JEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION

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BEACON LIGHTS

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Nature Study .............................................................. Clarence De Boer
Junior Journal ............................................................. Alice Reitsma
Book Review .............................................................. Berdina Knot
I must confess of the title of this article, as the man did of the axe-head which fell into the stream (II Kings 6:5) that it was borrowed. Perhaps, I might better say, the title was suggested by a member of my congregation in connection with a comparison drawn in a recent sermon.

In this season of Christmas, it is especially this, of all years, that even the sons and daughters of the Church of Jesus Christ have money to spend and to spare for Christmas gifts. I do not, of course, condemn the tradition of the exchange of gifts at Christmas time, provided the practice does not take a primary, but a secondary place in our lives. The idea is, however, that whereas we in our day easily spend money since we possess it abundantly, we are inclined to forget our true spiritual riches and the basis upon which these riches of grace have become our's.

One surrounded with wealth and abundance on every hand, certainly is under no necessity, nor is expected to make a practice of borrowing things. One that borrows is one who has a lack of something, and, being in dire need of the same, appropriates it by asking to use it.

To me then, the mystery of Christmas is, that I find my Elder Brother, who possessed all, who is rich in houses and lands and holds the wealth of the world in His hands, really from the very dawn of His life to His very death, did nothing but borrow again and again. The mystery becomes even greater when I consider Him as being not only the possessor of all, but the Lord and Sovereign of all, the Creator of all this universe, self-sufficient in Himself forever!

Wending my way to Bethlehem, I behold Him, however, lying in a borrowed manger-crib. The inn had no room for Him, and the only alternative for Him was that He be brought into the world, which in reality was His own, in the surroundings of the very beasts of the field. And, as I follow Him out of Bethlehem, I see Him being persecuted and molested. I witness His riding a borrowed beast in His
hurried flight to Egypt. Remaining with Him I observe how He feeds five thousand men with but five barley loaves and a few fish, which too had been borrowed by Him, Whom, if He so pleased, could make the very stones near the sea-shore become bread. Often I see Him using a borrowed ship from which to preach, or by which to sail to some yonder shore. I hear Him complain that the foxes have holes and that the birds of the air have nests, but that He, my Elder Brother, has no place to lay His head, implying that if someone does not lodge Him, He is without shelter. And, as He nears the end of His sojourn on earth, rather than that the scene would improve, it grows worse. To ride triumphantly into Jerusalem, He borrows an ass upon which to ride. He borrows an upper room in which to eat the Passover with His disciples, and when finally He does die, I find Him lying in a borrowed tomb—my Elder Brother.

"Poor Man!" you exclaim? Shall we inform the societies of charity concerning His plight? Shall we arrange to have Him benefit from the funds of the Community Chest?

Indeed, to do that, namely, to try to deliver Him out of His plight, would be to destroy the very purpose for which He came. For He came to deliver us, as members of His own body, the Church, out of the poverty of sin and hell.

Hence, we read in II Corinthians 8:9: "...though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich."

It is the Son of God in the likeness of sinful flesh that became poor. Flesh did not become flesh, no, the WORD became flesh. An ordinary infant was not born on Christmas Day, it was the SON OF GOD Who became flesh. It was not a mere man that became servant,—it was the Lord of all, that emptied Himself taking upon Himself the form of a servant and was obedient even to death, the death of the cross.

Did you notice the word "Cross," dear reader? Christmas could not be Christmas if it were not for Good Friday. The Cross is the climax of that which was begun on Christmas Day with Jesus’ birth. On Christmas Day indeed my Elder Brother and your’s borrowed a stable for his manger-crib, but on Good Friday—He did not, He COULD not borrow the cross, IT WAS HIS VERY OWN. All things He had borrowed previously could be borrowed also by mere man if need be, but the cross was His own peculiar possession. It belonged to Him exclusively, for He alone could accomplish the necessary righteousness for our redemption. By it He could rid His people of the poverty of sin and death, and realize for them all the riches of the sal-
vation which He came to accomplish. He is the Son of God, in the likeness of sinful flesh.

Bearing these things in mind, surely we will be kept from the vain and empty Yule-tide celebration of the world of wicked men. For then we know ourselves to be miserable and blind and naked and poor, by nature. Clinging to Jesus the first-born of the dead, the head of His people, our Elder Brother, we will stand in reverence and contrition of heart at the crib-side of Jesus at Bethlehem, by faith, and confess: for MY sake, Jesus became poor, that through His poverty I might become rich.

Have you become rich spiritually through the poverty of your Elder Brother Jesus? If you have, then you, in the consideration of the fact of Christmas, will, with the saints go to Bethlehem, to see the thing which is come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us. Taking hold of Him in faith, although the world and Satan, even our own flesh despises His poverty, we are rich indeed. For then we are like Him, partaking of the same resurrection life which He Himself now lives with the Father in His presence. Presently we shall know Him as we are known, see Him as He is, forever be partakers of the Divine nature. Wonderful grace! True Christmas joy!

The Staff of Beacon Lights extends to all its readers A Joyous Christmas and A Blessed New Year.
Accent on the first syllable! Put Christ back into Christmas!

The Christmas season is already upon us. In fact, the approaching holiday is rushing at us from all directions. Everywhere we turn we are reminded of it. Do your Christmas shopping early! Mail early! Order your holiday poultry now! Gift suggestions! These and many more exhortations and slogans are shouted at us from Press, Radio and store windows. everywhere and every day and will be, with increasing intensity, from now until December 25. And Christ is not in all this noise!

And if we would make a list of our own thoughts at this season we would find, to our shame, that they are conditioned by the Christless Christmas of the world. Isn't it true that also our minds are filled with shopping, gifts, trees, greeting cards, turkey, chicken, cake, pie, candy, etc. etc.? And Christ is not in all our thoughts!

All of it is evidence of the fact that the world has stolen our Christmas from us and having usurped the day for its own purposes has excluded the Christ from it all. The world can do nothing with the Christ of God. It's answer is always—we will crucify Him. So too, they have eliminated Him on the very day commemorating His birth. But having disposed of the Christ they have no Christmas. The more they shout "Merry Christmas" the more apparent becomes their folly and disgrace. All that remains to them is a din and clamor plus a heap of things that are all but forgotten the next day—except for the headaches they cause in the way of bills and "hangovers". Christ is not in it all!

What a contrast it all forms to the night of the Saviour's birth. Humble shepherds, an Angel song, a stable, a Virgin Mother, a Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes! Yet Christ is there: the Son of God became flesh in these surroundings! "Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes.
ly ing in a manger”. No tinsel, no gifts, no trees, but—the glory of God. the silent night, the humble homage—this—because Christ is there!

On that first Christmas too He was forgotten; rejected, pushed to the edge of the world—there was no room for Him in the Inn—and He has been ever since. Finally, pushed out of the world altogether; suspended between heaven and earth on the tree of the Cross where no one owned Him. Yet through it all He came, sent of God. made His own room. prepared His own celebration. established Himself within the hearts of His own and gave them CHRISTmas.

