BEACON LIGHTS
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION
JANUARY - 1947
Beacon Lights is published Monthly except July and September.

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Subscription Price $1.25 Per Year.

Beacon Lights is published by the Protestant-Reformed Young People's Federation, 354 Diamond Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids.

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Contemplating The New Year

By Rev. U. Zogg — Sutton, Nebraska

The year 1947 lies before us like an unexplored region, and we know that there are many possibilities for it. Things of which we never dreamed might occur in it. In this wide world everything is uncertain, nothing permanent. What shall God’s people say at the beginning of the year? Whither shall they look? They are well aware that in this world we lie in the midst of death and that the year upon which we have entered, will not be different from the years that have gone by. It, too, will bring its labor and sorrow, its suffering and agonies, its fear and death. And as they contemplate the state of the world at the beginning of 1947, with its confusion, hatred, lies, fear and dangers, they do not seek their happiness in the vain prospect of man’s better world or of a lasting peace and prosperity, created by the proud politicians.

No, they look upon “Eben-Ezer” upon the “stone of help” that is erected before their eyes. They remember the merciful help of God. yea, they know that “our help cometh from the Lord. Which made heaven and earth” and gratefully acknowledge “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us”! I Sam. 7:12. These words were spoken by the prophet Samuel who as the faithful servant of the Lord judged the people of Israel for many years. God had delivered his people out of the house of bondage in Egypt, but Israel soon has basely forgotten this great benefit and served idols. Therefore God gave them into the hands of their enemies which oppressed them hard. At this time Israel was groaning under the oppression of the Philistines. They had taken away from Israel the ark of the covenant, which was for Israel a testimony of forgiveness of sins, of grace, life and peace with God.

In their anxiety the people come to Samuel and say to him: “Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that He will save us out of the hand of the Philistines” (I Sam. 7:8). They cannot expect any merited help because with bitter
weeping they have confessed: "We have sinned against the Lord" (I Samuel 7:6). There was nothing else left for them but to cry for God's mercy. But—how can the holy God be merciful to these people which had so grievously sinned against Him and served the devil? Must God in His wrath not destroy them? Well, Samuel is a true advocate. He knows that "God is indeed merciful, but that He is likewise just" (Heid. Cat., Q. 11). He knows that the justice of God must be satisfied in order that we may escape the righteous judgment of God which we deserved, and be again received into favor.

What is Samuel now doing? He took a sucking lamb, and offered it for a burnt offering. Therewith he confesses that Israel's sin deserved death, yea, that all the people was worthy to be consumed in the flames of God's wrath. But this lamb becomes the substitute for the people and dies instead of the people. And this lamb is a figure of the Lamb of God, and the people are reconciled with God in the innocent and undefiled Lamb of God. and the admission to the throne of grace stands open.

And so you, too, youth of the Protestant Reformed Churches, are redeemed and purchased with the blood of the Lamb of God. And if you so in the Lamb that has fully satisfied for all your sins, come to the throne of grace, you will obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need in this new year. Israel experienced that the God of Israel keeps His Word: "Thou shalt turn unto the Lord thy God and shalt obey His voice according to all that I command thee this day, thou and thy children, with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that then the Lord thy God will turn thy captivity, and have compassion upon thee"! "Here it becomes manifest that Israel, the church of God, lives only by God's grace, that Israel has again tested the grace of God. yea, the grace through the blood of the Lamb! And here it was, where Samuel erected the stone and gave it the name "Eben-Ezer" and said: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"!

And, my young friends, in your midst there is also erected an "Eben-Ezer", and your Eben-Ezer is our Lord Jesus Christ. God has promised: "Behold. I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation" (Is. 28:16). In Psalm 118:22 we read: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner". Peter writes to the church: "To Whom coming as unto a living stone" (I Pet. 2:4). And Paul writes: "For they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them: and that rock was Christ" (1 Cor. 10:4). In this stone "Eben-Ezer"
Samuel holds out Christ before the people as the only help in life and in death. *God in Christ*, otherwise Israel and we have no God!

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us"! Thus you also must confess. And that means: Hitherto the Lord has kept His Word. And such a Word that has proved to be truth certainly is worthy that we believe it. And of such a word we shall not doubt for the future. You have a God and Saviour upon Which you may rely in life and in death, a God and Saviour, whose mercy endureth forever, and Who will not forsake the works of His hands.

"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and Who is the sword of thy excellency"! *He* is with you in 1947!

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**EDITORIAL**

Your Future....

BY REV. W. HOFMAN — HOLLAND, MICH.

As we stand at the threshold of a new year our thoughts turn to the future. So we too cast a glance ahead and consider that future. But it is not merely of the future in general that we speak but of your place in that future, hence, your future.

The Sage of Scripture, Solomon, suggests the wisdom of making provision for the future in his parable of the ant: "Go to the ant, thou sluggard: consider her ways and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest". Not only does he teach us that in parables but speaks of it directly, in another place, when he declares: "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son". The implications are, that he who does not provide for the days to come is a sluggard, and that he who takes no thought for the future is a fool. That wisdom of Solomon is ages old but just as fresh and true today as it ever was.
It is a timeless wisdom.

Undoubtedly, most of us who read this are still preparing for our future. And even if we have entered our life's vocation we are concerned about its future. What future is there in the work for which we are preparing? Does it have a future? What are the possibilities for advancement and success in the position we now have? These are the questions we face every day and especially in the summer of our life—our youth. Are you concerned about your future?

Perhaps, with the advice of teachers and parents, we have carefully plotted our course to lead to a brilliant future. After considering the various possibilities we see great opportunity to distinguish ourselves in the field of medicine, chemistry, physics, economics—or even the ministry. We may have taken aptitude tests to determine our I. Q. and thus attempted to find some future place and where we will fit into that future. And this all is certainly a wise course. God has given us gifts and brains to use: to use in compliance with His command to subdue the earth and have dominion over it.

But while you contemplate your future and chart your course into that unknown have you ever considered that there is only one sphere that has a FUTURE? That is, there is only one possibility that you shall have a future at all. The only thing that has future is faith! There is not even a possibility that it may or may not; faith very definitely has a future. In fact, we can be quite emphatic about it and say that it is the one and only sphere that has a future. One may become a most famous surgeon, a noted and brilliant scientist, an eloquent preacher, but if he has no faith he has no future. On the other hand, one's life work may be most insignificant, yet if he has faith he has THE FUTURE! Furthermore, the Scriptures teach us, that those who have that future also have a present. And again, quite strikingly, they are usually those whose accomplishments in this world seem so feeble and small. "For ye see your calling, brethren, honor that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and the base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God chosen. yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence."

