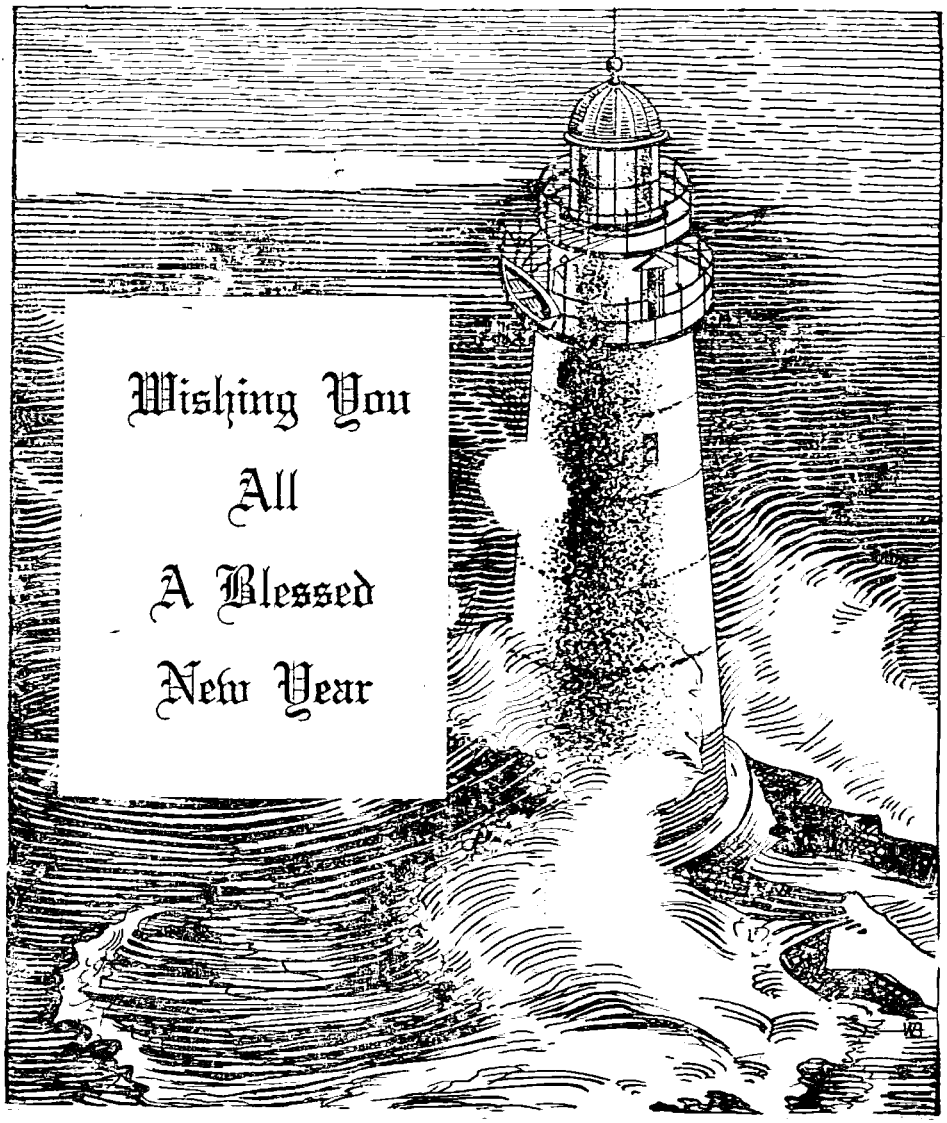
BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VI JANUARY — 1946 NUMBER 4



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Fruitful Cooperation

The way this generation
Behaves, is just a shame!
For they respect no laws of men—
Dishonor father's name.
Thus spake the wise old elders
Who sought to place the blame.

But have you ever reckoned
That we of you are fruit?
That sometimes, for example,
You have done things not so cute?
And the plant can't be much better
Than the old and gnarled root!

We're good enough to fight the wars
Which age has perpetrated;
And driven cruel foes far back
At which you are elated;
And keep on fighting to the end
'Til peace is consumated!

So temper your reproach, my friend,
Before condemning youth,
We know that we're not perfect,
And oft do things uncouth;
But won't you lend a helping hand
And lead in paths of truth?

Mix the wisdom of the elders
With the fervor of the young;
You'll have a combination
Whose effect will be far-flung;
And by God's grace forever
Vict'ry's song will then be sung.

—Selected.

THE NEXT ISSUE OF BEACON LIGHTS WILL BE AN ALL-IOWA ISSUE!

Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VI JANUARY — 1946 NUMBER 4

Only A Glimpse

By REV. J. BLANKESPOOR — Doon, Iowa

It was 1941. War had been declared on Japan, and Germany declared war on us. The entire nation was war-minded. This could be seen in the factory, heard over the radio and seen in the daily. But the thing that drew our special attention was the draft. Many a parent, wife and sweetheart had grave concern.

It was no different in Robert's home. Will he too be called ? This was the thought father and mother had with them every day. Within a few weeks Bob had to appear for his "physical". These were the first days of anxiety. They soon learned that their eighteen year old boy was accepted. On the day of departure there was no joy in the home. Prayers were offered, to be sure. With tear stained eyes they got a last glimpse of him as the train left the station. Will they ever see him again? Their own flesh and blood is torn from their side. Is this the way of God's promises that He will not withhold one good thing from those that walk uprightly? They hear a voice from within, the voice of God's Word: "All things work together for good to them that love God, called according to His purpose." This they try to understand, but they cannot. How can this apparently cruel way be for their mutual welfare? This is beyond their comprehension, of course. At times they can rest assured and have peace in God's ways. And then again they are filled with anxious care. How can it be for the good of their boy to be taken out of that indispensable home with its important instruction, sent into the world while still so young? Such has been the experience of many a parent, wife and sweetheart.

Bob is in the infantry, receiving his basic training. How he looks forward to the first furlough! However, the need is urgent and he is shipped directly overseas. The parents' apprehension increases. Again they hear the promise of the All-Wise Father: "All things work together for good. . . ." Sometimes it gives them wonderful

peace of mind and heart. At other times the very thought of their young son increases the perplexity of their minds. Some day they will understand, but now His ways are indeed through the deep. Their prayers are fervent. O Lord, if possible. . . . How difficult it is to really commit him to the Lord, to pray for His will and not ours. In their letters they continually write about the spiritual things, about the ever sure providence of God and His loving care for His people, about salvation through Christ and the assurance given those that serve Him. Bob is on the battlefront in the foxholes. How he longs for those letters from home and friends! What a comfort he derives from the church literature. He's living by the minute, not knowing what the next may bring. And while the bullets whiz overhead he reads: "Let not your hearts be troubled." God is his only comfort, his sun and shield. But. . . . what's it all for? Why? Can this experience do him any good? Would it not be much better for him to be under the parental roof, attend catechism, society and the services on Sunday? So days go by, months pass on. There is anxiety and fear and sleep often is far from father's and mother's eyes while their thoughts are with their son.

The war is over. Bob returns home, a war veteran. Now he's twenty-two years old. How things have changed. He, too, has changed as well as his parents, brothers and sisters, not only from the natural but also the spiritual viewpoint. By God's grace and Spirit the war has affected them. It has brought father and mother much closer to God. It made them more heavenly minded. They learned to realize that God could do with their son as He pleased. Never before were their prayers so frequent and fervent. At no time in all their previous years did they experience the blessed comfort of the assurance that our God is in the heavens, and that He reigns and does all things from day to day. They have learned by experience the blessedness of trusting in God, though His ways are unsearchable. Besides, all this has caused them to be much more intimate with their son concerning those spiritual things. When he was at home they were mentioned occasionally, but now their letters were permeated with them. The same is true of Bob. Before the war his parents were almost strangers to him regarding many of these things. Never did he converse with them about these things as he did in his letters. What a blessed effect of the war! The bonds of Christian relationship between parents and son have become more intimate. May they continue in these things and may their homes be the place of spiritual conversa-

tions in an increasing measure. The danger of a relapse into spiritual lethargy regarding these things is great.

