. a) Job worships God. b) He is expressive in praise to God, not silent. c) He acknowledges God's sovereignty. d) And that that is for His Name's sake—"Blessed be the Name of the Lord". e) Verse 22 is the careful expression of God's judgment that Job was without sin, which we will postpone until later.
BEACON LIGHTS

Prologue (Continued)
Chapter II: 1-6

Satan's Second Appearance in Heaven

These verses again give us a glimpse into heaven which is very important for the understanding of this book of Job and also for the life of the child of God in this world.

1. The opening question: Vs. 2.

1. The thing that strikes us first of all is that this question of the Lord is a duplicate of the one He had put Satan before, as we read it in Chapter 1:8ff. (a) Why is such the case? Is it because of the form of literature into which it is cast? That it supplies the transition from one scene to the other for the readers? (b) It seems that here is an indication of the only approach possible for the Unchangeable God to Satan. God is not asking Satan what He thinks of His Work, as if He were on a level with Satan. His question allows Satan to speak, but also calls Satan to the perfect work of Jehovah Jehovah never can change His attitude or question to Satan. He cannot after the first attempt of Satan to disprove His work, in anxiety wonder now what Satan thinks of His servant Job. He unchangeably repeats His question, approaches Satan in the same manner ever, revealing to Satan His own Perfection, and that of His servant Job.

2. The answer of Satan is also after the pattern of the one we find in chapter 1. (See previous explanation) We may remark here too that because of Satan's unchangeably wicked nature he cannot answer otherwise than he does. His work always will be just the same going to and fro in the earth and walking up and down in it, until he shall have been cast in the pool of fire.

II. The Lord's defense of Job: Vs 3.

1. The Lord directs Satan's attention to His perfect work. His servant Job, not because Job in himself was better than others but because he was the best manifestation of God's marvelous grace before Satan.

2. "And still he holdeth fast his integrity" is the expression that calls for our attention in this connection. (a) Compare this with verse 22 of chapter 1. Are we to explain "In all this Job sinned not" as though there was no sin in Job? If so what about the confessions of the saints that their righteousness is but filthy rags? What about the testimony that "in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing"? (b) It must be evident that the expression "in all this Job sinned not" must be interpreted by the following, "nor charged God foolishly" and by the testimony of the Lord, "holdeth fast his integrity". When all things were taken from Job he did not rebel against God, but as the Lord says he held fast in his faith; he had faith in God's righteousness. At a believer. according to his faith, he did not sin.

3. "Although thou movest me against him, to destroy him without a cause". (a) Is this difficulty to be over... e by saying that the moving of God was only from the point of view of Satan, an anthropomorphism? Or did Satan really move God as a will outside of the will.
of God? (b) Very evidently the former is the explanation. Yet, we must not take away the reality of Satan's moving God to try Job. An anthropomorphism does not take away the reality. Very really we must understand that Satan moves God to try His people, but that the will of Satan is also in the ultimate will of God to reveal His glory. God willed that there should be Satan to move Him to try Job. If Satan did not move God in any sense of the word we deny this word of God and we deny the reality of Satan. (c) The expression "without a cause" must not be explained as if God tries his servant Job arbitrarily, without reason. God always has a purpose with all things. But Satan had no cause to try and to ask God to allow to try Job. Satan hates and kills without a cause.

III. Satan's reply: Vss. 4, 5.
1. He quotes a proverb, which often apparently answers but which really does not answer the point in question at all.
2. His charge is that he has not had sufficient trial.
3. This causes Jehovah to reveal more of the glory of grace.

VI
Prologue (Continued)
The Crucible
After Satan departed from the presence of the Lord he prepared the most extreme suffering for Job. Job was thrown into the crucible of physical, mental, and spiritual suffering.
I. His disease. Vs. 7.

1. The text explains that it was sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. It is explained as an extreme form of elephantiasis.

2. We must understand that it was the most extreme affliction that could be chosen to cause the most pain and suffering. (a) Job was most miserable as can be seen from what he does, verse 8. This shows how hopeless and helpless Job felt. (b) It was also an affliction that caused those who saw him to be most horrified. Compare the reaction of his wife and the three friends. Verses 9, 12, 12.

II. Aggravation of suffering: Vs. 9
A. Sometimes there are trials which in themselves would not be such great trials, but when added to someone's physical pain they become most grievous, even appear on the foreground. It seems that way with the suffering of Job. After his great physical distress there is added the trial by his wife and three friends, whose words become the greatest trial of all.