Your particular future in this world may be difficult to predict and circumscribe. Nevertheless,
we can forecast rather accurately a general picture. You will be rich or poor or somewhere in between. You will be a common, ordinary citizen, mediocre, or at best famous. You will experience joy and happiness as well as grief and sorrow—mostly the latter. But whatever your future may be you may be sure you have none here, for you must die. In your future lies your grave, wherein you must some day lie, returning to the dust. Not a very pleasant prospect, but that’s your future. You may also be sure, as everyone is, that one day this world shall be destroyed and all futures with it. All shall be rolled up as a scroll and burned with unquenchable fire. You see, you have no future here, for the whole is passing away and we with it.

If, however, you are a child of God and have the gift of grace that is called faith, you have a future—THE FUTURE! You have that which cannot possibly be described or comprehended—it’s too glorious! You may speak concerning it and testify of the certainty of it all but you cannot even understand it: for the substance of that future is as of things hoped for, and its conviction of things not seen. That future cannot be predicted, described, pictured, nor even imagined. No one here can tell you what it will be like for no one here has experienced it. Even the Word of God hesitates to reveal its nature and frankly states concerning it: “Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love him”. But that doesn’t mean that we cannot know it, and be sure of it—“God hath revealed it unto us by His Spirit”. Is that your future? Plot your course with the directive of the Word of Truth and you run the race with the saints of God whose future is eternal life. Along that road the grave has lost its victory and death’s sting is swallowed up of Life. Through Jesus Christ our Lord we are more than conquerors for faith unites us to Him in time and unto all eternity—and nothing can separate us. He holds us there! If that is your future it is also your present. It conditions all your present plans, study, work or profession. Permeating these it fills you with blessed consciousness of peace with God—no matter what. Your present way is blessed, and in that way God leads you gently home. Faith has a present! More important—faith has THE FUTURE! Your future?
We are standing on the threshold of a new year.—1946 is past forever.—1947 stretches out before us. How fast those years go by!

With this transition from the old to the new there comes, as a matter of course, a change in viewpoint. No, reality is no different now than it was last month, when our thoughts were directed to the end of all things. Today, as well as yesterday, it may be said:

"Nearer my home am I today Than ever I've been before."

However, our viewpoint is somewhat different. At the end of a year we look back, or, if we do look ahead, it is over and beyond all present things to that which lies beyond this life. At the beginning of a year we look ahead to the way as it lies directly before us.

What this new year has in store for us no one knows but God alone. It is dark in more than one way: dark, too, in the sense of ominous, sinister, threatening. Both Scripture and experience tell us what we may and should expect. "The strength of our years," says the Psalmist, "is labor and sorrow." And even now, what do we see on every hand? A world that is living in all the corruption of which it is capable: jealousy and strife no end: labor and capital seeking, relentlessly and mercilessly, to cut each other's throats; the nations of the world distrusting one another more than ever before in history: a world full of misery and sickness and pain and suffering and death.

How we need the admonition to put all our trust and confidence in Him, alone, Who is able to help us and to see us safely through whatever may lie ahead. Trust—that is the password each New Year morning. And how secure and blessed are they who know, spiritually and experientially, what this means. "Like Zion's stedfast mound are they, Who in the Lord confide; Secure, immovable they stand, Forever to abide."

Yet, how little of that genuine trust there is in the life of the child
of God. And how much of that other thing, that thing that makes all of life so miserable and unbearable, that baneful thing that is known as—worry.

Worry, that enemy of all men and spoiler of all life, ah, we know all about it, do we not? Our heads and hearts and lives are so full of it. It is one of the best-known words in the English dictionary. Do you know what it really means? According to Webster its root-meaning is: to strangle, to shake and tear with the teeth, like a terrier does a rat. Thus it came to mean: to trouble, tease, harass. To be worried, therefore, means: that you are being shaken and torn, troubled and harassed by those things in life that cause the worry. It is a state of mental distress, anxiety, fear, restlessness, spiritual agitation and vexation. It is mental and spiritual uneasiness with respect to the way that lies before us. Worry is that painful state of mind, that mental anguish that we endure when we live in constant dread of the future, when we want things to go one way and we fear that they may go another.

Such worry could be justified on only one condition: that there were no Father in heaven who controlled all things and made all things work out together for our good. Then, of course, there would be every reason to tremble, be troubled, fear, be anxious and restless, for then we would have no guarantee whatever that all things will go well. However, with a Father above Who rules supreme there is no room for worry in the heart and life of the Christian. That is precisely the evil of all worry. It virtually denies that God does all things well, in fact, it really belies that the Lord does all things at all. It questions the love and grace, the faithfulness and goodness, the wisdom and omnipotence of our covenant God.

Therefore there is such a wealth of truth in this simple fable that came to my attention some time ago. Written by Elizabeth Cheney, it goes like this:

"Said the Robin to the Sparrow
I would really like to know
Why these anxious human beings
Rush about and worry so."

Said the Sparrow to the Robin
"Friend, I think that it must be
That they have no heavenly Father"

"Such as cares for you and me."

Well worth memorizing, don't you think so? If the birds, so wonderfully upheld and provided for by our heavenly Father, could speak, that's just what they would say about us anxious human beings. And we the very children of the Highest!

So very often Scripture exhorts us, in one form or another, to put
our trust in the Lord alone. What does that mean?

Negatively it admonishes us to look away from ourselves, entirely, and from all that is of the flesh and of the mere creature. Also, that we fear nothing or no one, now or in the future.

Positively it implies, that we seek our all in God alone: that we cast ourselves with all that we are and possess on Him and on no other: that we commit our entire way to the Lord and cast all our cares on Him: that we cling to Him as trusting children regardless what judgments may shake the earth; that we really sing 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."

Christian friends, let us thus put all our confidence in Him alone, Who loves us with an everlasting love, and we never shall be moved. That is the promise of the Word of God: "They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." Psalm 125:1.

How true this is. Did you ever see a person who trusted in God afraid, confounded, confused, shaken? You never did, and never will.

Let come what may: let come the severest trials of life, which by nature would certainly overwhelm us. Let it be, that God's ways are often strange, dark, painful, so that the world laughs us to scorn and taunts: "Where is thy God?"