But the war has also made Bob a man, spiritually. He's mature, perhaps more so than many ten or fifteen years older than he who have never experienced the realities of war. He has seen the world (in the evil sense) with all its corruption and immorality. He can speak of the depravity and unrighteousness of man. He has experienced the antithesis. For him God's Word in all these things was a savor of life unto life; for many others it was a savor unto death. O, it is true that Bob has missed some precious years of home and catechetical instruction and the preaching of God's Word (years which he can never regain) but from many other viewpoints he has learned much, much more than those who stayed at home. At twenty-two he knows the realities of life. At twenty-two he most probably is a conservative man. His many and far-reaching experiences have caused his life's view to be deepened considerably. Never before has he had such an high estimation for the church literature. This has meant so much to him, and to a certain extent will continue to do so. He has experienced life. He has seen death. He knows the comfort of a Providential God Who even determines the number of hairs that fall from our heads. It is the returning veteran who in many respects knows the blessedness of our Protestant Reformed truth. In the future years, when apostacy and iniquity will be on the increase, he will be a pillar in the church of Jesus Christ. The fruits of his experiences will last for years, yea, unto eternity.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." At the time he didn't understand; neither did his parents. Now they see a little of it. The Lord has given them a glimpse of it, only a glimpse. Only a glimpse of the maze of the work of the Divine, All-Wise, Artificer. Some day we will see it all. If a mere glimpse causes us to see these spiritual effects upon those involved, especially the veteran, how great will the amazement be when we in that day will see the whole! It will be marvelous, a most wonderful manifestation of His wisdom and love. During the war our hearts were often filled with anxious care. Our hearts were troubled, were they not? We were troubled and filled with concern when God was working this blessed work to effect these spiritual fruits. And how often we desired different ways! How foolish!

But why do you suppose the Lord gives us this glimpse? That we

(Continued on page 22)

Is This Trip Necessary?

MR. GEO. TEN ELSHOF — Grand Rapids, Michigan

So you thought you'd heard the last of this expression? Or that this article is a left-over which we neglected to scrap when the peace treaty was signed? Such, however, is not the case and with your kind permission, I'd like to give it one more fling before relegating it to the war-time souvenirs.

We stand on the threshold of a new year. We know it, simply because the calendar tells us so. It is not evident, let us say, from nature. For nature round about us lies dormant and shall not reveal a new life or renewed life for some months to come. And from that point of view, it would seem to be more proper if the new year would fall in the spring when nature is renewed, days are brighter, song birds return and the seed time of the husbandman is at hand. But so it is not and one cannot find an inspiration to write about a new year by looking at things round about him.

But it is not at all impossible to liken a new year to a journey. And such is our intention at this time. Hence we raise the qquestion which forms the heading of this article.

"For here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come." Shall we confess that with the author of the epistle to the Hebrews? And shall we, with him, also read the roll of those heroes of faith and conclude, "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them and embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth"? Shall we pray with the psalmist and say, "Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee and a sojourner as all my fathers were"? Shall we stand before Pharaoh as did Jacob of old and in our Egypt say, "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of my fathers in the land of their pilgrimage"?

Could not Joseph, when carried to Egypt as a slave, have asked, "Is this trip necessary?" Could not old Jacob have asked the same thing when Joseph's brethren insisted that Benjamin must accompany them to Egypt?

And did not the Israelites murmur at Moses and, when enduring the privations of the wilderness, in essence ask, "Is this trip necessary?" Incidents without number could be recalled. David flees from Saul and later from Absalom. Elijah must prophesy to Ahab and take a trip into seclusion for a time. And, finally, comes the realization of the types and Christ Himself was born and also before Him there was placed a journey. And praise be to God that He did not murmur and rebel and refuse to make that trip even though it was one which was most difficult to traverse.

And even so, you and I are called upon to make a journey. Every moment, every day, every year, there is before us a trip to make, a journey in our sojourn and oftimes we rebel against that way and ask, "Is this trip necessary?" For you see, that trip does not always take us over a widely paved and level highway and sometimes it seems that those narrow rugged trails must surely lead to nowhere. Sometimes we descend so far into the valley that even the sun is hidden from view and it is so lonely because there are relatively few travelers on that trail. Sometimes, on those long dreary nights, our batteries become weak, our lights dim and fog obscures our vision. And then we are more inclined than ever to murmur and ask, "Is this trip necessary?" Oh, if only we could follow that other highway with its many accomodations, its luxurious resting places for relaxation and amusement. But we? We must push on for we are conscious, and we alone, of the paradox that that broad way instead of leading to a principal city, leads to hell! Oh, if only we could linger a while and as errant school-children play along the way home! But no, we must press on, for our trip is a very necessary one. We have a high, yes, the highest priority which was reserved for us by Him Who made that trip before us. And we are called to follow in His footsteps!

And if only that way were an entirely separate one it would not be quite so difficult. If it were only one which was literally separate from the one travelled by the world. But such it is not, but rather, it is a road in a road and we as pilgrims find ourselves surrounded by those who are traveling that broad way to destruction. And there is no deliverance except by faith. We cannot separate ourselves from them in this life but find ourselves, as it were, shoulder to shoulder with

them. We find ourselves watching them as they pause for the refreshments along the way while we, according to our old nature, must travel with parched throats and eyes which become weary from gazing at the far-distant horizon. Sometimes the sign-posts pointing to Jerusalem are obscured and we begin to wonder if, perhaps, we should not turn left instead of right. And those fellow-travellers scoff at our apparent foolishness and by divers means would entice us to "play along the way". And how they will watch you! How eager they are to see you stumble and fall and ask them for assistance. And if they cannot cause you to enter their halls they will smirk if they can at least entice you to set up a reasonably exact facsimile of their amusement places. And oh, for grace to endure the cruel epithets which are hurled at those who refuse to be enticed. But, my friends, be comforted when you are called narrow-minded, old-fashioned and unenlightened. For know assuredly that it is and always has been the cruel connotation of those who are on the broad way or at best the old nature of those even on that narrow way. And shall we stoop to their level and when they revile shall we revile again? Nay, but rather pray for them for they are in need of your assisting hand. Those on that narrow way have at least partially succumbed to the call of their fellow travellers. They are "playing along the way" instead of hastening home to Father. Above all, be not proud or haughty for you and I, too, have often "played on the way" and as a result have fallen grievously.

But is our way always through the valley and do we never catch a glimpse of the radiant sun? No, sometimes we climb to a hilltop on that trail. By faith we always know that we are on the right way and God graciously gives us songs in the night. And that hilltop, that pinnacle of faith, allows us to glimpse, on the distant horizon, the walls of that city four-square. And if only we could remain on that hilltop? No, no, for we must travel on for we seek that city to enter in at its gates and we are anxious to travel and not satisfied with seeing it in the distance.

And how far away is that city? How many miles? How many days? How many years? As young people you have thought that it is a long journey which lies ahead of you? We know not. It may even be on the morrow or on this night that you come to the journey's end. And have you sometimes murmured and asked, "Is this trip necessary?" Or have you, perhaps, also ascended those hilltops and seen that city to which we are travelling? If we have, we will no longer complain and ask "Is this trip necessary?"

Some Striking Remarks

Show us your books!

We want 30%!

Two of the outstanding demands in the current General Motors strike.

Thousands idle. Both sides determined not to budge an inch. No immediate prospect of settlement.

Are the demands of the union unreasonable? Are the newspapers biased? Whose side do they appear to take?

Let's take a look. What do we find?