Let’s keep that day. Learn the lesson from the contrast! Even as the first stands in glaring antithesis with the celebration that is upon us, so should our own keeping of the day stand opposed to all we hear and see round about us. If Christ has put Himself into our hearts He must and will be in our Christmas day. Go to Bethlehem with the shepherds and worship the Christ Child. Let the Angel Song—Glory to God—be the heart and center of a Christian Christmas.

Wishing you all a blessed Christmas—with the accent on the first syllable!

Contact...

At a recent meeting of our Young People’s Society a letter was read which had been received from the Board of the Young People’s Federation. The letter explained that at the last Convention the Young People’s Society of Manhattan. Montana, had come with a request to advance the date of our annual conventions from the latter part of August to the first week of the same month. It was further stated in the letter, that the Board was asking the various member-societies to express themselves on this request. Since their conception, our conventions have been held during the last week in August of each year. It is usually during this time that the rich grain harvests are gathered in. around the Galatin valley and the Manhattansites find it difficult to get away, hence the request. This request was not treated by the Delegate Board but referred to the Executive Board. This procedure was quite proper since Article I of the By-laws of the P.R.Y.P.F. Constitution reads: “An Annual Convention shall be held at a time stipulated by the Executive Board.”

Quite a lively discussion followed the reading of the letter before a decision was taken. Many reasons both pro and con were offered why
and why not the date should or should not be changed. The general sentiment was rather well expressed in the statement that since it does not make a great deal of difference to us, we should certainly cooperate and express ourselves as favoring an earlier date for the sake of one of our member societies. When the Society vote was taken, upon a motion to express ourselves in favor of holding our Conventions early in August, it passed almost unanimously.

If there are other Societies which have not yet considered the matter we would urge them to concur with this expression. Manhattan is a distant and somewhat isolated community and should be favored in their reasonable request. They have always cooperated most beautifully in the affairs of the Federation and should receive kind consideration in return. We believe this is true even to the extent of denying ourselves, if need be. Most of our other Societies have much more opportunity and occasion for fellowship and contact with one another than Manhattan does. They deserve a "break".

But all of what is written above is not yet the point we had in mind. Besides the discussion on the matter itself, many expressions of surprise were raised that our Societies were conferred with at all in this matter. In fact, they were expressions of pleasant surprise. The feeling is all too prevalent that our Federation is run by the Executive Board and about the only thing the Societies are asked for is to pay the expenses. We appreciate this action of the Board, therefore, and believe it is a step in the direction of promoting greater unity and cooperation among the member-societies of the Federation.

The thought struck us that, perhaps, this procedure of "taking us in" on what goes on could be developed with profit to all. Undoubtedly, the Executive Board meets periodically to discuss things of general interest and welfare to the Federation. Wouldn't it be a good idea to hear of these meetings by way of reports to the Societies and to ask the Societies more often for an expression of opinion? Among such items of interest that could be brought to our attention are "Beacon Lights" and its contents, mass meetings, projects for after-recess programs, affiliation with the Western League, etc. Let the Board draw up proposals and present them to the Societies for discussion. We are a small group and anything to promote a strengthening of the ties that bind is worthy effort. In this way we will not only be a Federation in name but in action and feel our unity.

W. H.
Christmas All Year

Christmas, 1946. Already in November the streets and stores were filled with early shoppers scurrying through crowded aisles, pausing to inquire about this article or that, exhausting the patience of harried clerks, pushing their way into a compartment of a revolving door, and elbowing a path down the sidewalk. The stores advertise that Christmas is nearer than you think, and remind you of that fact by their Yuletide decorations, which may be anything from clowns and Christmas trees to a representation of the visit of the Magi. Especially this year Christmas is being made mercenary. Business is booming: the buyer has money, and plenty of it. burning holes in his pockets: and many of the articles one would like to buy cannot be bought at all. And so people are stretching the Christmas season farther back than ever, following the advice to “do your Christmas shopping early” until it looks as if we are to have Christmas all the year round. Thus the world celebrates Christmas.

And thus we must not celebrate Christmas. Oh, I know, we too, join the mad rush at Christmas time. There is no objection to this. The custom of giving, although a custom, is pleasant and likeable enough. Nobody loves a “tight-wad”. And if we wish to use the holiday season as a time for giving gifts to our friends and relatives, I see no reason why we should refrain from doing this. Only, let us give in a cheerful and generous spirit, not as a sort of exchange.

But our Christmas must not consist of giving and receiving gifts, nor even of giving gifts plus going to church on Christmas Day and perhaps to a few Christmas programs during the holidays. Let us not be deceived by the materialistic Christmas of the world. Their apparent merriment is only a very thin crust that covers hearts that are fearful and comfortless because of the perilous situation of this world of 1946. Our Christmas goes deeper. It is the celebration of the birth of the Son of God, and therefore it is really a matter of the heart.

This Son of God. Whose birth we celebrate on Christmas Day is the basis of all our hope and cheer. Because of Him we are not gloomy or despairing, even though the world of today seems to have a terrifying future. For we look beyond the manger to the cross, and beyond the cross to the resurrection and the ascension, knowing that our Lord is preparing a place for us.

Having Christmas in our hearts then, we, too, stretch the Christmas season, not just a month or two, but until it extends all the year round.

By Lois Hoeksema
Christian Living


Never does the difference between the church and the world, the Christian and the unbeliever, reveal itself more strikingly than it does on New Year’s Eve, the night of December 31. In its vain and foolish attempt to banish from its mind all thoughts of the end and in its anticipation of a new year wherein it can pursue the things of this present time, the world laughs and sings, drinks and dances, riots and revels as it does at no other time. The Christian, on the other hand, desires to see things as they are, and, e’re the tolling bells and striking clocks all over the world announce the passing of another year, he pauses a moment to reflect, to meditate, and to ask himself: Where am I going?

Another year of our brief lives has sped by with amazing swiftness. Now that it is past, where did it go—all those months and weeks and days and hours? It seems but such a short time ago that it was still 1945. How we are reminded of the end of our entire lives and of all things! “Little children, it is the last hour."

How fitting that for us this day should come in the dead of winter! Gone is the springtime with its promise of life and growth—gone the summer with its brightness and warmth and wealth of outdoor activities—gone the crisp and colorful autumn. It is December and winter—and all is cold, still, dead. So appropriate, it seems!

How are we reminded of the simple but most significant words of the author of Psalm 90, “It is soon cut off, and we fly away.”

* * *

That truer words have never been spoken is certainly the testimony of all experience, is it not? And it is the message of Scripture throughout. “As a sleep is the life of man. “Like the tender grass which today flourishes and tomorrow is no more.” Spent are our years “as a tale that is told.”

“Man soon yields up his fleeting breath."
BEACON LIGHTS

Before the swelling tide of death;
Like transient sleep his seasons pass,
His life is like the tender grass,
Luxuriant 'neath the morning sun.
And withered e'er the day is done."

Young people, don't let the fact, that you are still youthful and full of hope and anticipation and plans for the future, blind you for this reality. Psalm 103 puts it very bluntly:

"So man is quickly swept away
Before the blast of death."