They that trust in the Lord shall not be moved. upset, confused. They shall be strong in the God of their salvation. They shall stand, now and forever, for their strength will be in the God of their salvation.

May this, then, be our prayer, by the grace of Almighty God, as we start our journey through another year:

"Another year is dawning!
Dear Father, let it be.
In working or in waiting.
Another year with Thee;
Another year of leaning.
Upon Thy loving breast,
Another year of trusting.
Of quiet, happy rest."
Montanism


The early New Testament Church, it seems, was to have no "breath- ing spell" at all. False doctrines were springing up in rapid succession. Indeed, this is just exactly what the devil desired. He favored no breathing spell for the church but instead martialed all the forces at his disposal to attack the church from every direction which held the promise of destroying the faith of the newly converted Christians. Of course, when the time has arrived that God eternally pleased to bring a temporary halt to the terrific pressure that was brought to bear upon the church, the devil can do nothing. Even as he was not allowed to afflict Job beyond the measure God prescribed, so too the pressure the devil desired to exert upon the early New Testament church was decreed by God and was always under His perfect control.

In the early history of the New Testament church it plainly was the devil's desire and attempt to destroy the faith of the church by multiplying the false doctrines of that day. Ebionism, we have seen was propagated with a view to subduing, if it were possible, the Jewish converts to the Christian religion. Gnosticism had for its devilish aim the tempting away from the truth of the Gentile converts. And now appears a third heresy which seeks to capture the hearts and minds of both the Jewish and Gentile converts by an entirely different appeal. This time it is Montanism.

Montanism was founded by a certain Montanus who lived in Phrygia in the middle of the second century. Since he lived in Phrygia, his followers were also often called "Phrygians". The heresy, unlike Ebionism and Gnosticism, found a ready place in the church because of corruptions in the church which were present. It seemed to be a return to the true faith, but instead it was simply a departure in a different direction. But a departure from the truth it surely was. And it was as dangerous to the true faith of the church as Ebionism and Gnosticism and perhaps even more dangerous than these.

Ebionism had its origin in Judaism. In fact it was Judaism with
a mixture of those Christian truths which best served to cover up its evil nature. Gnosticism was Paganism with a varnish of Christian truths. It had its origin in Pagan mythology, and like Ebionism professed to believe some of the truths of Scripture in order to lure the believers away from Christ. Montanism however did not have its origin in either one of these. It originated in the minds of those who professed Christianity's truth and condemned the error of Ebionism and Gnosticism. In this respect it was therefore more subtle and dangerous for the truth than Ebionism and Gnosticism. In fact even such a capable leader as Tertullian, as we said before, embraced Montanism in the latter part of his life and accepted it as the proper reaction to the corruption that was setting in amid that early church of the New Dispensation. It seemed to be the answer to the growing worldliness in the church.

One of its chiefest characteristics was that it claimed continued revelation through the church of all ages. It denied that the canon of the Scriptures was closed with the death of the last Apostle, and instead it maintained that even after the death of the last Apostle, God continued, to reveal the truth to the church, or rather even to the believer directly. Of course God reveals the truth to the church today, but He does so through the Scriptures. Montanus claimed that God revealed it directly, without the use of the previously inspired Scriptures. He taught that he himself received such revelation from God. In fact he even maintained that he, Montanus, was the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, whom Jesus promised to send after He had gone to heaven. The truth in regard to the Spirit is not clearly understood by many even today. And in the day of Montanus the knowledge was even less understood, and many followed Montanus as the prophet of God to lead them into the truth.

A few interesting facts in regard to the movement are the fact that these Montanists already denied infant baptism. We often think of this heresy as being of recent origin. It was taught here already a little over 150 years after Christ's birth. Another fact is that the Montanists—believing as they did in direct revelation and prophecy—predicted an early return of Christ. They even predicted dates, only to be proven to be wrong, and they lost many followers because of such practices.

You might ask, "How could Tertullian embrace such a religion?" He did especially because it taught asceticism, that is, a strict life of self denial. As we stated, the church was becoming increasingly worldly, and this emphasis upon self denial had its appeal for many of
the more serious-minded in the church.

The danger of this heresy was that it placed experience in the fore of what it called "revelation" above the Scriptures. It was mystical. Besides this it denied the special offices in the church and due to its belief in this direct revelation insisted that all believers were pastors, teachers and prophets. This latter stand was also a reaction to the worldliness in the church. It was a reaction to the worldliness in the clergy.

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IN MEMORIAM

The Young People's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, herewith wishes to express its sincere and heartfelt sympathy to our fellow-member, Roger Westenbroek, in the loss of his sister

MARJORIE KAY

May the God of all grace comfort our brother and his family in their bereavement.

"For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory: while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Rev. W. Hofman, Pres.
Miss. M. Casemier, Sec'y.

...CONTRIBUTED...

It is a proved fact that the Church of God in this world is gradually departing from the true Gospel and is more and more tending toward the false doctrines of Modernism and Liberalism. It is undeniable that the further we depart from true Christianity, the further we sink into sin and the more our morals degenerate. The result is we can no more live a decent Christian life and fulfill the purpose for which we were placed on this earth. It is also undoubtedly true that not even one-tenth of the people called Christians would willingly die for their faith as did the martyrs of old.

In view of these facts, it is our duty as leaders of the intellectual thought amongst Young People, in our Societies, the forerunners of the future generation, and the fathers and mothers of the future Church of Christ, to lead the way back to a more perfect understanding of a clean spiritual life and pure morals. We can begin this movement by setting ourselves as wholesome examples, individually and collectively. Our Societies afford probably the best starting point for a unified Christian group of Young People to aim at a stricter orthodox Church. Much can be accomplished individually by fearing less the so-called narrow-mindedness than by embracing a single particle of Liberalism.
Current Comments

By HOMER G. KUIPER

Kalamazoo, Michigan

ATOMIC ENERGY

The night of August 5, 1945 was hot and humid on the huge military airfield in the remote Marianas of the Western Pacific. A steady moisture laden trade wind was blowing from the East as a crew of skilled technicians worked feverishly but with extreme care and precision on a huge sleek new B-29 bomber of the Twentieth Air Force. In the glare of the flood-lights, the name "Enola Gay" could be plainly discerned on the side of the fuselage and in its cavernous bomb bays a very peculiar device was being placed in position. Finally the pilot, Colonel Paul Tibbets, lined up the air crew, conducted the routine inspection of the crew's parachute, oxygen and safety equipment. Quickly the crew members reached their stations at various places inside the "Enola Gay". At a signal from the ground crew chief, the pilot turned on engine No. 1. Slowly the huge seventeen feet propeller turned while the engine sucked in raw gasoline and suddenly the fuel ignited and the propeller began to spin so rapidly that its outline was no longer discernible to human vision. The process was repeated in the remaining engines until all four engines of the colossus of the sky were running smoothly.