Doesn't it look, to say the least, a bit suspicious that G. M. refuses to open their books even to a third party? Do you know that even the stockholders are not granted that privilege? Only the selected few. Originally such was not the case. Is that their *right?* Can we simply excuse it by saying to all and sundry who make this request: "It's none of your business, snooper!" Is a large corporation such as G. M. responsible to no one? Can it be said that what they do is absolutely no one else's business even when by with-holding to labor (without which they could not have made their profits in the first place) what they require they invoke hardship on thousands of families not only but also with-hold from the nation automobiles and trucks that are sorely needed for replacement of war-weary and worn vehicles. Is that no one's business? Rather suspicious is it not? Especially in view of the fact that the president of G. M. is the second highest income man in the U. S. with an income well over the $400,000 mark.

You will perhaps have noticed, too, that your newspaper cartoons and articles call this 30% an invitation to inflation. But is that quite correct? Has not the union said, in effect, that they want this 30% without having the cost of the finished product raised? Have they not agreed to *accept less if the books show that it is impossible to do so?* But this fact is barely mentioned.

We do not intend to leave the impression that we are advocates of unionism or strikes or picketing. But, it is only fair when discussing these things that we also bear the above mentioned facts in mind lest we become biased and simply make a blanket condemnation before we have considered all the factors involved.

And when it's all settled, what do we find? Whatever gains have been made have been purely materialistic for, their god is their belly and they mind earthly things.

Let us stand fast in our calling and not allow ourselves to be influenced by the carnality which is so evident on both sides.

Trusting In The Lord

By REV. R. VELDMAN — Grand Rapids, Mich.

"Trust. . . . in the Lord. . . . with all thine heart."

What a beautiful grace! How little we practice it in our daily lives! How much we need it also with a view to the year that lies ahead!

Our viewpoint, since our previous visit together, has changed considerably. December spoke of the end, the end of all present things. Then we were given to solemn reflection on the way that lay behind. What a year it was with its joys and sorrows, its births and deaths, its mirth and heartaches, its laughter and tears. It began with the greatest of all wars still raging furiously; it ended on a note of peace and reconversion. Also, what a sins there were to stain each passing moment. Yes, 1945, now only a memory, gave much food for earnest retrospection. January on the other hand, speaks of the beginning, and though reality has not changed at all, our viewpoint is different. We are standing on the threshold of a new year with all it has in store for us, and as we do, we are not given to reminiscence as much as to prayerful consideration of the unchartered road that lies ahead. Where are we going? How shall we embark on this new journey? What must we do?

Christian friends, who can advise us better than our Heavenly Father Himself, Who knows all things; and where does He give wiser counsel than by mouth of the wisest of them all: "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding." We need some one on whom we may lean, however rugged the road may be; some one who knows every inch of the way and is strong infallibly to direct all our paths.

The year 1946 is dark for us in more than one respect. Dark it is in the sense that it is so deeply mysterious, completely secret. We know nothing of what lies ahead. Before our eyes there hangs a veil so thick, so impenetrable, that even our very next step must be taken in complete darkness. Between life and death there is not infrequently but a single moment. Countless

questions, therefore, may arise in our hearts with respect to ourselves and our loved ones, our parents and children, our church and nation and the world in general. To all of them there is only one answer: We don't know.

The year 1946 is dark in still another sense. True, in detail we cannot know what lies ahead. Yet, it is not so that we know nothing at all. From both Scripture and experience we learn that the future is ominous and for the flesh it promises little that is good. "The days of our years," says the mediator of the Old Testament Dispensation, "are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." There is your answer. "Labor and sorrow", pain and tears, suffering and death, all these and more. Are we not living in a world that has forsaken the living God, and have we not a God Who must maintain Himself? And when all these things come upon us, what is there we can do to turn them away? Therefore our need of one in whom we can place all our confidence and who is mighty to control all things.

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart."

What does this mean? What does one do who heeds this admonition?

It means, on the one hand, that we do not lean on our own understandings. How prone we sinful, obstinate, haughty creatures are to do this. Are we not strong and rich? Come what may, we shall place our reliance on the arm of flesh, on horses and chariots. Our own resources, ingenuity, wealth, position will see us through. It always has and it will in the future. How evil for the creature thus to exalt himself above the Lord of all! And how utterly foolish! We shall lift ourselves by our bootstraps out of the mire wherein we are sinking away! As the speck of dust that would maintain itself over-against the raging hurricane that is carrying it along, so we would maintain ourselves, we, creatures of time, whose breath is in our nostrils. How can such proud self-reliance lead to anything but everlasting despair and disillusionment?

To trust in the Lord means, that we cast ourselves upon Him with all we are and possess, that we lean entirely on Him. It implies, that we look away from all that is of the creature, that we place all our hope in Him alone, that we commit our entire way to Him, that we let God do all our worrying for us, that we live by the day and let the Almighty One take care of tomorrow. To trust in the Lord means, that we know and acknowledge Him, not in some, but in all

our ways, and that we say with all our hearts:

"My soul in silence waits for God
My Saviour He has proved;
He only is my rock and tower:
I never shall be moved.
My honor is secure with God,
My Saviour He is known;
My refuge and my rock of strength,
Are found in God alone."

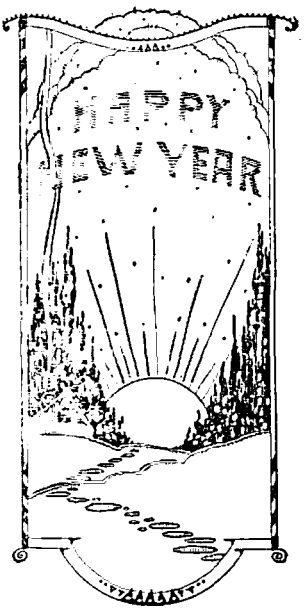
Trust in *the Lord*, Whose is all dominion over all things, Who has determined all things from before the foundations of the world, in Whose hands are the deep places of the earth, Who rules supreme over all that was and is and ever shall be, Whose is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever, and Who alone can say: "My counsel shall stand and I will do all my good pleasure."

Shall we do this, friends in God? Without reservation?

Then we shall have nothing to fear, for "Jehovah is our Light and our Salvation". Then we shall never be confounded. For "He will direct our paths," make them straight. His is the end and destination, His are also the ways and the means, and always the latter are perfectly adapted to the former. We may not be able to understand all these ways: often they may seem foolish and unnecessary. However, by faith we apprehend what eye cannot see, that God never once departs from that way that leads to our eternal salvation.

Trust, then, in the Lord with all your hearts, and yours, Christian pilgrim, is the blessed assurance: "When thou passeth through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

"Thy protector is the Lord,
Shade for thee He will afford;
Neither sun nor moon shall smite
God shall guard by day or night.
He will ever keep thy soul,
What would harm He would control;
In the home and by thee way
He will keep thee day by day."



EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

The Apostolic Fathers (3)

By REV. J. A. HEYS — Grand Rapids, Mich.

There is one more thing in regard to the Apostolic Fathers that we would have you consider with us. It is the matter of the persecution which the early church endured and which was therefore not at all strange to the Apostolic Fathers. For this purpose we have singled out the martyrdom of Polycarp for our present consideration.

It can be inferred already from what we wrote last month about Ignatius that this period was one of persecution. Ignatius also lost his life through this persecution, being fed to wild beasts for the entertainment of the ungodly. That it was such a period of persecution need not surprise us at all. Jesus Himself declared in John 15:20. "The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you: if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." We can see this carried out in literal, historical fulfillment. Christ they crucified, and it did not take the ungodly very long before they detected the life of Christ in the lives of His Apostles. Soon enough they say again, "Away with Him". To achieve their end and attempt to stop the reappearance of Christ through the proclamation of the truth concerning Him, they killed His Apostles. Soon enough they also persecuted those who were His disciples in a broader sense. Was it not in Thessalonica that they layed hold on one Jason by name who had given Paul lodging? Surely then when these Apostolic Fathers, who were no ordinary disciples but rather leaders in the church, began to preach Christ, we can expect that they too would be subjected to persecution.

This persecution came from two quarters both of which were godless, but each in its own way. Even as with Christ and the Apostles, they were opposed by the false church, the ungodly Jews, and by the world, the Gentiles. The Apostles suffered especially at the hands of their own nation, yet not exclusively. In Ephesus Paul was attacked not by the Jews who professed to believe in Jehovah but by the worshippers of Diana the goddess of the Ephesians. The Apostolic Fathers were opposed by both of these factions but especially by the Gentiles.