1. His wife: (a) Instead of being a comfort and help became a burden to him. (b) She speaks from her unbelief. Her advice is not out of faith. (Whether she had faith is not our problem here). Her question means to point to the impossibility of holding fast to God in faith. This can only arise from the flesh and unbelief. Furthermore, she gives rise to her bitterness by telling Job to curse God and die. She had also suffered upon the loss of the sons and she probably had cursed God herself, or she was seeking company of Job to
curse God though she had not yet come to that point.

3. Job's faith appears again. (a) He makes a marvelous confession of God's sovereignty to his wife. Verse 10. God gives both good and evil. It is only our business to receive what He gives, not questioning the wisdom and choice, for that belongs to God alone. (b) This is not, however, as beautiful as in the previous trial where he worshipped God. (1:20, 21) The content is the same truth, but previously Job entered into his confession with his whole being.

4. God's Word explains Job for us: "in all this did not Job sin with his lips". (a) How must this be explained, however, in comparison with the previous unqualified testimony about Job that he sinned not? What is the meaning of the qualification that he sinned not with his lips? Did Job sin in his thoughts and heart? If so, does God's law approve of such lip service? (b) This is an approval of the Word of God upon Job's confession. It therefore cannot be that he did not speak out of his regenerated heart according to faith. It cannot be that Job was praising God with his lips and not with his heart. That would have been most abominable. This, however, does not mean that there were not sinful thoughts in the old mind and nature of Job. The implication of this testimony definitely points to that. (c) That his lips here spoke according to his faith, to his heart, in which there is that small beginning of new obedience, and contrary to his many rebellious thoughts in his mind (members, if we take the terminology of Romans 7), is evidence of the power of God's grace in which sin has not dominion over us. His sinful tongue, that little member with much power, was controlled in the service of God. "In all this did not Job sin with his lips!"

B. Visit of the three friends: Vss. 11-13.

1. The names and the places from which they came are given us. This prevents any suggestion that they are fictitious. It also indicates their probable renown; from three different places, and friends of Job.

2. These friends were also believers in God, and gave as friends, communion of saints to Job.

3. This time, however, they fail miserably to comfort Job and are the aggravation of Satan, who cut off all help from Job. (a) They come to comfort by appointment, which shows lack of spontaneous sympathy. (b) Their thoughts were to admonish Job, as their speeches reveal, without a basis. (c) They aggravate his suffering by keeping silence for seven days and acting in their mourning as if there is no hope or help.

** VII **

"Job Opens His Mouth"

This is a very pertinent statement of the matter in Chapter III. It is different than to speak with the lips. It reminds us of what Jesus said, "Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man."

1. Job curses his existence. Vss. 1-10.
1. "After this" refers to the silence of the three friends which brings out what an oppressive silence and affliction it was. This silence became the occasion for God's bursting into cursing.

2. He curses the day in which he was born and the night in which he was conceived. (a) Usually we celebrate the day of birth. (b) Job rebels against them. (e) Verse 9 gives support to the previous fact that there was such a day of his on which the beginning of life was made.

3. The extent of his cursing. Vss. 4-10.
   (a) He uses the studied form of poetry with the strongest terms imaginable to hurl against the cause of his life as he sees it. (b) He desires that God may not regard it, that it may not be. (Even though it was past for Job, it was before as present) (c) All the darkness to blot it out is called forth to cover that moment of his coming into existence. Verse 5: Consider the enumeration: darkness, shadow of death, cloud, blackness of day. In the sixth verse the night must be covered by a still greater darkness, a darkness of night that is not connected with the hope of a day, not connected with months or years. Verse 7 seals it as night forever by itself. (d) This darkness reminds us of the darkness of hell and the impreca tions of men when they say, "go to hell!". (e) Verse 8 gives support to the previous thought. In the Hebrew there is this possible translation: "Let the cursers of the day perforate it with curses, those who are practiced in charming the serpent." With this translation we do not explain that Job lapsed into some Oriental superstition, but that he consigned the day and night to the demons of hell. The serpent is leviathan, the great serpent, comparable to the serpent and dragon of Revelations, the devil himself. (f) In verse 9 a final emphasis is given to the thought that all possible light be taken from the cause of his existence. He desires that it may suffer want of light, crave it but never receive it. That is hell, craving a drop of water, but forever thirsty.

4. Reason for his imprecation. vs. 10
   (a) It was the cause of his mother giving birth: and (b) The cause of all his sorrow.