Well out in front of the nose of the plane stood the crew chief facing the ship, his arms extended high overhead, his almost nude body glistening with perspiration caused by the excitement and exertion, and began to wave his arms as a signal to the pilot that all was ready and that he could taxi his plane to the take-off point. Slowly the "Enola Gay" moved down the taxi-way and up to the runway, its engines ticking slowly and smoothly in a sweet symphony of mechanical perfection, its two wing-mounted flood-lights clearly lighting up the run-way. Soon the cryptic voice of the pilot could be heard in the control tower radio requesting that Dimple 82 (the army code number of the airplane) be cleared for a take-off. In brisk military language the control tower operator gave a take-off clear-
ance and the "Enola Gay" moved out into the runway and headed into the easterly wind. The pilot moved the throttles to the maximum power position and the huge propellers clawed at the air and caused the seventy-ton giant of the skies to lumber slowly down the three mile runway. The huge plane gathered speed until it was moving along the ground at well over 125 miles per hour. Finally the ship's wheels left the ground and the plane was airborne. Gaining altitude and turning northward, its lights blinking out a farewell, the "Enola Gay" disappeared into the predawn gloom of the tropical night, carrying in its bowels an instrument of death and annihilation for 100,000 inhabitants of the Japanese city of Hiroshima, the first victims of the military use of atomic energy. Thus this flight of the "Enola Gay" revealed to a war-stricken world that the United states had succeeded in solving the riddle of atomic energy and that it would use it as a means to military victory.

In seeking an adequate Christian interpretation of the atomic bomb, it is absolutely essential that we bear in mind, that this discovery, as well as all others, falls within the scope of God's Providence. We do not wish to say that we as yet know the full significance of the fact that atomic energy has been released on the earth but we do believe that this event and many others of this present era are to be understood in the light of the fact that there is an Antichrist coming, that also the time is very near when the Lord shall reveal the wonder of His might over against the scientific and cultural achievements of this world in the salvation of His people at the time of the end.

Secondly, we believe that, in distinction from worldly men who are afraid of atomic energy, that there is nothing evil in atomic energy in itself but atomic energy placed in the hands of a thoroughly depraved human nature and in the hands of men who have no regard for the righteous precepts of the living God. that indeed atomic energy becomes a monstrous thing. The formula of the irresistible force of atomic energy plus the depraved character of humanity can only equal chaos. This the world leaders realize and therefore the United Nations is treating the matter of atomic energy. It should be clearly understood that the motive is plainly self-preservation. Let no modern clergyman deceive you with lengthy speeches on the brotherhood of man, nor let any clergy of nominally Reformed churches chatter about common grace. Look at Hiroshima!
The Black Widow

By MR. C. DE BOER — Kalamazoo, Mich.

Formidable is this creature small.
As in her web the victims fall;
Attired in her dress of black,
With ruthlessness she makes attack.
The poisonous drop she then secretes
The prey is doomed and death it meets.

In a dusty corner of an old woodshed or among the rafters of an attic, one frequently finds beautiful works of art—delicate silken webs are they, geometrically perfect in design—the product of a small arachnid. Perhaps we may take time to admire their weaving, but seldom are we attracted by the weaver itself, because the spider is repulsive and has little appeal for the average individual. Very timid and shy are these creatures, preferring darkness and unfrequented places.

For the present, we are interested in the exception: namely, the only poisonous spider in the United States. Until the turn of the century (1900) this poisonous arachnid was called in descriptive literature the “Black Spider,” because of its ebony color. However, the present appellation—“The Black Widow” was given to it by popular writers who claimed that she invariably devoured her partner after mating, and thus became a widow. Experiments within the last decades have proved that only in cases of extreme hunger does she consume her partner and enter the state of widowhood.

The black widow has also been called the “Shoe-button spider,” the “Hourglass spider,” the Red-spotted spider,” and the “Poison Lady spider”—all of which are more fitting but less fanciful than the present misnomer. The scientific—latrodectus mactans, means murderous, biting robber.

Although the black widow has been found in every state in the union it prefers the warm south and southwest. Other members of the genus Latrodectus, which are also poisonous are found in Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia.

By nature the black widow is sedentary and not a hunter. It spins a very coarse web, unlike most spiders, and lives on flies, coddling moths, caterpillars, grasshoppers, squashbugs, from which it extracts its liquid food by sucking and pressing its victim.

The best identification is the red-hourglass spot located on its under-
side. Occasionally, this spot is colored orange or yellow but regardless of color it stands out in bold relief in contrast to the black body. In addition it has eight pearly white eyes to aid in its identification.

The female lays from 25 to 1000 eggs per sac (cocoon) and during the course of its lifetime (about two or three years) averages nine broods. Only a small percentage of the young mature. Sometimes the hungry mother devours her young, and the newly hatched frequently devour one another until they are able to find a good supply of food.

Both sexes have venom pouches located at the base of the fangs. As the male matures his pouches gradually shrink and dry up, while the opposite is true of the female, for her poison sacs increase in size and the venom becomes more potent. (This toxic liquid is not a glandular secretion as has been formerly supposed, but is absorbed from the general body fluid by these pouches, and, hence, called toxalbumen). The fangs are very sharp and make a needle-like prick into the victim. The venom flows down the hollow tubes within the fang through a pin point aperture which remains open in spite of the pressure applied. Not only is the venom poisonous, but the entire body fluid as well as the eggs. This explains the old Indian custom in the southwestern United States of dipping their arrowheads in a concoction of macerated black widow spiders to make them poisonous.

On the basis of dry weight the venom of the black widow is fifteen times as potent as the rattle-snake's secretion. Of course, we must not fail to consider that the spider produces only a few drops of venom, and, consequently, the overall picture proves the rattle-snake to be much more dangerous.

Although the table is far from complete since many cases, especially in the earlier years, were not recorded; yet it gives one an idea of the prevalence of spider bites and the relatively high fatality from 1926 to 1943. Of the 1291 cases recorded 55 resulted in death. For the interest of the readers we might refer to four of the States: California had 578 cases and 32 deaths, Illinois had 17 cases and 2 deaths, Michigan had 2 cases and no deaths, Iowa also had 2 cases and no deaths.