Polycarp was put to death by these Gentiles who opposed him

because he preached Christ. At that time the world was filled with superstition and the worship of false gods, idols and images. Christianity was growing rapidly, and these false gods were being discounted and branded by the preaching of the church as being nothing but the work of man's hands and of having no power whatsoever. Those who preached this truth incurred the wrath of the worshippers of these gods. So it was with Polycarp. The Christians were blamed for every calamity that came the way of the nation. It was explained that the gods were displeased because these Christians denied their power and divinity. Especially then were the leaders who preached Christ singled out to be tormented and killed to satisfy these gods. And so Polycarp is killed.

Let me give you a few facts about his marytr's death. He was ninety years old when it took place. Hearing the people shouting for his death, he first intended to wait quietly in the city to be captured. Persuaded by the church he took refuge instead in a neighboring villa. He was betrayed by so-called friends and fled to another villa. A servant who was left behind was tortured until he revealed the new hiding place. When the soldiers came to capture him, Polycarp gave himself up. Having been hiding on the top story of a high building, he came down to meet those coming up after him. He asked these captors to indulge with him for one hour of prayer. The prayer lasted two hours. Taken before the ruler he was asked to denounce Christianity and confess the emperor to be lord. He refused. Then he was asked to repent and show his penitence by joining in with the shout of the people, "Away with the godless". The inference was that the Christians were godless, having nothing to do with these heathen gods. Instead of doing as he was asked Polycarp pointed his finger *at these unbelievers* and lifting his eyes to heaven cried out, "Away with the godless". Even here he dared to condemn those who had condemned him to death. Now the proconsul urged him to "Swear, curse Christ" with the promise that then he would be released. To this Polycarp gave answer in those memorable words, "Sixty and eight years have I served Him, and He has done me nothing but good; and how could I curse my God and Saviour!" Still prodded by the proconsul, he finally declared, "If you would know what I am, I tell you frankly that I am a Christian."

Needless to say, he was put to death. They burned him at the stake. His prayer before the fire was lighted was this, "Lord, Almighty God, Father of Thy beloved

(Cont. on page 30)

To Our Boys In Service

Grand Rapids, Dec. 1945

Dear Fellows:—

At the time of this writing winter is tightening its grip on us here in Michigan. About the Thanksgiving holiday, he paid us a rather blasty visit, and gave us a foretaste of what he may have in store for us this season, but he seemed to repent, and left us to enjoy a few rather mild and pleasantly sunny days. This time he made his entrance more quietly, but he is more serious about it, and is settling down as if to make himself at home for some time. The temperature is tsruggling in vain to rise above the freezing point, already a blanket of snow is covering the roofs, the streets, the lawns, and the fields; and still the snow is falling in myriads of flakes, playfully whirling and twirling, chasing one another, as if playing tag; moving hither and thither, downward and upward again, reluctant to defile the pure white of their garments through contact with the earth.

And soon, within a matter of days, it is Christmas, when all the world, at least the nominally Christian world, as far as the Christ-child tradition, even its most diluted forms, extends, will sing of peace on earth and good-will to men.

Yet, there is neither good-will nor peace in the world. O, indeed, in the year that will have become history by the time this letter reaches you, the most dreadful war of all times came to an end; peace terms were dictated by those that proved to be the more powerful in war, and were signed by the vanguished because they could no longer continue the war with any hope of victory. But there is no peace among the nations, nor, within the nations, between the various social groups. Strife and unrest, malice and envy, hatred and war, one finds everywhere.

Peace there is only in the hearts of those to whom the Christ-child is more than a sweet dream or beautiful symbol; who do not stop at the manger, but who, turning from Bethlehem to Calvary, see in Him God reconciling the world unto Himself; and who, advancing from the cross to the empty tomb of Joseph, believe that He is raised for our justification, and know Him as the life and the resurrection.

He is our peace!

In and through Him, by faith, we have peace with God.

And by the power of this peace with God in our hearts, we have peace also with one another, and with all things! It is the peace that passeth all understanding.

May that peace be yours, wherever you are, and whatever may be your way!

And all the happiness that is rooted in this true peace, and that flows from it as its fountain, I sincerely and most heartily wish and pray to be yours in the New Year.

As ever your friend,

Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Junior Journal . . .

PRAYER

by Thea Bylsma, 14 years old
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Many questions come to our minds when we think on the subject of prayer. Such things as: why is prayer necessary for the Christian? For what may we pray? To whom do we pray? And what is the proper attitude of prayer?

First then, prayer is necessary for the Christian because it is the chief part of thankfulness which God requires of us and also, because God will give His grace and Holy Spirit to those only, who with sincere desires continually ask them of Him and are thankful for them. We may pray for all things necessary for soul and body which Christ our Lord has commanded us and promised us in His Word. We pray from the heart to the one true God only, Who hath manifested Himself in His Word for all Things He hath commanded us to ask of Him. The proper attitude in prayer is that we rightly and thoroughly know our need and misery, so that we may deeply humble ourselves in the presence of His divine majesty. Our purpose to pray should be chiefly to glorify our Father which is in heaven. Not in our works, not in our sacrifices and offerings, but in our speech, in the word of our mouth, particularly in our prayers, it is that God is glorified the most. Prayer is an expression which lives in the believer's heart by grace. So often we pray for earthly things because we are so carnal. It is necessary, therefore, that we always compare our prayers with that most perfect prayer which the Lord taught us to pray. Let us all strive to pray without ceasing.

* * * * *

THE ESTHER SOCIETY

by Esther Sikkema, Secretary
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Every Tuesday evening a group of twenty eight enthusiastic girls, from fourteen through sixteen years of age, meet in the Fuller Ave. Church basement for an hour and a half of Christian fellowship.

At present we are studying the women of the Old Testament under the capable leadership of Mrs. N. Newhof, our president. Although our new vice-president, Mrs. H. Visser, has been with us only a short time, we also enjoy her presence.

On November 13 our society enjoyed meeting with the Talitha and Young Men's Societies in a combined meeting. An interesting discussion was given on the topic: "What we as Protestant Reformed Youth should read".

The members of the Esther Society wish to thank the Beacon Lights staff for its interest in our society and for the privilege of writing about ourselves to the readers of Beacon Lights.

* * * * *

Dear Juniors:—

Although we know that you enjoy reading the rest of the material in Beacon Lights too, we are very happy to devote a special page entirely to you, our young young readers.

We are proud of our Fuller Church Esther Society! You can see from the picture that they certainly are a nice group of charming young ladies and from the article written by Thea and the report by Esther we would conclude that they have many good times together, good times that help them to live more closely to God.

Are there any more societies in our churches with a strictly junior membership? If so we would like to hear about it. If you juniors enjoy this special page and would like Beacon Lights to set aside a space for a *Junior Journal* in each issue, be sure to let us know. We welcome your contributions and suggestions and pictures, too. Send your letters or material to:

Beacon Lights (Junior Journal)
706 Franklin St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Since our next issue of Beacon Lights will be another "All Iowa Issue", we are eager to see how our Iowa Juniors will fill these pages, aren't you? They promised to make it good, so be on the lookout for it!

Your Big Sister.

ESTHER SOCIETY

First Protestant Reformed Church

Standing: A. Vanden Berg, E. Bastianse, B. Roskamp, L. Deppe, E. Rietema, E. Sikkema, N. Deppe, F. Veldkamp, S. Brummel, J. Wever, F. Vanden Berg, D. Schuitema, D. Baar, A. Borduin, J. Reitsma. Seated: B. Bylsma, Mrs. N. Newhof, T. Swart, J. Boelema, J. De Borst, H. Hinken, J. Rhoda, B. Dekker, T. Bylsma, G. Roskamp, W. Knoper, J. Lamse, Mrs. H. Visser.