"We fly away." "As a dream when one awaketh." Suddenly, just when is determined by God alone, we appear upon the stage of this life. For a few brief years, 70 if we be strong, 80 at most, we play our part in the drama of life. Then just as suddenly we disappear from life's stage.—only a memory to them who remain. Whatever be men's experiences in life, and all are different,—the end for all is the same. And ah, having reached that end, and looking back, it was not long,—as a shadow that declineth. And then,—then it is cut off. For a brief moment our place is vacant and we are missed and mourned by a circle ever so small. Then the vacancy is filled in, as the shifting sands on the beach speedily fill in the holes our children love to make, and presently even our memory has faded from the earth. The shifting sands of time remove every trace of our ever having lived on this earth. That is life. Don't dare to forget it! "As a dream. . . ."

Yet, life is no dream, but terrible reality. Remember that too. It is not thus, that we live our life on this earth, and having reached its end have nothing more to do with it. This life, however brief and transient, has its purpose. It is a preparation for eternity. Consequently, every moment has its value with a view to that eternity. The Lord causes us to be born; gives us our place in the world; endows us with gifts and talents, money and goods, wife and children, faculties and time and opportunities; all in order that with all this we should serve and glorify our Maker. Therefore, the stupendous fact is, that we have never lived one moment in vain. From a certain point of view we may say: we take nothing along with us, but leave everything behind. In another way, however, we leave nothing behind, but take everything along. Life is real! It may seem vain, but it isn't! Every moment adds to the load I carry with me into eternity.
“We fly away.” Where to? Always into the future, my friends, dark and mysterious to us, but known to God, because He determined it for us from all eternity. Where to? To death and the grave. Precisely when we shall meet these face to face God only knows. It may be today. But this is certain: always the way leads to the grave. Somewhere on this earth is that spot, where one day our remains will be lowered into the ground, and with incredible speed we are hastening to keep our rendezvous with that grave. Where to? To the judgment seat of Christ. There the final separation will take place between the sheep and the goats. Where to? To our eternal destination. That will be the end of the road. Either-or: eternal glory or eternal desolation.

Where to? In last analysis that depends on our relation to the Lord Jesus Christ. Nothing else matters. Character, or works, or knowledge, or education, or pre-eminence in natural matters, will not determine our place in eternity. Those who perish are lost because they stand outside of Christ. Those who are saved inherit eternal life because they have Christ for their Saviour and Lord. And possessing that Christ, by faith, there is nothing to fear, neither life nor death, neither the present nor the future, neither time nor eternity. But the wicked, saith my God, have no peace.

* * *

Christian friends, in the light of all this, “what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness!”

Shall we now live as the ungodly fool, who seeks only the present? His motto is: let us eat and drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. He thinks of no eternity and considers no God,—not today,—tomorrow perhaps. Life for him is nothing else than the satisfaction of the flesh.

God forbid! Let us be wise and careful. Let us “buy out the time, whereas the days are evil.” Let us live here below as in the midst of things that mean nothing as far as this life is concerned, but that mean everything with a view to the life to come. And let us heed the exhortations of Scripture. “Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” Matt. 24:44. “Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh.” Mark 3:35. “But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.” I Peter 4:7. “He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen.

“Even so, come, Lord Jesus.”
Gnosticism


Last month we called your attention to the false doctrine of Ebionism which troubled the early New Testament Church. It was a mixture of some of the truths of Scripture together with the lies of Judaism, and it was an attempt on the part of the devil to destroy the Church from within by manufacturing a doctrine which would destroy the faith of the Jewish converts. The elements of the truth were there to set the minds of the believers at ease, while the lies were there to destroy their faith in Christ.

The devil had more evil “up his sleeve” in order to destroy if it were possible the faith of the Gentile converts. He moved men to manufacture a false doctrine that would also befuddle the minds of the Gentile converts, if it were possible. It is the same old story of Paradise and man’s fall. There the devil sought to confuse Eve by making her question God’s Word. Here again in the early New Testament Church, the devil, as it were, showers philosophies and carnal ideas about the truth, mixing a little of the truth with a host of lies and appealing to man’s emotions and reason in order to cause him to reject God’s Word and embrace man’s lie. Such a finished product of the devil’s ingenuity and man’s folly is Gnosticism.

Gnosticism was not really something new. Even as Ebionism was a mixture of the truth and the wrong ideas of the Jews in regard to Christ. His kingdom and their salvation, so too Gnosticism is a mixture of the truth with Pagan or heathen mythology, mysteryology and philosophy. Its appeal was directed especially toward the Gentiles, as we said above. It gathered much of its heathen philosopher Plato for whom the Gentile world had very much respect.

Gnosticism was dualistic, that is, it believed in a power outside and next to God. It was also rationalistic in that it presented God as the unknowable one. This is a denial of God’s revelation. God would be the unknowable one were it not for the fact that He revealed Himself to us in His Word. We could never know God were it not for this revelation. He is indeed the Incomprehensible One, that is, we cannot fathom Him, but because He reveals Himself to us in His Word, we may not call Him the unknowable one. Gnosticism in its deceptiveness does claim to believe in the Scriptures wherein God revealed Himself, but it places Scrip-
ture on the same level with the writings of heathen philosophers. Thus it makes Scripture nothing more than the ideas of certain men about God, rather than God’s own self revelation.

Further, it taught that the world and all matter is evil in itself. God did not create matter and the world. It was formed by another god, and mind you, this god, according to some Gnostics was Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. From the most powerful God flows forth certain attributes and powers of His nature which Gnostics called aeons. The most perfect of these aeons was Christ. The weakest and least of these aeons was sent to redeem man from evil. This weakest aeon is called the Demiurge and is identified by the Gnostics as Jehovah, the God of the Old Testament. He created the world as the first step in man’s redemption. He failed to realize redemption however. Therefore now the most perfect aeon, Christ, must come and save us.

Salvation is the deliverance from matter, which, as we said, is evil in itself. Redemption consists in the conquering and exclusion of matter. This is accomplished thru knowledge and asceticism. (Gnosticism gets its name from the fact that it believes in salvation thru knowledge. The Greek word for knowledge is “gnosis”, hence the word “Gnosticism”). Professor Kurtz in his church history book correctly states that redemption according to the Gnostic is a chemical rather than an ethical process.

Perhaps you think within yourself that this doctrine is so mystical and mythological that it could hardly be considered as a serious threat to the truth. Its folly is so obvious that one who confesses faith in Christ surely is not tempted by such a heathen philosophy. But do not forget that this heresy was taught in the early New Testament Church and not in the twentieth century. It has no appeal to us, but to the Gentiles who had been brought up and steeped in pagan mythology, mysticism, and worldly philosophy there was a very strong appeal for the carnal nature. The devil knows how to adapt his tactics to the time and place wherein God’s people live in order to try to seduce them.