Today the illness produced by spider's venom is called *arachnidism*, and it is usually characterized by severe abdominal pain, fever, muscle spasms, nausea and delirium.

Several attempts have been made to find a natural enemy of this spider, so that this poisonous crea-
ture could be exterminated. One of the attempts was made with the solpugid, but its habitat was too limited. Other experiments were made with a certain species of toad and a San Diegan alligator lizard, but both of these proved futile. Also the efforts of a small parasitic fly which deposited her eggs in the egg sac of the spider were unsuccessful in combating this loathsome and dreaded creature. It was discovered that the best means of natural control is the mud-dauber wasp, who searches out the nest and paralizes the spider by its powerful sting. Then it takes its stunned prey and transports it to its own home to store it in one of its cells. The wasp continues this process until the cell is filled with black widows. after which it deposits an egg and seals the cell. When the wasp egg hatches it has a bounteous supply of “widows” to feast upon. This has proved to be the best method of counteracting the spread of the black widow as no extensive artificial means of control have been effective.
Dear Fellows:

When a young man steps out of civil-
ian life in order to enter military service,
it must seem to him, I often think, that
he is transferred to an entirely different
world. This must be felt by him in more
than one way. But I have especially in
mind just now the difference between life
in the service and civilian life, from the
viewpoint of strict authority and disci-
pline. In the Army and Navy, especially
in time of war, it is still understood that
a house divided against itself cannot
stand, and the necessity of exercising
authority and of demanding strict and
unquestioning obedience is deeply felt.
You are simply ordered what to do, and
expected to carry out the orders without
any questions asked. You obey, not
because what you are told to do is, in
your judgment, proper and wise, but
simply because your officers have author-
ity over you.

And that is as it should be.

In civilian life, however, the real mean-
ing of authority is hardly understood
anymore, and the virtue of true obedi-
ence is a very scarce article.

The root of the trouble, no doubt,
must be found in the home. Children no
longer learn to respect the authority of
their parents. They are on the throne
and do as they please.

And the results are everywhere evi-
dent. Many people seem to have an
idea that democracy is a form of govern-
ment under which everybody strives to
gain his own end, and is his own author-
ity. The result is strife and chaos. So-
ciety becomes a house divided against
itself, and works out its own destruction.
Unionism, especially during the recent
months, with its methods of force, strikes,
boycotts, closed shops, has clearly il-
lustrated the truth of the statement
that a house divided against itself can-
not stand. And although people in gen-
eral are waking up to this fact, the deep
root of the matter, disrespect for and
rebellion against authority, acting upon
the principle that might makes right,
they do not see.

A fine illustration of this was furnish-
ed in the recent case of the government
against John L. Lewis and his miners.
You have, of course, all read about the
case. The union boss threatened to call
a coal strike: the government served an
injunction on him, restraining him from
calling such a strike; and John L. Lewis
disregarded the injunction. The people
in general were opposed to the action of
the union leader, mostly, however, for
utility reasons. They wanted coal. The
judge, however, clearly saw the issue in
volved: that of rebellion against author-
ity. And he said, in effect: "Mr. Lewis,
the government is in authority, and
whether its injunction was right or
wrong, it was your duty to obey first, and complain later."  
You, as Christian young men, understand these things, of course. And even in the service, you obey not as eye-servants and menpleasers, but for God's sake, and as unto the Lord.  
May God bless you!  
As ever your friend,  
Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Our Young People's Society

TALITHA SOCIETY NEWS

It's been a long time since we let you know what's what in our Girls' Society! So now for a few newslets. . . .

The Talitha Society of Fuller Avenue opened it's season this year with a combined Outing on October 1, with the Young Men's Society. It was held in a beautiful park in Caledonia, Michigan. We had a good turn-out which made the evening a success. We played games (which included a scavenger hunt), and had a luscious weiner-roast. It was a big thrill—nice warm fires on a chilly nite, underneath the blue-black sky sprinkled with stars. After the weiner-roast we had a few harmonica solos and a "singspiration" with an accordion accompaniment. The committee must have worked hard to make the evening such a success.

With the closing of the last season, we were sorry it also ended the presidency of Mrs. Andy Voss. She has been a wonderful leader for us girls the past four to five years. But we are very glad to say her vacancy is filled by another capable president, Mrs. Gerrit Schaafsma. She has proved this already in the past few weeks.

We feel we can never know enough about our Protestant Reformed doctrine and so have decided to study "The History of the Protestant Reformed Churches". Our after recess schedule is a program one week and sewing the next. We decided to make dresser scarfs and donating them to the Holland Home.

On November 26, our society gave a program for the old folks in the Holland Home. We try to entertain them once a year—sometimes twice.

This year we have 36 girls as regular members and 18 as associate. But we sure miss those who left us after they said "I do"!

May God bless our society and all the societies, in the work he has given us to do.

Ann Sjoerdsma, Reporter.
Comfortably perched on the sofa Betty and Joan were quietly talking things over. The holidays were passed, but the memories of these days of laughter and song and well-wishing lived on in the minds of these two girls. And you know how girls will do—rehash the whole thing after it's over, even down to the fine points of “he said to her”, and “she said to me”. Betty and Joan’s conversation had followed this same ordinary pattern, since they were ordinary girls.

But they were suddenly interrupted by the unannounced entrance of big, strong, Navy Veteran Dan. Dan had seen the world. He had seen life, and the girls felt that their experiences were really very petty and trivial in comparison with the experiences of their brother Dan. Dan could talk of sinking ships, of fighting, even of killing! But Dan could talk of more than that. And it was for that reason that he now wore that grim, determined look on his face. He wanted to talk—talk about something that was burning in his heart.

He sank heavily into the nearest chair, and without waiting for an invitation to speak his mind, he burst out: “What’s wrong with our Young People anyway? Talk about religion? No! Talk nonsense, that’s all! Nonsense! Silly jokes, laugh and giggle! That’s all they care to do! Bah!” And he began to pace the floor.

“What’s eating you, Dan?” asked Betty, sympathetically.