Youth Center Reactions

Since it appears that all the contributions, for which we allowed ample time, have been submitted in regard to our Youth Center discussion, your editor would like to make the following remarks:

1. It is not true that we must have our own youth center. If you wish to use a strong imperative and say "Ye must be born again to enter the Kingdom of Heaven", we agree. Some may call it dramatic but let us rather reserve these strong imperatives for such things as are beyond dispute. You may say that you deem it adviseable but must? No!

2. The weapon wherewith we may fight against, yea, and what is more, will overcome the world is not a youth center but is a putting on of the whole armor of God. cf. Eph. 6:10-17. ". . . . and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." I John 5:4b.

3. That there are three nights per week with nothing to do is regrettable. Physicians tell us that walking is one of the best all around exercises. We have at least a half dozen fine books written by one of our leading theologians. No one would at all object if you young people made a concentrated house to house attempt to sell these fine publications. It would not lack in zest and thrill if teams were organized and losers stand treat for malteds at the corner pill dispensary.

Or how about visiting the aged, sick and shut-ins and cheering their day? See James 1:27. Those are only two suggestions. There are hosts of others if you feel the need of them.

4. "Your Reporter Reports" is not a reply by the editor to the first contribution. It's purpose was:

a. To incite interest in and comment on the first contribution. Definitely not to provoke anyone in the bad sense of the word.

b. To forcibly stamp out the thought of associating the name of our church with any physical gymnastic and contortion society. The sad state of those churches which have done so is too evident to repeat. In fairness to our original contributor, let us state that she did not propose doing so. But can it be avoided?

c. We blush to think that some have likened it to the writings of Voltaire! The author of this article does not expect to go down in history as a contributor to the Classics. A more fitting signature for that article would have been "Seer Roebuck".

5. "That Insane Amusement Notion" should give you enough food for thought so that none of us will be required to "eat oatmeal out of a gas pipe"!

6. "A Raindrop" makes an eloquent appeal. For objection to "dramatic" see article 1. Oh mother, don't rob me of my children who regularly retire at 8 P. M.

7. To "Youthful Contributor" we raise the question: Is a youth center sin? Is it definitely wrong to gather together for physical exercise?

8. And to you from Chofu, don't worry about those blinders. "Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil." Prov. 4:25-27.

9. It is not impossible to have a youth center but if you still feel that it is adviseable please consider the following:

a. It can never serve to equip you to fight the warfare of faith.

b. It can make you wise unto salvation.

c. It can never prepare you for an office or calling in the church.

d. It can never remove the temptations of the world or the lusts of the flesh since these proceed from the heart.

e. It can never teach you your misery, deliverance or gratitude.

10. It is deplorable that far too many of us, and I do not exclude us older folks, when asked "What's the Score?" have so much of this earthly clay clinging to our feet that we imagine that this interrogation means the ball scores of world series or the ratings of the various basket ball teams. How many of us find our delight in pointing with pride to one who has attained heights of spiritual knowledge and sanctification? How much easier to root for a ball team than to become filled with spiritual zeal for things of the Kingdom. How much easier we speak of sports, hunting, fishing, business and politics. How much easier to spend a "social evening" with salted and unsalted "wisecrackers" and wits and fractions thereof! Will a youth center solve that? If so, we must have our own youth center!

Well, my friends, that is what I have to offer on the subject. Let me also herewith thank all those who have contributed their material in regard to this matter. Especially are we grateful to our first contributor who had the admirable courage to state her convictions. She will no doubt agree with Solomon when he writes in Prov. 18:17 "He that is first in his own cause seemeth just; but his neighbor cometh and searcheth him." Surely we should welcome this search by the neighbors and receive even as charitably as it is given, the advice of others. We trust that you have all received all the remarks and contributions in good humor and that no one was unduly offended. Come again, anytime anyone with anything. It is instructive for all of us.

Neither would we have you conclude that your editor frowns upon all your activities and endeavors. I do not say you cannot have a youth center. Perhaps you can and perhaps you really do need a place to go on those extra evenings. But even those who differ with us should admit that there is a grave danger that such a thing will receive more enthusiastic support and patronage than the things of the church. I would like to see our young people gainfully engaged in preparing themselves for their calling as fathers and mothers and allowed to take more of an active part in the affairs of the church.

From The Editor's Desk

Hope that all of you had an enjoyable holiday season. Don't you often get the impression that every year the celebration of Christmas and the observance of the beginning of a New Year is a farther cry from that manger in Bethlehem? Animated cartoons and Santa Claus'es become the center of attraction. And as you see the ghoulish figures and masked impersonations it leads you to wonder if the world is really so far removed in its present civilization from the time of idolatry in its most tangible forms. It is indeed a privilege that, as we are called to walk through it, we may flee to the sanctuary, the fellowship of friends of like faith, our own quiet family circle and the recesses of a renewed heart.

* * * * *

Your editor has been reading a little about the modern trend in poetry and writing. It is characterized chiefly by the fact that it sounds a note of despair, thwarted desires and aspirations. It presents a doleful picture and leaves you without hopes. Just to give you some samples, we have written a few to show you what is meant. They will appear in some future issue. We sincerely hope that you don't like them.

* * * * *

Was I ever surprised and pleased at receiving so promptly the suggestion, printed elsewhere, for reading material for your society libraries. Beacon Lights arrived at my home the sixth of December and the suggestion came on the eighth! Wish you could have seen the fine stationery on which it was written. A Christian's testimony was extended also through the mail by this means. May we also hear from others?

* * * * *

Perhaps you've wondered what happened to the condensation of "The Works of Father Chiniquy." Well, the truth of the matter is that we simply haven't had the space for it. Your editor definitely does not want to monopolize this publication. I'll gladly step aside and give you room. We'll try to write a little introduction each time so you can at least partially recall the events which have transpired.

* * * * *

Have you enjoyed the "Youth Center Reactions"? Let's do something like that oftener shall we? Unless someone has thoughts which have not heretofore been expressed, we shall consider the matter closed. No hard feelings anywhere are there? Why of course not! Anyone who writes publicly expects public criticism both favorable and otherwise. We'll try to treat each and every contributor as fairly as we know how but if you can't "take it", don't write. What shall it be next time?

* * * * *

Thanks to all of you who remembered us with greeting cards on the holiday season.

* * * *

Our next issue will be an All Iowa Issue!

Out of the Mouth of Babes

Father: "Hurry up, son and get ready to go to Photo News with me!"

Johnny: "But, father, do I have to go?"

Father: "Yes, Son, tonight is Friday night and we haven't seen the new pictures this week."

Johhny: "But father, I still have to do my written work for catechism."

Father: "Oh well, you can skip that can't you, or perhaps dash it off tomorrow morning before you go."

Johnny: "But there are some hard questions I thought you could help me with tonight."

Father: "Who, me? You know very well your father is a busy man with consistory work and societies and everything. It's getting so I hardly have time to go bowling the way you kids always have to ask for help with everything. What do you suppose we have teachers and preachers for? Always shoving the work off on us busy parents!"

Johnny: "But father, why do we have to go to Photo News? Is it so important?"

Father: "Now see here, Johnny, I'm not going to have my kids be a bunch of nit-wits. How do you expect to know what's going on in the world if you don't go to Photo News?"

Johnny: "Can't we read it in the papers father?"

Father: "Yes, but this is much more effective. You can see the things you read about and remember them better."

Johnny: "But father, all those things are things of the world aren't they? Last time it was all about the terrible things that the Japs and Germans did and how nice our side was. Then all about those new things that we're going to have and how beautiful everything will be. I didn't see anything about how sinful we all are like we learn in church and catechism."

Father: "Well, that may be, but didn't you like to see those pictures of where the Americans were fighting and that island we captured?"

Johnny: "Oh, you mean where they showed those soldiers using flame throwers and burning the Japs out of the caves? I didn't sleep well that night, father. Those people have souls too, don't they? It looked to me like a little preview of that place where wicked people go."