The Church was sorely pressed on every side by an increase of these heresies, and as we wrote before, it was this Gnosticism which Tertullian fought with all that was in him. The devil is cunning and sly. But Christ now had dominion over all things, the devil included, and He saved the church in that day and preserved the truth for us in this day and age. The gates of hell cannot prevail against Christ’s kingdom.
Current Comments

By HOMER G. KUIPER

Kalamazoo, Michigan

UNITED NATIONS

The series of meetings and conferences now being held at Lake Success on Long Island in the state of New York under the name of the United Nations Organization is an interesting spectacle. Aside from the cosmopolitan atmosphere created by the presence of delegations from most of the prominent nations of the earth, and aside from the far reaching consequences of some of the decisions being made by this conference of powers, we see the spectacle of nations anything but united. On every issue, minor or major, we see a deep-rooted cleavage making itself apparent. The readers of this column are no doubt aware that it has been a common thing for certain delegates, particularly those of the Soviet Union, to leave the conferences in a dramatic walkout at some crucial point during the deliberations. Whatever the merit or lack of merit these actions have, we do not wish to say except that generally speaking the name “United Nations” is fast becoming a farce. We desire to point out however to the readers of Beacon Lights that there is an underlying current of unity whose principle is utterly incompatible with the Christian religion and our Reformed heritage.

The unity of the United Nations revealed itself first of all in a negative manner by the fact that it rejected the conventional acknowledgement of the rule of God over the affairs of men. Altho it is the practice to open our national and state assemblies with prayer offered by a duly appointed chaplain yet at the opening of the UNO assembly, the host nation, the U. S. A., made no arrangements to continue this practice. In spite of the fact that in most cases the prayers in question are mere lip service to Christianity and are usually perfunctory petitions for carnal desires, we feel that the omissions at the opening of the UNO have great significance. We are of the opinion that it was a concession to the ungodly character of the delegations. We feel that it was omitted for political consider-
erations as a concession to those delegates who have made atheism their creed, for example, Soviet Russia and her satellites. We believe that, in view of the fact that there was not a single voice of protest, that they have revealed themselves as truly united nations, united in their ungodliness.

The unity of the United Nations, in the second place, was revealed in the sponsorship of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO, in which a highly organized program of education, scientific and cultural attainment was proposed for the peoples of the United Nations. Careful analysis of the basic principles of UNESCO shows that it is devoted to the development of a world and life view committed to the dignity of man and the glory of “one world” of humanity. UNESCO has lost no time in asserting its principles and you will find its propaganda and literature in all the public schools and colleges of our nation.

Concerning this UNESCO philosophy, we believe that it bears a very close resemblance to what Scripture calls the number of man, 666, of man in all his achievements but without God in his thoughts. Over against this view of life, the adherents of the Reformed faith hold, and by the grace of God shall continue to hold, that man is the servant of God and that in all things we are obligated to serve Him, that God is the sovereign Creator of the universe and that all things are in subjection unto Him, that “In Him we live and move and have our being”, that He has revealed Himself to His church as the God of all grace, mercy and compassion in Jesus, Christ our Lord.

We believe that the day is close at hand when we shall be called upon to make a life or death decision concerning the hope that is in us. We do well to prepare ourselves by a thorough mastery of the teachings of Scripture and the doctrinal formulations of the Reformed faith.
The Avian Parade

By MR. C. DF. BOER — Kalamazoo, Mich.

Have you ever observed a large number of swallows or grackles congregate and prepare for the "take-off"? Did you ever listen to the weird honking of geese as they journeyed southward thru a cold, bleak, snow-laden sky? Where do you suppose they were going? Why?

Occasionally, one still hears the query, "Do birds migrate?" This is not so strange, for centuries ago Aristotle taught that certain species as the European Robin changed to an other species as the Redstart with the approach of winter. Until the last century the hibernation theory was quite generally accepted. It was based upon the annual finding of many birds in the mud and marshes during migration. The poor creatures dropped from exhaustion or were unable to resume the flight after a short rest in the marsh, with the result that observers assumed they were preparing their winter dwelling in the weedy marsh to protect themselves from the cold of winter. Less than 50 years ago one author in reviewing the literature on migration found no less than 175 books and articles on the hibernation of swallows, which strange to say, is a migrant.

According to the Tartars, the large birds transported the smaller ones, as for example, the Crane carried the Corncrake on its back. This, of course, was mere legend. The highly imaginative speculators of the 18th century maintained that the birds migrated to the moon. Hence, we readily realize that there was little scientific knowledge concerning the seasonal movements of the birds of the temperate and arctic regions.

— 15 —
Today, charts have been constructed indicating the important highways thru the sky. Banding of the winged creatures has been the most important single factor in determining their pathways. However, the airplane and the camera have been extremely helpful.

Why do birds migrate? When the cold of winter approaches and the supply of food for most birds diminishes (since insects and worms disappear) the very existence of the feathered creature is jeopardized. Undoubtedly, you recall from a previous article on birds, that they surpass all other animals in appetite because their active nature necessitates such a great expenditure of energy and their temperature (110 degrees) requires the production of considerable more heat than most creatures. A constant consumption of food is required as they do not store it. In one instance a House Wren was recorded feeding its young 1217 times during a single day; a Scarlet Tanager devoured 630 gypsy moth caterpillars in 18 minutes; and a Maryland Yellow-throat ate plant lice at the rate of over 5,000 an hour. In fact the greatest value of birds lies in their ability to destroy insect enemies.

Also to be considered is the fact that the hours of daylight are greatly shortened with approaching winter, consequently their time of foraging is greatly reduced. Hence, birds instinctively seek another home during the inclement season.

Where do they migrate? Many have the mistaken notion that they simply journey to a warmer section as our own southern states or Central America where food is more plentiful and the temperature more favorable. However, the migratory maps indicate that birds of the Arctic as the Tern travel to the Antarctic—a distance of 11,000 miles—and those of the northern United States go to southern South America. Naturally they seek their own climate alternating between Arctic and Antarctic Zones, and North and South Temperate Zones according to season.

Many species pursue different routes in autumn than they do in spring, for example, many follow the Atlantic Coast route in autumn and return by the Mississippi Valley. The impulse to migrate is so strong that birds will leave their brood behind them to starve when the urge seizes them.

Numerous experiments have been performed in an attempt to determine what directs a bird on its course. Although they found that the bird's vision and sense of balance are unusually acute (in most cases) nevertheless, they are insufficient to direct them at night, thru fog, and over sea. In fact, they concluded, the arrival at the
ultimate destination we can only attribute to a deep-seated sense of direction combined with a topographical memory developed in birds. Many attempts have been made to isolate the seat of this sense of direction. It cannot be truthfully said that to date any have been successful. None of the known senses seem to offer great possibilities."

However, this does not explain the action of the young Golden Plovers who, while their parents follow the Atlantic Coastal route, make their first flight south by following the Mississippi Valley, arriving at the same destination. Certainly this cannot be ascribed to acquired deep-seated sense of direction and topographical memory.

Evolution minded naturalists, being unable to explain it scientifically, finally ended up in an attempt to interpret migration by the inheritance of acquired characteristics. that is, thru the process of trial and error they have established definite routes for their spring and autumnal flights. These acquired experiences are transmitted en mass to the young.

We cannot agree with their interpretation for it is instinct which not only gives them the urge but also guides them every foot of the way. Instinct is an irresistible, God-given directive force. It is instinct that directs the Tern for 11,000 miles to a similar climate in the Antarctic that it has left in the Arctic; it is instinct that guides the young Golden Plover for 3000 miles unescorted by adults on its first flight to the winter quarters in the south.