“I’ve been talking with Tom and Fred and the other boys. You know, just sort of talking things over, about the nice party we had in church and so on.” He continued to walk to and fro in the room as he added bitterly, “Nice party all right. Nice Christmas party—with the accent on the first syllable—when a group of Protestant Reformed Young People pull up their noses at singing, “Oh Come All Ye Faithful”, but can gather round with plenty of enthusiasm to sing “Roll Out The Barrel”.

“Doesn’t it mean anything to us? I mean our religion! Is Christ just someone we are forced to read or study or think about once in a while, but who really has nothing to do with the joys and pleasures of our lives? Is He just someone who bores us and with whom we would like to have as little to do as possible? Doesn’t Christ live in the hearts of our Young People? Don’t they ever feel like rejoicing
in Him? Like singing His praises? Like shouting Hallelujah?"

Dear Junior, do you understand Dan's attitude? Have you ever felt the same way about your own Young People's meetings? Have you ever felt that way about yourself?

*Dare* to be a Daniel,
*Dare* to stand alone,
*Dare* to have a purpose firm,
*Dare* to make it known.

That means in the midst of the world. But it also means in the midst of the church!

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**DONATIONS**

**BEACON LIGHTS FUND**

The following contributions have been received:

South Holland Ladies Society ........... $10.00
Hudsonville Ladies Aid .................... 10.00
Hudsonville Young People's Soc. .......... 25.00
Fuller Ladies Aid.......................... 50.00
Mr. and Mrs. H. Wustman
(Byron Center) ........................... 10.00
Miss Alice Reitsma ........................ 2.50
Mr. T. Sytsma ............................. 3.75
Miscellaneous ............................ 1.25

(Donations are very much appreciated)

Send all Donations to Miss Winnifred De Vries, 354 Diamond Ave., S. E., or to Miss Wilma Pastoor, 939 Sigsbee St., S.E. Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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**POEM**

**WAY UP IN THE LOFTY MOUNTAIN**

By Johnny Feenstra, Redlands, Calif.

Way up in the lofty mountains
Where the snowflakes fall all day,
That's where you find the silver fountains,
And the streams flowing down the way.

Way up in the lofty mountains,
Where the raindrops fall in May,
While the bluejays drink from the fountains,
And all mountain life is gay.

Way up in the lofty mountains,
Where the hunter seeks his way,
There the tourists visit the fountain,
And the Christian sees God's way.
Dear Friends:

We appreciate the kind gesture of our Editor-in-Chief in the last month's issue of Beacon Lights and would like to assure him and all our fellow society members that that is the policy the Board expects to pursue in the future. There are many things which the Board has discussed and which they intend to bring to the various Societies at the proper time. We would like to mention a few of them.

The Convention in 1947 is still a long ways off but we would like to remind the various societies that the purpose of the business meetings at the Convention is for matters which should be treated for the benefit of all the member societies. In the past most of the proposals have originated in the Board. However we feel that these things should be referred to the Board by the Societies. And therefore we ask you to bear this in mind the next few months and if you or your Society has a suggestion for an activity, or a matter which will make for a better Federation, or improve Society-Board relationship, we urge you to send it to us.

There is another matter which has received attention in the past. A matter which is close to our hearts, which we have also discussed. It is the matter of those Societies in the West which are not members of the Federation. The Board feels that it would be ideal if all Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies could be united in one organization. Efforts have been made in the past and invitations have been extended, but to no fruitful avail. We would like to be able to work out some plan with the Western League whereby a measure of unity could be reached. Any comment?

Beacon Lights is a matter which receives much of the Board's time. Periodically the Board meets with the staff and the business editors to discuss the contents of Beacon Lights and the matters pertinate to the financial end of Beacon Lights. At that time the contents of the magazine for the ensuing months, apart from the regular contributors, are decided. And any other business concerning Beacon Lights is taken care of.

Beacon Lights is your magazine and you are responsible for it. For its contents and its finances, including the circulation. Each month some 850 copies of Beacon Lights are printed, of which approximately 600 are for paid subscriptions. Each month 1200 copies.
of the Standard Bearer are printed! From which it is evident that every home that has a Standard Bearer does not have a copy of Beacon Lights. And so we would like to encourage all of you to pay your subscription if it has not been paid, or to subscribe, or get some one to subscribe to our magazine. Our goal is 1000-1200 paid subscriptions. Let's get on the ball, shall we?

The Board sponsored a Mass Meeting in the Grand Rapids area last year and has another scheduled for Tuesday, February 11, 1947 at the Second Protestant Reformed Church in Grand Rapids. We have very fortunately, secured Rev. H. Hoeksema to speak for us. Invite all the young people of Michigan to meet with us for an evening of spiritual fellowship and joy.

In conclusion, we would like to mention again the department on Social Problems. No comments have, as yet, been heard. Write in your reaction to the idea or send a problem or situation to the editor of this department. —The Board.

From The Editors

The Rev. U. Zogg, author of our feature article, "Contemplating the New Year", is pastor of the Reformed Church of the United States at Sutton, Nebraska. Perhaps you would like to hear a little about him.

A native of Switzerland, he was already a minister and advanced in age when he came to this country. He speaks pure German. He learned his English by reading English books and papers, and was sixty-six years old when he delivered his first English sermon.

When his church merged with the Evangelical Church he refused to go along together with others, constituting Classis Eureka in S. Dakota. Contact with his group was first established through our

western radio program, and was cemented by repeated conferences between his church and ours. Being a lover of the Reformed faith, Reverend Zogg enjoys this contact with our people.

Already past the age of three-score and ten, he is very bright and pleasant to meet and converse with. Last fall Rev. Hoeksema preached in his church and had an enjoyable visit with him and his people.

* * * *

We received the following:

Dear editor of Beacon Lights:

Just a line or two, please.

It is not my intention to put my nose into the debate about the mov-
Bene distinguit, bene docet. . . .
Sapienti sat.

Yours for Beacon Lights,
H. Hoeksema.

* * * *

How about starting the new year right, by taking a more lively interest in our young people's magazine? We would like to hear from you, whether your criticism be good or adverse. More comments, please.

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**Choosing A Vocation**

A young reader asks me to write a short article on the subject: "Choosing a Vocation".

That's really quite a question, much easier asked than answered. Besides, the additional 'light' shed on the question is such that the question is broader than the heading of this article would suggest. It's really a matter of questions about the question. And just think of it. I am supposed to write a 'short' article about this, and in that short article everything in connection with the question must be 'cleared up'. I hope that by this time all of you will realize that my task is an impossible one. However, I will try to say at least a little about the question. And if we can not finish our subject in this particular issue I have an idea that our Editor in chief will be kind enough to grant us a little space in the next Beacon Lights.