Father: "Oh well, that's war for you, son. But how about that other country with pretty mountains and lakes and green valleys. You enjoyed seeing that didn't you?"

Johnny: "Yes, that was pretty, but no one said that God made all those things and gave life to them like we read in Genesis. And besides, father, the minister said that just like Abraham we have here no abiding place and that we must always be ready to pull up our tent stakes and journey to that better country. Don't you think, father, that it would be better if we spent our time learning about that land?"

Father: "Now see here, Johnny. Some-

body's been influencing you. Those things are true but remember that we're still in this life and all those things are here for us to enjoy. We have to have relaxation and amusement. Do you want people to point you out and say that all you know is about God and that you're not up to date?"

Johnny: "But father, if I knew all about God and His works and His plan with the world and His people wouldn't I be up to date and more too because I would even know what's coming in the future?

Father: "You impudent child! Just who do you think you are? I've a good notion to strap you and send you up to bed."

Johnny: "I'm sorry, father, I didn't mean to make you angry. But may I ask one more question?

Father: "Well, I suppose. But make it snappy. We're late already."

Johnny: "Well, father, tell me this if you may anyway. Do you find that those who have time and money for those things are equally zealous for our church affairs and liberal in its support?"

Father: "That's all! That's all, Johnny. I can't answer that. Let's forget the whole thing. What's your lesson about this week, son?"

Contributed.

* * * *

Some stiff necks may be cured by the chiropractors but others can be cured only by the Great Physician.

ONLY A GLIMPSE

(continued from page 5)

may live by sight for a time and faith won't be necessary? Of course not. The Lord first of all wants to bring us with all our unnecessary anxiety and trouble to shame. But with this glimpse He also confirms the promise that all things work together for good. Through it he will exercise our faith, in order that we will live by faith in the future. In this light it also becomes plain that those who did not have their dear ones return can be enlightened and comforted by this doing of God. If a mere glimpse shows how God in every way caused the war to work together for good for the Christian young man who returned, will it then not also be true for them, even though the Lord does not grant them this glimpse? The purpose therefore is that we will live by faith in the future, trusting in Him. In the future His ways will also be unsearchable. Often we won't be able to understand, and. . . . we should not. For this is true worship, to believe though we don't understand, to trust though we don't see, and then to sing:

How wondrous are the ways
of God,
Unfathomed and unknown!

The Beauty of the Young Woman

I have heard of many people who have been put to flight by the daggered looks of certain women when they made comments on their beauty. We do not say it is wrong to visit the beauty shop, for we all hate to see girls that are slouchy. For Paul does speak of the fact that "if a woman does have long hair, it is glory to her." But the Scriptures do not forbid our young women to keep themselves neat, tidy of appearance; for the Scriptures do mention about women being beautiful. There is one thing you can consider when you make your next trip to the beauty shop, that is, Scripture warns us against making beauty our God. For that is just what the worldly women do, they set their whole heart in making themselves beautiful. If our young women have but one ideal and that is to adorn themselves with outward beauty, I feel sure then, that your beauty has become your sin. The more you reveal yourself in that beauty, the more you glory in your shame.

The Scriptures tell us "be moderate, be sober, and adorn yourselves with modesty." Be not conformed, but be transformed." Also in this matter God is not mocked. God looks past your make-up, and examines your heart. Why those horrid painted nails, those red lips, that isn't even beauty! Be tidy, be neat, but surely we should know moderation and limits. When Scripture exhorts to moderation and sobriety (Titus 2:4)), it implies here that it condemns the outrages we see in many of the young women, even in our young women of our churches.

It sends a chill down the minister's spine when he looks over his audience and sees the girls with those red painted lips, those dyed cheeks and those claw-hammered red nails, equally garnished. They who have fallen into this sin have forgotten about moderation which is spoken about in the Scriptures.

Jezebel, who was a wicked woman painted herself up to attract Jehu by her vain beauty. But Scripture condemns this all when it tells mothers to teach their daughters to be sober and moderate, and dress with moderate apparel. (I Tim. 2:9)

True beauty of a young woman is not something that can be purchased at a drug store or at a beauty shop. The true beauty says Peter, lies in the heart, a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price. Peter also speaks of the true sense of beauty. That beauty cannot be smeared or dabbed or painted on, but is the gift of God in Christ Jesus. The renewal of the heart is the beginning of all beauty. By nature we are ugly, at best we are but a handful of dust. But God is beautiful, He is graceful, He is attractive. And it pleases Him to make His people beautiful with His grace.

The young woman's beauty begins in regeneration. Scripture exhorts the woman to adorn herself with this beauty, that is, let the beauty of that regenerate heart show itself in your walk, conduct,

and manner of life. The Christian young woman ought to let her very face tell others that she is born again, and that she despises all worldly things and entertains deep reverence for the things that are pure and holy, when she shows this reverence she has become beautiful in the sight of God.

South Holland Y. P. Society.
Dorothy Zandstra,

Library Suggestions

Dear Friends of Beacon Lights:

As my favorite pastime is reading, I am very interested in the appeal for suggestions on good reading material.

I think it is a "super" idea for our churches to have a library. (How about it, Fuller Ave., why don't we start one?) They shouldn't be composed of just novels, but should include—a Bible Commentary for those who have none at home; Bible Encyclopedia; books on other religions, etc. Of course the novels wouldn't all be according to our doctrine, but when a person reads a book it should not be just for the story itself but he should keep the good and bad points in mind as if he were going to give a book review.

It might be a good idea to paste in the front of books, especially ones like "The Robe", "The Apostle" etc., a review of the book explaining or pointing out the discrepancies. Something like Miss Wiersma writes, to be "read critically. . . . the book's value should be measured by its historical background . . . ." etc.

My suggestions for novels are "Tho He Slay Me" by Ella M. Noller; "Bright Midnight", and "Courage Has Eyes" by Trumbull Reed.

Authors whose books I enjoy are: Bertha Moore, Paul Hutchens, Dan. E. L. Patch, J. Wesley Ingles, Florence L. Barclay and Gene S. Porter.

I hope these suggestions are helpful.

Arlene Brummel.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

* * * * *

— SERVICEMEN'S FUND —

Donations have recently been received from:

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We thank all those who remember Beacon Lights with gifts. Beacon Lights is still being mailed to many servicemen overseas. To expedite this mail and assure prompt delivery Beacon Lights is sent as first class mail to all our men overseas. Mail all changes of address and contributions to Beacon Lights, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Bible Study Outlines

By Rev. L. DOEZEMA — Bellflower, California

XIII

JOB'S ANSWER TO ELIPHAZ

(Chapter 6, 7)

Recall the speech of Eliphaz. His point was rather indirectly made, but nevertheless understood by Job. With all his beautiful moral philosophy Eliphaz had meant to say utter calamity only falls upon the foolish and ungodly; and that they who believe and seek the Lord shall be materially and bountifully blessed. Indirectly he cut Job by saying in verse 2 of chapter 5, "vexation killeth the foolish man." He meant, rebellion is of no use. He accuses Job of rebellion and points to Job's complaint as foolishness. Now let us consider Job's reply.

I. Job's rebuttal: (vss. 1-7). We speak of this section as a rebuttal because Job refutes the accusation of Eliphaz.

1. He takes up the same word Eliphaz used, "vexation" which is used in the Revised Version. a) This refers to the rebellion of Job as Eliphaz spoke of it in 5:2. b) Job defends his complaint by saying that it was not understood by his friends. "Oh that my vexation were but weighed." c) He desires that his calamity be put in the balance, that is, considered first of all and weighed with his vexation or his complaint.

2. His refutation therefore is that they were not fair. And he maintains his right to complain by, a) maintaining that his calamity justifies it. b) For if it were weighed it would be heavier than the sand of the seas. This is a figure which expresses that there is nothing heavier. The sands of the ocean is that which falls to the bottom of the ocean, and heavier than any trouble and matter in the wide ocean. c) For the last expression of vs. 3 compare the Authorized with the Revised Version. The Authorized Version is more literal. The Revised Version expresses the meaning. The real depth of Job's refutation, however, is grasped as we enter into the figure he uses. He says, in effect, I cannot help it, my words are sucked out of me by my misery.