A Reformation In Holland

The controversy of 1924 was the cause of much agitation in the fair city of Holland, Michigan. Many were dissatisfied with the action of the Synod of the Christian Reformed Church. This was to be expected for several of these individuals had heard the Biblical Reformed preaching of the Rev. H. Hoeksema for over four years, while he was their pastor in the 14th Street Christian Reformed Church in that city. At the time that he was cast out, therefore, many appeared eager and ready to organize a Protestant Reformed Church in Holland. It soon became evident, however, that much of this enthusiasm was not of the proper kind. Gatherings were held at the home of some of these brethren but they did not result in the
organizing of a congregation.

Shortly after the deposition of Rev. Hoeksema a very interesting event occurred in Holland. He had been asked to speak on the "Three Points" and came to Holland to comply. So great was the interest that it was necessary for him to repeat his lecture to accommodate the crowd. On one evening, capacity audiences filled the Women's Literary Club auditorium twice, to hear the topic of the hour. But sad to say, this enthusiasm soon waned and by the year 1929 it was almost gone. There remained, however, a few who continued to be dissatisfied with the teachings of the Christian Reformed Church, "common grace" in particular. They were convinced that the teaching of the Protestant Reformed Churches was the true, Biblical teaching of God's Word.

In the early part of 1929, Mr. Henry Kamps, who at this time attended the Protestant Reformed Church at Hudsonville, took steps to attempt the organization of a Protestant Reformed Church in Holland. This attempt, by God's grace, was successful and on the evening of July 3, 1929, the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland was organized in the Women's Literary Club Rooms. On that occasion the Rev. H. Hoeksema spoke from II Timothy 2:19 and led the organizational procedure. There were 11 families as charter members. A Protestant Reformed Church in Holland had become a reality:

From that date on regular services, society meetings, catechisms and a Sunday School nourished the new daughter. Our first place of worship was a small building which had been used as a bakery. The dough had to be scraped from the floor before it was fit to use. It served its purpose, however, and we experienced the joy of the Word of God: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Our services were faithfully conducted by our students.

In September of 1932, Candidate M. Gritters became our first pastor. He served us with blessing until April of 1938. It was during this time that a young man from our midst felt the call and desire to study for the Ministry in our churches. This son of our congregation serves the church at South Holland at present, the Rev. M. Schipper. It was also during this period that the congregation moved from its first place of worship to a basement Baptist church across from our present parsonage. Steps were likewise taken to procure a place of worship that we might call our own. Two lots were purchased on the corner of 20th and Maple Avenue where our church building now stands.

From the basement church the
congregation moved to North River Avenue. For about a year and a half we worshipped in a Gospel Hall there. The flock at this time was shepherded by the Rev. P. De Boer. His pastorate extended from June, 1938 to December 1943. It was during his pastorate that the new church building was completed. The Lord had provided us a place of our own where we still continue to worship Him from week to week. To this we had looked forward and consumated with joy.

All things in this life have an end, as also the labors of Rev. De Boer, who, when called to another portion of God's vineyard in 1943, felt it to be the Lord's will to leave Holland for sunny California.

The congregation was not long without a pastor. Our present pastor, the Rev. W. Hofman, who was then a Candidate, accepted our call and became our third under- shep-herd.

The congregation at Holland can and must say "Ebenezer, hither hath the Lord helped us". To Him be the praise alone! He has abundantly provided with material goods but above all with spiritual blessings. We are blessed to be instructed in the Reformed Truth which is the Word of God.

The Scripture teaches us, that in the measure we receive these blessings, so also, our responsibility increases. We are only stewards and must give account to Him Whose are all things and Who alone is worthy of all praise and adoration. He calls His own out of darkness into His marvelous light that we may be pilgrims and sojourners in the earth, manifesting that we are of His Party.

The Truth of the Sovereign Grace of God is not popular in our day and really never has been. As we look back at our history that is also evident. We did not grow by leaps and bounds but God gave the increase in His own time and way. By His Spirit and Truth, through the years of our existence, we have grown in grace and numbers. The organization that began with 11 families now numbers 45.

May the Lord continue to bless us, as a congregation, and as churches. May we have faith ever to be vigilant, sober, and to continue in the Truth; once delivered unto the Saints!

H. E. Windemuller.
Dear fellows:

My last letter I wrote to you from Platte, South Dakota. But, as I wrote then, I could not stay there much longer because of the army of hunters that invaded that part of our country, and I could not find a suitable place to lodge. After all, I was sorry, as far as the work was concerned, that I could not stay longer. For although, at the time I wrote my last letter to you, things did not appear very bright, towards the end I felt rather encouraged, and began to have hope that the Lord might open the way there to organize a Protestant Reformed Church. The audiences improved. Especially on the last Sunday evening in Platte, we had a very good audience. And there is a group of people there in whose heart the Lord instilled true interest in the truth of His sovereign grace.

But I had to leave, and now I am writing again from my own study in Grand Rapids.

When you receive this letter, the mid-winter holidays are near. Soon the Christmas bells will be ringing, inviting us to go up to the house of the Lord, and with His people to commemorate that greatest of all wonders, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh. And soon after, another year will have sped away, and we will stand upon the threshold of a new year. Fellows, it is my prayer and sincere wish that you may spend these holidays with true joy and gladness, and I wish you a happy New Year.

This is possible, of course, no matter where you are on those days, and what may be your way. Some of you, perhaps, will have the privilege of coming home; others will be far away from home, in more than one sense of the word. Yet, I may wish you happy holidays, and a blessed New Year. For the Christian’s happiness is not of this world, neither is it dependent upon the things of this world. It is found in the blessed truth that God is our God through Jesus Christ, Who came in the world, died for our sins, arose for our justification, is exalted at the right hand of God, and has all power in heaven and on earth. That God is for us. He loves us. He prepared salvation, even eternal life, for us. He will guide us by His counsel. He will strengthen us unto the way we must travel. He will preserve us in the midst of a world of darkness. He will enable us to fight the good fight of faith, and to overcome. He will cause all things to work together for good to them that love Him.

He is our God!

And they that trust in Him shall never be put to shame.

To know this, to believe this with all our heart, to experience this in all our way,—that is true happiness.

God bless you!

As ever your friend.

Rev. H. Hoeksema.
A Reply ... Concerning Movies

A writer is greatly delighted when he finds out that his articles are read and even discussed. So I was delighted when I received various letters from those who had an interest in what I wrote concerning our latest Young People’s Convention, and that I had but one criticism to offer, n.l., “Personally I disapprove of movies at our conventions”. I answered those who wrote me that I would give my reasons for my disapproval of movies at our conventions in our December issue of the “Beacon Lights”. And Miss A. Reitsma asked me in our last issue to do this. So with thanks to those who wrote me, I hope to make my position clear.

First of all I want to make myself clear on this, that I do not believe the movie camera as such an evil thing. Many of us own one and such a movie camera is no more evil than any other camera. These are all good gifts of God. We have no argument with anyone on this score, even though the institution that has developed from this, has been and remains a great evil.