Let me start out by saying: "This question is a very pertinent question for young people." When a person is sixty years old he has no problem with choosing a vocation. He may have difficulty to find a job which gives him a sufficient income to provide for the daily necessities of life but he no longer stands before the choice of a vocation. However, young people, and especially the younger of our young people, are confronted by the question: "What vocation should I seek?" A number of years ago this was usually rather simple. As a rule the son would follow in the footsteps of his father. If Dad was a farmer his boy would become a farmer. If Dad was a carpenter his son would learn the
trade and either presently take over the business, establish a business for himself or just work for a boss. If father was a painter it was self-evident that sonny boy also had to learn the painter's trade, painter's colic or no painter's colic. And of course if father was a minister it was expected that at least one or more of his sons would also study for the ministry. And thus it was with blacksmiths, teachers, doctors, lawyers, etc. No, this did not always work out according to plan, but it was nevertheless much more the rule and custom than in our day and age. Times have changed and with the change of times customs have changed. In our day and age there are many more jobs to be gotten and many more vocations to choose from. The simpler life of the past is no longer with us. We live in the highly industrial age with its almost limitless choice of jobs, offering all kinds of technical trades. We live in times of details and specializing.

The result is that today a young man who wants to prepare for his future life is confronted with a great variety of choices and possibilities. That makes the choice already more difficult than ever. There are so many things to choose from. Our schools, aware of the changed situation, offer a variety of courses on their regular curriculum which help to prepare the young man for his future task in life. There is much so-called specialized education. But then, of course, if one attends school he must already have some plan for the future and choose his subjects in school accordingly. This is not always easy. Oft times high school students and even those who attend college do not know just exactly what they want to do in the future, and sometimes they make tentative plans but as they go along change their mind. Now, nothing is worse than to just aimlessly wander around without any definite purpose in mind. And youth is the time that we have to make up our mind as to what we would like to do in the future.

As a rule the problem is simpler if one does not receive more than a grade school education. Although even then there are a number of problems which should be considered and looked into before one can settle down, so to speak, and choose a certain vocation, trade, or job.

On the other hand, to mention an example, if one was born on the farm, likes farming and has made up his mind to become a farmer, his case is very simple. Presently he may have quite a job to find a farm, but as to his particular vocation (taking this term in the broad sense) he is not confronted with any problems and difficulties which are of a principle and spiritual nature.

However, according to your ques-
tion you want to know a little more about some of the rules that should guide one in choosing a vocation. You also wanted to know if I could mention some principles, Scriptural principles, which should guide us in answering the question we are talking about. You also asked me if I could not give a word of warning in our Beacon Lights addressed especially to those that seem to be rather indifferent about their future vocation or (and) those who don't seem to realize that we must also be guided by the principles of the Word of God. Asking about the subject of choosing a vocation you also brought up the matter of the church. And finally, you wanted me to give some practical illustrations about some of these things.

Well, my dear friend, Pete, I told you already that your question implied quite a little. I was afraid from the start that I could not answer this question in one 'short' article. Please, look for the next Beacon Lights, and the Lord willing, we'll continue this subject.

In the meantime I encourage you and any of our readers to send me questions, in connection with this subject or any other subject. I cannot give any promise that I'll answer every question, but we can at least talk about matters and discuss our problems.

Schuiler.

P.S. You ask me who I really am. I'd gladly tell you as far as I am concerned, however, the Staff of Beacon Lights thought it would be better if I'd use an anonymous name. I suppose they think that this is better for me in case I'd say too much, and it is better for our potential questioners because they may feel a little more free to ask questions. Naturally I will keep your name confidential if you so desire and I will also treat your correspondence confidentially in as far as this is necessary.

Send your question to:

"Schuiler"

c/o BEACON LIGHTS
1100 Sigsbee St., S.E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

IN MEMORIAM

The Junior Young People's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Holland, Michigan, wishes to express its true sympathy to our fellow-member, Doris Westenbroek, in the death of her little sister:

MARJORIE KAY

May God give to Doris and her family the assurance that He is good in all His ways. Jesus said: "Suffer the little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven".

Mrs. W. Hofman.
Mrs. F. Harbin.
Leaders.
Eloise Kortering, Sec'y.
In the preceding chapters we have seen the importance and significance of the speeches of Elihu. Now in this chapter we have the conclusion of the "Elihu section".

I. The speech of God in the thunder is pointed to. Vss. 1-5. In the preceding chapter Elihu had made a reference to the storm that causes the cattle to fear. Chapter 36:33. Now he himself expresses his own awe and fear, vs. 1: and calls attention to it, vs. 2. And Elihu describes this manifestation of God in true childlike, and creaturely reverence. How different from the cold scientific, sometimes atheistic description which explains that thunder and lightning are the result of two forces of electricity meeting each other. This is blind to the cause and the speech of God in these forces and their movements. The point of Elihu is given in the last part of verse 5. "Great things doeth he, which we cannot comprehend." The speaker means to show that we cannot explain and understand the hidden reasons for God's works, which has been made before in another connection. This time, however, it is in connection with the real speech of God in the thunder. Some think that there must have arisen a great storm while Elihu was speaking and that he is drawing lessons from it. And it may be that his point is that when God speaks, as e.g., in thunder, it means man must be silent, and man is silenced, as the whole earth is silenced when He speaks.

II. The works of God which effect man are pointed to. vss. 6-13. The snow and the rain seal up the hand of man, that is, prevent him from his usual labors. The weather is most important for man's life. And of the things that God sends upon inhabitable earth it is said that it is per se grace of God. But Elihu makes the definite point that it may be for correction, for mercy, or for the land. The word for correction has been translated scourge and the thought is the destruction that is caused upon the earth, of which the waste places are testimonies.
III. Admonition to Job. vss. 14-20. 1. The direct address is found in verse 1. 2. The questions are put to Job which call to mind his ignorance and his weakness in the face of the wisdom and power of God, His wondrous works. In vs. 17 it is pointed out that the least change in the weather, the warmth of the south wind and Job is made uncomfortable—"his garments are warm", i.e., to his discomfort. The firmament is referred to as a molten mirror, vs. 18, and is another example of God's strength which shows Job's impotence. No one could possibly criticize the work of God. We must desire to be kept in the way of worship and praise and not desire even that God should know that we murmur for that would be tantamount to a desire to be swallowed up, vs. 19.