II. His great sin.

1. To curse, to rebel against any creature of God is sin. God made the day and ordained all things that take place in it and all creatures that move in it. To wish anything out of existence is rebellion against God, who is the Potter and who alone has power to curse, and consign to hell.

2. This is really a curse against God. If it is against the day of God, is it not against God? Did not Job know that the day was not the cause of his coming into existence, but God Himself?

3. The interpretation is given that here Job did not curse God, but the day of his birth. So the explanation is made that Job did not fall utterly. Satan did not have the victory. His charge that Job would curse God was defeated.

4. I reject this interpretation. (a) Sin is always against God. Ps. 51:4 "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned. (b) Job fell so far down from the heights of
his beautiful confession, into hell. (c) Satan had been sifting and was apparently as far as we can see now having the victory. It was the same apparent victory that Satan had over Peter, and over Christ in the cross. (c) It is the same place that we must see ourselves. Our curses are given out every day over the circumstances of life that we find ourselves in. These are not just “white sins”, sins of God’s people that are half sins. They are sin, worthy of hell. (d) But, we ask, how then can we be saved? How did God prove Himself to Satan? (e) That is the mystery of salvation. With God all things are possible. Christ died for the ungodly! Herein is the beginning of the marvel of Job’s salvation. God’s grace and power over against Satan is so great. Out of the depths of hell we are saved.

* * * *

VIII

Job’s Musings About Death

In these reflections Job is coming out of the awful depth of cursing his life. He now is just asking questions and groping in the dark. In these wonderings he will finally be led to the light. Let us try to follow him, for it is the deep way that God leads His children. Vss. 11-26.

1. Death is appealing to him, when he asks the questions in Verses 11, 12.

1. Strangely he wishes that he died upon birth or shortly thereafter when he was just a small child. (a) This is deep, for he does not wish for death just before his affliction and after he had enjoyed such a “blessed life”. In this moment all of his life seems worthless and he wonders why he had not entered death immediately. (b) It seems to me that Job is struggling with the problem of life itself which to him is nothing but sorrow. In moments of real tragedy are we able to see reality. “It is better to go to the house of mourning; than to go to the house of feasting: for this is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart.”

2. Because he asks these questions after his cursing of his life, it seems to me he is softened; he puzzles about the deep problem of suffering, instead of cursing.


1. He appeals because it seems to be rest to him. Verse 13.

2. There in death there is not difference to cause pain or jealousy. Kings and princes, powerful and rich are there in the same place, without their power and riches.

3. There those who are prevented from entering life, hidden abortions, infants which have been murdered before birth, have a place.

4. The prison of death seems better than the prison of life wherein the prisoner hears the voice of the oppressor. Vs. 18.

5. All classes are there in death together without the painful relations that obtain between them now in the struggle of the survival of the fittest. The curse of God seems to be lifted in death.

III. How Job can speak thus:

1. Because superficially it is true. There is that element of truth in it,
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that death ends things as they are now in this time.

2. When one speaks this way, that death looks so good to him, then he is in the depth of suffering. The misery blinds him so that he cannot see beyond it. Besides according to the flesh who knows of what death brings?

3. It is the way we all shall speak when we are in such misery that death does not even come to end it. Vss. 21, 22.

4. Yet this is most tragic, most dark, because death is in itself the second death to this life, or more terrible than Job's suffering.

5. Out of what great darkness God leads Job and His children!

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We Must Have Our Own Amusement Center

A definite and highly dramatic closing sentence for a fine article. As the mother of five small children already seeking outside entertainment I add my plea for a place to pass leisure hours.

Lois seems to have a good perspective on the whole situation. She realizes the need for control by proper authorities. I am still puzzled by the article that followed. Surely the idea of a youth center is not to build highly competitive teams in major sports. A youth center to be of real value must produce the maximum pleasure for the masses. Entertainment for all types of children and young adults, not games for a few so that the rest remain spectators. And please do not forget the younger children. Last but far from least have some of the entertainment free.

Why not combine the youth center with a high school. The gymnasium could serve a double purpose. A cafeteria could accommodate the students at lunch time and serve snacks in the evening. The piano would be there for informal group singing after school hours. A band could be organized.

Children between the ages of ten and fourteen need group activity also. Why not organize groups interested in handicraft, hiking, and nature study.

Oh yes there are many details to be worked out but surely it is a worthy cause and must be carefully handled.

A Raindrop