Secondly, we believe that the argument that movies are of great educational value, is greatly exaggerated, and is not in its place in this connection. Educational standards certainly have not been raised in recent years since the introduction of movies in our education institutions. The educational standards were higher years ago than they are today with the movie. Besides the movies were not shown at our convention with a view to education but to entertainment, even though the beauty of nature, such as the trip to the Northland and Yosemite National Park, were shown us. I once attended a father-son banquet at the Chicago Christian High School and there too the program included some so-called educational movies. There was one entitled: “Wheels of Progress” which might be classified as such, but when finally, “Mickey Mouse” was shown, the folks present surely revealed that the latter picture entertained them the most, by their applause. We believe that entertainment by movies is wrong and will lead to such kind of entertainment as indulged in at Chicago Christian High School.

Thirdly, we do not believe that the revelation of God in nature, as those movies of our convention were supposed to depict, may be divorced from the revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. (See Cor. 2 4:6).
BEACON LIGHTS

Even the heathen peoples see beauty and power and wisdom in God’s creation but they see not the beauty and power and wisdom of God “in the face of Jesus Christ”. In old Israel the children of God were instructed to destroy even the pictures of the heathen peoples they conquered in Canaan. See Num. 33:52. And our fathers said in Lord’s Day 35: “God neither can, nor may be presented by any means but as to creatures, though they may be represented, yet God forbids to make or to have any resemblance of them, either in order to worship them or to serve them . . . . . for we must not pretend to be wiser than God. Who will have His people taught not by dumb images, but by the lively preaching of His Word”. (I italicize, L. V.)

Certainly we all believe that God reveals Himself in both nature and the Word, but centrally always in Christ Jesus. And outside of the Word we have no revelation of God, not even in creation. See John 1:1-5. Now this revelation of God in the face of Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour certainly was not given us in the movies at our latest convention.

Fourthly, I believe that movies at our convention are an offense to many of our good, christian people. It breathes a spirit of worldliness, which certainly must be fought instead of encouraged. The movies, even those that appear so innocent, instill in our youth a desire to see more and more and lead to the movie house of the world. A truly God-centered instruction is the goal of all those who love the Protestant Reformed truth. That is why there is such strenuous effort made to have our own Protestant Reformed Schools in distinction from the so-called Christian Reformed Schools. And we did not see such a God-centered movie at our convention.

Finally, I would remind our readers to read and re-read an article that was written way back in April 15, 1927, in our Standard Bearer. In that article the author attacks the movie as positively and principally wrong, even as the drama is wrong, for they are really one and the same. The Christian Reformed Church as early as 1928 defended the principle of movies and claimed there are good and evil movies. But there is no such thing as a Christian movie, for no man can nor may act out either good or evil. for God requires truth in the inward parts. Ps. 51:6. “There is no good movie. A christian theatre and a christian movie are a contradiction in terms”. see The Standard Bearer, vol. 3, p. 320.

With this we are in hearty agreement, though at one time we had a somewhat different idea of this. I repeat: Personally, I disapprove of movies at our conventions.

Thank you.

Rev. L. Vermeer.
THE BLACK ROSE . . . .
By Thomas B. Costain.

Would you like to go to China with us in this story? The trip may be long and arduous, but there will be no lack of adventure. The first paragraph will launch you from your starting point, England.

It is medieval England. Edward the First and Roger Bacon are names of the day. Oxford, however, finds human nature the same as always. A couple of her sons get themselves into trouble leading an uprising. Both sons find it expedient to join forces as their predicament of being expelled from school gives them common footing.

Walter of Gurnie has blue blood that boils at mention of his ignoble birth. His friend springs from the common people, but his loyalty is as firm as his frame is large and sturdy. Left without a place to go, the two take the suggestion of their great teacher, Roger Bacon, to travel to Cathay, there to study the advanced civilization of the East and bring back to England knowledge of it. Walter is given a map to guide him.

They find it easy to follow the broad wake of the Crusades to Palestine. From there, their travels become increasingly unsafe. Through a tyrannical merchant of Antioch, Walter barters places for themselves in a caravan conducted by the famous Mongolian war lord, Bayan of the Hundred Eyes. They discover incidentally that the merchant is sending by the same caravan nine times nine beautiful women to Kubla Khan, a gift of slaves. To prove his bestiality, the merchant includes his own half sister among the eighty-one slaves. The young Englishmen witness a spirited attempt on her part to plead mercy from her heartless brother. To their surprise, Walter and Tristram observe that this beautiful Greek woman has blue eyes, English eyes. The color speaks to them of the great Crusade of a generation before.
The Westerners are hated and scorned by the Mongols. Their lives are lightly esteemed and come into constant danger after Maryam flees her captivity and asks protection from them in the guise of a black servant boy. Maryam is eager to learn about the country of her father and life in a Christian land. Her presence is revealed at length by a spying Mongolian before they reach China. To avoid suspicion of complicity Walter continues with the caravan while the others escape.

China has many wonders for Walter. He sees cannon and powder used in a new kind of warfare; he is taught the making of paper; he studies the process of printing. Chinese law and philosophy and society are as fascinating as they are strange to him. His yellow hair is interpreted as a good omen by the Empress, and his favor with the court enables him to experience luxury and wealth beyond his wildest imagination.

His friends appear again but in dire straits. To rescue Maryam who is about to be sold into slavery, Walter marries her. Tristram, after being treated like a caged tiger on exhibition, is restored to health after many weeks. War interrupts and terminates their visit in China. Treachery separates Maryam from her husband and his friend. Walter and Tristram are forcibly conveyed by ship back to Europe. Believing their little black rose, as they called her when she was disguised as a Negro servant, to be lost, the two return to England.

The jewels and the tales of adventure gain a social position for Walter, but Tristram becomes an outcast because of his leadership of the commoners against feudal oppression. The two, though loyal to one another, are widely separated by circumstances. At length Tristram's life becomes the price of his steadfastness.

Meanwhile, Maryam's son, Little Walter, is born. With perseverance, courage, and just two English words at her command, she travels inexorably toward her husband's country. Weeks between ships she passes walking on the waterfronts calling "England" and "Walter" until she is picked up and brought farther on her way. Hardship and illness cannot make her give up. At last, after four years of struggle, Maryam reaches England and Walter.

A sketch of the plot can give only a hint of the charm the story holds. Its running recital doesn't let our interest flag. Its pictures of life in early England are vivid, but history is given us in pleasing doses by being secondary to the plot. Among the welter of recent books which are noticeable (not notable) for their ugliness and sor-
didness, this one printed in 1945 appears as a refreshing change.

It is honestly a secular book. Its ethics are limited to a simple code of morals without aspiring to religiosity or philosophy. Courage, loyalty, and honesty are the characteristics held to be worthwhile in the individuals. The only apparent purpose of the story may be noticed from the restlessness among the downtrodden peasantry in England and the yearnings after science among a few leaders of English thought. We are made to realize that the high walls of the Dark Ages are beginning to crumble and that the Renaissance cannot be long delayed. The author wants us to know that men wish to be recognized as men after centuries of being considered little better than animals.

Certainly we do not call this a great book. Its style is easy but not remarkable. A second glance at the language shows a fair amount of preparation and research on the part of the writer. Altogether THE BLACK ROSE can be recommended for pleasure to your readers who wish to be entertained for an hour or two by a legend of the long ago.