3. Job again describes his misery, vs. 4. His misery is that God is against him. God is fighting with His arrows and in battle array. Job means to say, "don't you understand my trouble?" "God is killing my spirit." If God be against us, who can be for us?

4. Rhetorically Job points his friends

to their folly of criticizing his complaint. Vs. 5-7. The causal connection between his misery and his complaint is as natural as the examples he gives.

II. Job continues his groaning. (vss. 8-13)

1. The refutation is ended and Job now continues to give expression to his awful misery in the presence of his friends, and for which they are trying and cannot find a solution. We must visualize Job on the ash heap without relief and therefore unable to control his outbursts during the discussion with his friends which results in a deeper trial for him.

2. He expresses again his desire for death, vss. 8, 9.

3. But his desire for death is because it is certain in the end; and because he cannot endure longer, vss. 11-13. His disease is of such a nature that there was no recovery, but certain and slow death. Notice how he says that wisdom is gone from him.

4. But notice this especially in vs. 10, that he is confident of his righteousness. He has not concealed the words of the Holy One. Therefore he is not afraid to die.

III. An accusation of his friends. (vss. 14-23)

1. He contends with them that they should comfort, not accuse.

2. He expresses how great a disappointment they were to him. a) His figure is of mountain streams which are full of water at first and then evaporate in the desert. b) So they were at first his hope of comfort. He had not asked anything from them but comfort; and how keenly disappointed he was.

IV. Job's challenge. (vss. 24-30)

1. Job sees value in right words.

2. He condemns their words and maintains his cause, challenging them to speak again.

* * *

XIV

JOB'S SPEECH — continued

(Chapter 7)

This speech of Job, his reply to the friends upon the first speech of Eliphaz clearly divides itself into two parts. The second part which is given in chapter 7. In this part, however, he is not particularly addressing his friends. He is struggling with the problem of his suffering and in a part speaking to God in prayer. Let us consider this struggle of Job.

I. His hopeless plight. (vss. 1-6)

1. He places his life and affliction in the light of man's responsibility in the opening question, vs. 1, which is the introduction to his further expression of his misery and hopeless plight. a) He asks, "is there not a warfare to man upon earth?" (R.V.) This brings out the idea that he considers man to be a servant of God to be engaged in "the hard service" appointed to him. The "appointed time" of the (A. V.) doesn't bring out the primary meaning; it stresses, however, that the work of man is set within time limits by the Sovereign Ruler. His days are as the days of

an hireling. That is, he is called upon by God to perform his calling faithfully each day. This opening question and reflection of Job is the occasion for his further utterances and prayer.

2. He compares himself to an hireling, a wage earner, as he looks for the end of his day and his pay. vs. 2.

3. His experience, however, is different than the laborer for he is called to suffer. He is like a laborer who has no hope or expectation of reaching the end of the day's work. Job mentions how his night and his days are spent in agony. His nightly experience is the experience of all sufferers in the night. Job had months already of such wearisome nights, watching for the morning light. Then there is the never failing agony of his affliction which brings on the despair. Then his days are no better. They are swiftly gone, as a weaver's shuttle darts through the warp so are his days—and without hope.

II. His prayer to God. (vss. 7-21)

1. I think we must link this thought that he now expresses with his question still in the first verse of chapter 7. He means to say that his work cannot be accomplished if he continues to suffer and is unable to serve. And so he pleads with God to remember how short is his life, vs. 7.

2. Death, going into Sheol means no more opportunity to serve. (8-10).

3. Therefore he will not hold his peace, but will speak all that he feels within him about his suffering. That is, he will take his opportunity before he vanishes away as a cloud. vs. 11.

4. He speaks to God and asks first in bitterness whether he is a prey that God hunts as a sea monster. He probably refers to the sea which they watched for a sea monster as the crocidile which was hunted near the Nile. vs. 12.

5. In vss. 13-15 he complains to God about his suffering and says he choses to die rather than continue in such misery.

6. He asks God to leave him alone, that is, cease from inflicting further misery. His reason is that he is nothing. His days are vanity.

7. From that he comes to the profound and awful thought in verses 17-19. The point Job makes is that man is not worth all the wrath of God. He means to say, even if sinful, man cannot possibly be so great before God that He the Almighty, Self-sufficient, Unchangeably Glorious One should be so concerned about man so as to inflict him so grievously, every moment.

8. In verse 19 the expression means, wilt thou not give me a breathing spell, a moment's rest?

9. This thought of the preceding is applied to himself in verses 20-21 and marks a significant conclusion to his speech. "So that I am a burden to myself" has been rendered by the LXX "to thee" and may be the correct reading. If so it follows the thought closely. Job asks why the Lord makes a mark of him. If he had sinned, he still could not have injured the living God; and besides he means, by afflicting him God only made Job a burden to Himself, unable to serve Him.

The prayer is closed with an urgent call for forgiveness, before he dies. This is not to be interpreted as impudence; the wording of it may give that impression. If we keep in mind the awful struggle Job has and the accusation of his friends that he had sinned, we can understand his outburst; it is partly in reply to the accusation and partly an earnest supplication out of his darkness. His question is a problem that we must leave until later, however.

* * * *

XV

BILDAD ENTERS

The three friends follow the same line of argument against Job. Each one, however, adds his own distinctive color. Bildad the Shuhite indignantly begins his speech with the question, "How long wilt thou speak these things?" etc. vs. 2. He contemptuously sets aside the great problem Job presented to himself and to God and so also to the three friends; he sets aside the grief-stricken expression of his misery. The attitude of the friends becomes more apparent to us. It is not a sympathetic, loving attitude. When they use beautiful language and philosophic thought and Biblical expressions they only deepen the problem and misery of Job. They are used, however, by God to lead Job and His people to a deeper understanding of His ways and truth. For that reason we must carefully analize the content and intent of each speaker and so follow the great drama of the book of Job. Although the main line is to be found in the outbursts of Job we cannot understand them unless we have heard the friends for they give the impetus to Job's thought and expresions.

The speech of Bildad has three divisions, marked clearly in the R. V. and also so according to their content.

I. God is righteous. That is the main contention of the friends. That brings them to their conclusion, which is not warranted, that Job is unrighteous.

1. He presents the point in a rhetorical question, vs. 3.

2. Bildad then refers to the sudden deaths of his children and draws the conclusion that they were taken away because of transgression. vs. 4. Bildad might not judge so and besides it was a cruel reference.

3. He argues that if Job were pure and upright God would reward him. The implication is that there is still hope for Job although there was no longer hope for his children.

II. The counsel of the fathers is given as support. vss. 8-10.

1. Very reasonable is this appeal to the fathers, and expressed in the humble spirit that we cannot know the truth alone, we are but of yesterday and know nothing. vss. 8, 9.

2. We must, however, remember that mere quotation of the fathers is not sufficient. Just as with the Bible we must understand and interpret and apply correctly.

III. The teaching of the ancients as uttered by Bildad: vss. 11-22.

1. In vss. 11-19 beautiful figures are used to show that the ungodly cannot survive. They perish as plants without water if they do not have the blessing of God. If they put their trust in anything outside of God, that shall perish as a spider's web. The ungodly apparently grow as a plant that takes root in stony soil, but in a short time they wither and perish utterly. (16-18). His place shall know him any more. His joy is so fleeting that it is vanity.

2. God is righteous is emphasized again. a) He will not destroy the righteous nor reward the wicked. b) Job is called upon to believe that and to repent and he shall yet prosper. vss. 21-22.

The same lack of understanding of God's ways as evident in Eliphaz is shown is this speech of Bildad. They argue from the righteousness of God and explain that that can be seen in all of this life. They forgot it is often hid, and a mystery awaiting final revelation.