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**Bible Study Outlines**

By Rev. L. DOEZEMA — Bellflower, California

Chapter 32

_Elihu Enters._

This entrance of Elihu forms another main division in this book. Because of the difference in the language and the thought, some have argued that this "Elihu section" does not belong to the original, but that it was added by some later scribe. It is also argued that no other reference is made to Elihu in the entire book—neither before or afterwards. These arguments or observations cause us to see that there is something extraordinary about this "Elihu section", but they are not arguments at all against its canonicity. For we have the infallible approval of all our Old Testament Bible from Jesus and the apostles.

In verses 1-5 we have the introduction to Elihu's speech and in
the following verses. 6-22, Elihu makes his introduction.

I. The Author's Introduction:

1. It is told us that Elihu begins after the three friends had ceased speaking. The three friends were silenced: they could not answer Job because he was righteous in his own eyes. 2. Elihu speaks because his wrath is kindled against Job first of all. and also against the three friends. 3. We also have a description of Elihu. Notice how that much more is told us of him than of the others. Elihu means: "He is my God." He is the son of Barachel, which means: "praise God." He is a Buzite. We read of Buz in Genesis 22:21, where it is said that he and his brother Huz. or Uz, is exactly the same as the name used in the first chapter of Job where it is said that Job was in the land of Uz. This interesting description of Elihu tells us of his parentage and seems to imply a relation to Job not only, that he is of the same country. but also that there is some connection of these men to the time of Abraham. From their names we also note their relation to God. They confessed their real faith in God.

II. Elihu's Introduction:

1. First of all he states why he has not spoken before. vss. 6-8. 2. Thereupon he explains why he must speak, vss. 8-22. There are two reasons that Elihu gives for his speaking. a) The first reason is that he feels that he has the truth. This he has from the Almighty. vs. 8. And he makes the statement that only when the spirit of man is led by the Almighty can he possess the truth. It is not necessarily age that possesses wisdom. This is Scriptural for, "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." Nevertheless, Elihu was courteous. He had waited for the elders to speak. He had listened very carefully to their every word and determined their meaning. vss. 11, 12. (Here we have an important example for all of us.) And his conclusion was that the friends of Job had not at all given Job an answer. vs. 12. In verse 13 Elihu makes the point that they must not think that the arguments of Job are to be answered by God only and not man. That they had done their human best—they have found wisdom—: but only God can convince Job. This is somewhat clearer in the Revised Version, which begins. "beware lest". Elihu intends to defeat their implication that no man can answer Job for that would also imply that neither had Elihu a reason to speak. And we must not misinterpret Elihu to mean that he of himself will answer Job, for he has already made the point that it is of the Spirit of the Almighty that he speaks. He means to point out their failure and their calling as well as his, which is his reason for speaking. b) His sec-
ond reason which follows from the first, is stated in verses 17-20. It is, in short, that he cannot keep himself from speaking. This in introduced in verses 14-16, where he admits that he wasn’t spoken to by Job. 3. Finally Elihu concludes his introduction by emphasizing that he will speak the truth regardless of the position of the person to whom he is speaking. He will not flatter, for he is conscious of his calling before God, vss. 21, 22.

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Chapter 33
Elihu’s First Address.
The speaker calls Job by name, different than the other speakers. This seems to indicate his sincere interest in Job’s welfare. At least he takes pains to express his good intentions in another introduction to his first address, vss. 1-7. The situation is indeed serious and tense, which will cause us to allow for this sort of an introduction on the part of Elihu. Some criticize the lengthy speech of Elihu and say it is characteristic oriental style. Yet there is certainly very important material in the introduction. In vss. 1-3 Elihu again calls attention to his readiness to speak and to his sincerity. In vss. 4-7 he comforts Job with the thought that he himself is of clay, a creature of the Almighty. Job had nothing to fear from him.

1. A statement of Job’s words is made, vss. 8-12. This is to refute Job fairly. The question is, has Elihu stated the case correctly? It is correct as far as the sense and even the words are concerned. However, if we would compare chapter 14 we find that Job does not deny his depravity. He asks there, 14:4 “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?” We must, therefore, give the correct interpretation to these words of Job. As we remarked before, he was righteous before his God. He also had the testimony of God that he was perfect and upright. Just this makes the problem of the book of Job. It is the suffering of the righteous. The problem was especially difficult in these days prior to the coming of Christ and the New Testament revelation. Nevertheless, it is always the soul struggle of every child of God. This struggle had caused Job to sin and to question the action of God. This is also the point Elihu takes issue with. His point is: God is greater than man, i.e., it is impossible for man to question God’s right to do anything.

II. Elihu reproves Job for his words against God. 1. The speaker reproves by asking a question, vs. 13. This follows his point in vs. 12. The point is that God does not obey the whims of man. Because of His wisdom and power God cannot be called to give account of his work to man when man is in doubt of God’s wisdom.
That is equal to denying God.
2. Nevertheless Elihu makes the beautiful point that God does inform man of His way, vs. 14. He repeats his revelation, yet man does not perceive. 3. Different ways are mentioned that God makes man know His way, vs. 15, 16. This must be understood in the light of those days when there probably was no written word of God, there was this testimony of God which was given to His people that they might know His will. Now we have the written word of God: and we believe we have the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit through the written word, as He interprets and assures us of God’s will. We believe we receive God’s answer to our prayers. “He openeth the ears of men and sealeth their instruction. God takes care of His own; He never permits them to be lost everlastingly. I think that that is the meaning of Elihu in vs. 18;—not as some explain, only temporal salvation. This point of Elihu is very good. God saves but not in man’s way or time.

III. The reality of severe trial brought out by Elihu, vs. 19-22. This was not in Job’s consideration at all, that God would instruct his child in the way of sickness nigh unto death: “Yea, his soul draweth near unto the pit.” It is even more than physical sickness, it is the sickness of the soul because of sin and misery unto death. The soul is given to the destroyers, or as has been explained by one commentator, destroying angels, Cf. Ps. 78:49.

IV. The Deliverer: Elihu comes to the conception of the need of a Saviour, and His salvation, vs. 23-28. 1. Notice that his conception of a Saviour of man in misery of sin and death is an angel of God. In the Old Testament, before the clearer revelation of the Mediator to Israel, there is the revelation of the Saviour in the expression of the Angel of Jehovah. Jacob spoke of the Angel who delivered him: Ps. 34:7 speaks of the Angel of Jehovah who “encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” There are many such references in the O. T. 2. This Angel is Interpreter to show man “what is right for him”, i.e., the way of salvation through righteousness. He is unique among the hosts of angels, one among a thousand. 3. This, therefore, cannot refer to Elihu as some explain. Although Elihu certainly is a “forerunner” of the Christ for Job. 4. Through the Angel’s work, God declares His grace to man, vs. 24. This is the striking contribution of Elihu, that he shows the need of atonement, “I have found a ransom.” 5. Thereupon man rejoices in that salvation. The Savior causes man to be renewed, to make confession, to pray, to receive the joy of salvation, and to confess it before
V. The challenge. Elihu maintains this as the truth and challenges Job to answer if he can. If he cannot Elihu will proceed to enlighten him still more. Upon this first address of Elihu, Job is silent. This silence is significant of conviction, vss. 29-33.

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Chapter 34
Second Address.

Elihu's introduction to his continuation is very interesting, vss. 1-4. Vs. 4 is comparable to the N. T. admonition to the believers, "Prove all things, hold fast to that which is good." I Thess. 5:21.

1. The error of Job considered: Elihu had taken up (chap. 33) the idea of Job, that he was righteous and could not see cause for his misery and thus implying unrighteousness with God, and had explained that there was a reason for suffering, namely, instruction in the way of salvation. He continues in chapter 34 to take up the problem of Job and the three friends and to show more specifically how God is righteous in all His dealings. Job had looked at the prosperity of the wicked and presented his problem how that the wicked prospered and the righteous suffered. The three friends had denied the problem. In vss. 5 and 6 Elihu states it. It is almost the same as stated in chapter 33. But now Elihu takes up another aspect of the problem as it had appeared in the different speeches.

In vss. 7-9 Elihu states in effect what had been the speech of Job and criticizes him severely.

II. God's righteousness maintained: 1. The righteousness of God implies that He deals with every man according to His works, and Elihu maintains that so it is also, vs. 11. 2. Before he enters further upon this truth, Elihu considers the problem in the abstract and shows how it could not be otherwise than that God always deals righteously. The reason is that God is the sovereign ruler of the universe. No one gave Him charge of the earth, i.e., God is subject to no one. Besides all things continue to exist in God. If the Almighty would withdraw His Spirit they would not be. From this Elihu means to imply that therefore God will deal righteously. But also from the fact that God is not turned to Himself alone, but to the creature, vs. 14, it is sure that God will do the right. It is as Abraham expresses it, "Shall not the judge of all the earth do right?" 3. Also abstractly considered God is just because He is the ruler. It is inherently a property of a ruler that He is just. Vs. 17. We, of course, understand a real ruler, not a tyrant or imbecile, for they cannot rule. 4. Job is charged with a great sin in that he questioned the justice of the All-just One, vss.
17, 19. For God judges all, both rich and poor, not according to their person but according to strictest justice. It cannot be that He would be partial for all creatures are what they are because of God. They are the work of His hands. The Lord Almighty knows all things and everything receives His just attention. even in time, in the sight of men. vss. 21-23. This expresses that God reveals His wrath upon all ungodliness of men. Elihu therefore also proves God’s justice from actual observation. 5. It seems that in vss. 31, 32 Elihu teaches that the only thing that changes the execution of justice upon evil men is their penitence. This is so proposed to Job. He must choose. And in the final verses he makes the charge of rebellion.  

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Chapter 35
Elihu’s Third Speech.

The next important point of Job’s speeches Elihu considers. It is that Job had said that it mattered not whether one sinned or had done righteously. for there was no reward or punishment from God accordingly. This is not the verbatim expression of Job, but is logical inference from his words, e.g. 9:22.

To answer this Elihu points to the infinity of God. God is great. And the heavens declare His greatness, vs. 5. From this Elihu makes the same point that had been suggested by Job and also by Eliphaz. 7:20; 21:2, 3. That is, vss. 6-8, that man’s righteousness or man’s sin cannot hurt or profit the Lord. However, the former speakers had drawn other conclusions from this important truth. Elihu means to say God’s reward of evil and of the good is not because of a change in God. His reward of good is not His indebtedness. nor is His punishment self-defense. According to vs. 8, the reward is in the doing of good and in the doing of evil. To perform the good is its own reward. to do evil carries also its own punishment. According to the principle expressed in Gal. 6:7: “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he reap.”

In vss. 9-13 Elihu points out that the correct way to approach God is to seek Him. the Maker, and not to complain as is often the case in the prayers of men. This is what Job had also done. He had complained, almost to the exclusion of a prayer for salvation from God. But every prayer for help is answered, for He gives songs in the night, and giveth us all wisdom above the birds of heaven.

In vss. 15-16 it is pointed out why Job continues to rebel. It is because the Lord has not dealt with Job as He ought to have done. In this is a strong plea for penitence and an emphasis upon the reality that all is of grace, not of our merit.

— 30 —
Chapter 36
Exhortation.

I. In vss. 1-16 Elihu explains once again and now more in detail the way of the Lord. He maintains that He is always righteous. He does not preserve the life of the wicked. And by this we can understand that Elihu means the reprobate. The elect righteous are the objects of the eternal preservation of God, vs. 7. When they sin the Lord sets them in fetters, or bondage, or affliction to show them their sin, that they may repent before Him. He instructs them in the way of salvation. When they return and walk in His way He rewards them. This is always worked out in God's people. If they would not turn to Him then it would follow that they would be consumed, vs. 12. He delivers even by affliction, vs. 15.

II. A reprimand is given here to Job after the enlightenment in the preceding verses. He in effect condemns Job's judging others, vs. 17. He was filled with wrath against the chastisements of the Lord. In the language of Jesus, "Judge not that ye be not judged" Elihu also shows that he had listened to every word of Job. He mentions how that Job had cursed his day and had desired death. He now reprimands him, vs. 20. He also points out his sin of cursing his day, and his other rebellion, vs. 21, "Take heed regard not iniquity." He admonishes him to look upon the affliction as of the Great Teacher, Who does all things righteously.

III. Finally in this speech Elihu exhorts Job to praise God for His greatness, vss. 24-33. He does so by singing the praises of God himself. God is great and incomprehensible and good are the points of his song. At the same time he speaks of the lightning and thunder of God. There is grace and judgment. For His people grace; for the wicked wrath.

Our Young People's Society

Once again we meet as a Young People's Society. We have had a long vacation and we should be eager to begin another season. The purpose of a vacation is that by taking a rest, our meetings should be that much more lively and interesting. It should prepare the members for renewed activity and stimulate a genuine interest in the Society.

God commands us in His law to remember the Sabbath Day and keep it holy. What could be a better way of hallowing the Sabbath Day than meeting together on Sun-
day afternoon to study God's Word?

This Society has a motto "Search the Scriptures". Let us live up to this motto. The Word of God is like a deep mine. The precious truths of God's Word are not all lying on the surface but they must be sought after. "Seek and ye shall find."

God also commands us to study His Word. We read, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness," and "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above. where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" and "Study to show thyself approved, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." The command is there and we must obey it. A true child of God will by God's grace be eager to know more about God and His Word. If we truly seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness we shall surely find it. For this has God promised in His Word. Let us learn to sing from our hearts, "To live apart from God is death. 'Tis good His face to seek; My refuge is the living God; His praise I long to speak."

We do not know how long we will be privileged to meet as a Young People's Society. For we know that the day is soon coming when all the church of Jesus Christ shall suffer persecution. But the Bible tells us not to fear, for Christ will deliver us. Timothy tells us that evil men and seducers shall become worse and worse, "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them."

Let us then meet as a Young People's Society with this in mind, to preach the Scripture. It is our duty but also our privilege as children of the covenant. If we all meet from week to week with this in mind, to learn more about God and Jesus Christ Whom He has sent, then we will have no problems. Everyone will be present as much as possible, every one will conduct himself in an orderly fashion, all will be interested in Bible discussion, and members will at all times be prepared to give a number on the program when required. Such a society would be to our edification and to the glory of God.

*Essay by a member of the Young People's Society, Redlands, Calif.*