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XVI

JOB'S THOUGHT UPON BILDAD'S SPEECH

(Chapter 9)

Notice how we have worded the above. Job's speech is almost a soliloquy, for he does not argue with his friends,—he reasons within himself further about his deep problem, the problem of the relation of man to God. Solemnly he agrees with the statement of truth made by the speakers, vs. 2. Then he presents his problem: "But how can a man be just with God?"

The main thought, or conclusion of Job is that he cannot answer God. This comes out several times in his expressions. For example in vs. 3, "He cannot answer him one in a thousand"; vs. 15: "whom though I were righteous, yet would I not answer"; vs. 16: "If I had called, and he had answered me, yet would I not believe that he hearkened unto my voice"; vs. 32: "For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgment." God is God and Job perceives more deeply than his friends the problem that man cannot answer, that is, speak, plead, make a case for himself, make supplication even as Bildad had last suggested. For these reasons:

I. God is wise in heart and mighty in strength. vs. 4.

1. From vss. 5-9 Job beautifully points out the works of God which manifest that He is Almighty. Note these examples. They are some of the best evidences of the power of God, for they are given of inspiration in God's Word. The more we stand also before these works of God, the mountains, the earth, the sun and stars, we shall marvel at His power and might.

2. Job shows that God's works are also a mystery to us. We cannot ask why of God. His strength is sovereign.

3. These are of infinite wisdom. And God is wise in heart, says Job. The wisdom of God is confessed by Job as a wisdom out of infinite love. For this reason no man has anything to say to

God. No one has ever succeeded, vs. 4.

II. God is sovereign in His anger. (vss. 13-16)

1. "God will not withdraw His anger." a) His anger is such that the helpers of mighty "Rahab" (which we must interpret as a great power, either a rebellious power in itself as a reference is made to Egypt, Ps. 87:4 or a definite object Job had in mind) were not able to stand against God's anger. b) So Job is not able to answer God's anger.

2. Job expresses the sovereignty of God so strongly that he says, "though I were righteous, yet would I not answer." vs. 15.

3. The reason is because Job, man cannot comprehend God. He is above us. He is our Judge. We cannot speak, plead, make a case, supplicate unless upon that basis that we acknowledge Him as sovereign Judge of whom we may only plead for mercy. vs. 15.

4. Job concludes that it is hopeless for him to expect anything because the Lord has so afflicted him. He maintains his right but the Lord has broken him and multiplied his wounds without a cause. It is no use to plead his cause before the Lord who is sovereign in his anger. Verse 20 expresses too how hopeless it seems to Job. It seems to him that the Lord has destroyed the righteous and the wicked. Vss. 21, 22. It is even so dark for Job that the wicked seem to have the right. vss. 23, 24.

5. Job surely beholds the sovereignty of God but at this moment he cannot rejoice in it in his misery. He fails therefore to see how that God reveals His justice and mercy. It is something like Asaph in the first part of Psalm 73.

III. Man is nothing: vss. 25-32.

1. Although Job acknowledged the sovereignty of God in the preceding which was reason for saying that man cannot reply against God, (as Paul also speaks) nevertheless he could not rejoice in it and complained. However again there is a change in Job. From moment to moment he changes. As the waves of the ocean he is going back and forth in his misery.

2. In these verses Job confesses how he came to speak, for he is a creature a) of time which moves swiftly away, and b) a sinful creature whose righteousness and covering is only such in his own eyes and not before God.

(We will continue from here next time. L.D.).

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EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

(Cont. from page 14)

Son, Jesus Christ through Whom we have received the knowledge of Thyself; God of angels and of the whole creation: of the human race, and of the just that live in Thy presence; I praise Thee that Thou hast judged me worthy of this day and of this hour, to take part in the number of Thy witnesses, in the cup of Thy Christ."

J. A. H.

The Works of Father Chiniquy

(A translation and condensation by G. T. E.)

If you will recall, we noticed in our previous issue that Karel Chiniquy is now attending the school which is preparing him for the priesthood. He has been engaged in debate with his instructor concerning various matters. We left him last time in the midst of a debate concerning the vow of celebicy and Scriptural texts by which his instructor sought to convince the pupils.

The next day, when they again convened with their instructor, Chiniquy politely asked for the floor to present their opinions to their instructor. This was granted. Thus spoke Chiniquy: "When Jesus spoke these words recorded in Matthew He did not at all mean what you, Father Lephrohon, have concluded. Jesus meant with this text to warn his disciples of one of the greatest dangers to which man is subject. Jesus meant to warn that there would be men who would be so wicked and blind that they would teach that the best possible manner by which to go to heaven would be to make oneself a eunuch. Jesus here warns against men who would strive to attain for themselves a crown in heaven by making eunuchs of themselves. If we must interpret the text to mean that Jesus here advises men to become eunuchs then let us also take the text from John 16:2 'yea, the time cometh that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.' Now, because our Saviour said that there would be men who would think to be doing God service by killing His saints, must we conclude that Jesus here advises men so to do? Certainly not! If it is true that a eunuch is closer to heaven than others who live in accordance with the laws which God lay down in Paradise, how does it happen that already in Paradise when man was good and upright he was given a wife? Further when the rich young ruler comes to Jesus and says, 'Master, what good thing shall I do to inherit eternal life?' does Jesus say that the best manner by which to attain that life is by the means which you told us two days ago, namely, by becoming a eunuch? If the blessed Saviour were in your place and I had asked Him, 'What must I do to be saved and to show the way to my brethren?' would He not have answered, 'Keep the commandments!'? And I read nowhere in either the Old or New Testament that God commands us to take the vow of celebicy. If it be true that the vow of celebicy is so essential, why is it nowhere commanded in the Scriptures? If Jesus thought it essential, how does it happen that He never rebuked His disciples whom, as we know, had wives with whom they lived? We have more to say but would be pleased to hear your reply to our arguments."

Father Leprohon was shocked and he answered with unusual fervor, "You have spoken like a genuine heretic and were I

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not assured that you have spoken these things only for the purpose of receiving light, I would immediately complain of you to the Bishop rather than to expose to you the heresy of your speech in regard to this important question! You speak concerning the Scriptures even as a Protestant. You call upon the S. as though they were the only source of truth and knowledge. Do you know that we must be led by the writings of our fathers and that these writings are equal in value with the S.? You are correct when you state that nowhere in S. do we expressly read that those who would serve in the church must take the vow of celebicy. But although we do not find it in the S. we do find it in the holy writings of the church. They are very specific on this point and as binding upon us as the commandments given upon Mt. Sinai because Christ has said in Matt. 18:17 '. . . . but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.' There is no salvation for those who will not subject themselves to the utterances of the church. You are not capable of understanding all the reasons for the vow of celebicy but you are not free to dispute and reason about them but you must submit yourself to the utterances of the church and obey them even as you would a dear mother. But there can be no question that Christ commanded His disciples to be as eunuchs for have we not heard Peter say to our Lord, 'See, we have left all and followed Thee; what shall we receive?' Is not the priest the representative of Christ on earth? Is he not even in a sense higher than Christ for he has power in the mass to call Christ from heaven and must He not obey? And then he has power to again shut Him up in the holy host chest and take Him out again when he pleases? (These last two questions are so terribly blasphemous that it was difficult to write them down. But, for our instruction, they must be included. G.T.E.) By becoming priests, you are raised above the angels. You must elevate yourselves above the common people and become like unto holy angels concerning whom we read, 'They marry not, neither are they given in marriage.' Does not Paul teach that the virginal state is above the married state? Does this saying of the apostle not teach us that he who would daily touch the holy body and blood of Christ must have clean hands and must not be spotted by the vows of the married state? Now if you have any other arguments, I shall consider myself fortunate to have this opportunity to answer them."

"We are much obliged to you," answered Chiniquy, "and would like to take advantage of your offer by making a few remarks in regard to the texts you quoted. When Peter says that they have left all, he does not mean he has left his wife because Paul, many years later, expressly states that Peter not only lived with his wife at home, but that she also accompanied him on his journeys.