All this very beautifully and tactfully quiets Job and points to the way of righteousness.

IV. His final point, vss. 21-24. This is Elihu's last word which is given to clear up Job's difficulty. If there are any doubts and fears, and there always are, we are admonished to patience and trust. It may be that men see not the light, vs. 21. This takes the example of the storm again, but refers to our affliction which leaves us in darkness. Yet there is always a time when God causes the darkness to disappear. Although we cannot see it always, nevertheless the Lord is perfect in all his ways. In the way of fear we shall receive. The wise in heart are repelled by the Lord.

* * *

Chapter 38.

THE WORD OF THE LORD

The speech of God is most remarkable in this book of Job. 1. It is remarkable because in itself it is always a wonder of grace that God reveals Himself to His children. That God reveals Himself by speaking directly to His children is unique only for the time that the canon of the Scriptures was in the making. 2. In the second place it is remarkable that the Lord makes a speech in this drama of Job from the standpoint of Job's insistence on his own righteousness even over against the justice of God. Job was a child of God but he had in his affliction challenged the Lord, to answer him. It was only because there was also the earnest plea that he might hear from the Lord as to His way with him that there was any possibility of God's answering. Job had said in 31:25: "behold my desire is that the Almighty would answer me." Now the Lord does so. 3. In the third place this speech of the Lord is remarkable because of the problem it gives us. It is so simple and it
seems so like the speeches of the friends and Job himself that we wonder what is distinctly divine about these words.

The point that will help us to understand the entire section, chapters 38-42, is to remember that the speech of the Lord is always the Gospel to man. It is to save. And the Lord speaks of His salvation in His usual unique way. This of course does not exclude the law as a basis for the word of the gospel.

The Manner of this revelation:

1. The Lord appears in a whirlwind. With Elijah it was in the still small voice. Here it is a manner of revelation which is to be in harmony with the message of power and wisdom. The whirlwind is to stop the further sinful attitude of Job.

2. The Lord's question form, which is maintained throughout, is to rebuke Job. It fits the spiritual weakness of Job, is more effective.

3. The challenge to answer the Lord if possible is given to Job also to serve to humiliate him. It is as if the Lord speaks to Job as an equal to show how unequal Job is to God. How perfect a pedagogical manner we can say.

4. This manner of approach in itself shows God's purpose to save, in the way of bringing about humiliation first of all.

The First Speech.

1. The Lord points to His work of creation in a series of questions. Verses 4-7. The works of God's creation are always a marvel to the creature. His very creative power is a mystery which we can only behold in His works. The questions in this connection place Job altogether in another class than the Almighty. The reference to the morning stars, or the sons of God is very likely to the angels, who must have witnessed some of God's creating of the world. It may be that God shows Job that he is lower than the angels.

2. The sea is the next observation, vss. 8-11. The mighty deep is under the sovereign command of God.

3. The dawn, vss. 12-15. How marvellous is this description of the dawn of each day. How wonderful to remember this, to see what is meant in the expression: the dawn of the day of salvation, when the day star shall arise in our hearts and the Sun of righteousness shall appear.

4. The origin and the depths of things are called attention to, vss. 16-21.

5. The mysteries of rain and snow are the subjects of another examination. They control the life
of the creature upon the earth to a great extent. Vss. 22-30.

6. The wonders of heaven are recalled to Job who was an observer of the heavens. Vss. 30-38.

7. The preservation of the animals by God is also called to his attention. The representatives of the beasts and fowls are mentioned, at least those which seek to devour so much.

All the questions present the matter from the point of view of Job's ability and his knowledge,—"Canst thou, or knowest thou." And we certainly must have some sense of imagination to project ourselves into the wonders of God's hand too, in order to see the same impressive glory that Job must have seen when the Lord, the Creator called his attention to it. We must take our Bibles and ourselves into God's nature.

* * *

Chapter 39.

This chapter continues the speech of God and it is also in the same manner of interrogation. This time, however, the Lord leads Job to behold more in particular some of the wonders of the animal world. Some of the mysteries that are called to attention are, the bringing forth of young by the wild goats and the hinds:—the freedom of the wild ass:—the untameable wildness of the "unicorn", or better the ory or some type of antelope:—the beauty of the peacock:—the strange foolishness and speed of the ostrich:—the glory of the war horse:—the wisdom of the hawk.

All these powers and characteristics are created in these animals and are not at all subject to the wisdom or hand of man. These show the wisdom and power of the Maker. In question form the Lord impresses Job with the point that Job has no such power and wisdom at all.

But the point is that the Lord chooses these animals which are well known to Job. The mystery and glory of the creation as it attested to the glory of the Creator not only is pointed to in these words but the striking thing is that it is all so familiar to Job.

Problem.

The problem has been presented that there is nothing new in this speech of God. Job had already sung of the praises of His Maker in his own speeches, for example his doxologies. Some commentators have been puzzled and some have drawn the conclusion that these speeches are not really of the Lord and do not even belong in this book of Job. Exactly when it seems so out of place because of its simplicity and commonplace character does its divine character manifest
itself so strongly. Man's ways of conviction and salvation are not God's ways. Here God is humbling Job and bringing him to confession of sin and the necessary vision of faith. It is so marvelous that God does so by speaking of things that are well known to us, that which we see every day. Even for Job these same things were the object of his contemplation in his discourses. God does not take Job to heaven, nor does He speak in a strange tongue, of strange things that have not come to the consciousness of the three friends and of Job. That would have destroyed the responsibility of Job, and the possibility of seeing his sin. On the contrary God spoke in the same kind of language and in the same style that Job was accustomed to in order to cause him to see the point immediately. Pedagogically it caused Job to see what he should have seen all the time. It caused him to blush with shame and confess. Such is the gracious character of all of God's revelation and Gospel.

* * *

Chapter 40

In the first two verses the Lord charges Job with contending with Him. Further, Job had not been open to conviction in such an attitude. Now upon this challenging rebuke of the Lord Job makes his first confession to God. In this confession, vss. 3-5, he confesses his vileness and his inability to make any reply to the Lord. He also promises to keep from speaking to God.

Then the Lord's second speech is made.

In the vss. 10-14 he invites Job to govern the world, especially to judge and condemn the wicked. This is an important point, for it very emphatically reminds Job to leave all matters of judgment to the Almighty alone. The problem of the lot of the godly and the ungodly is answered fully even though briefly, for it points out that the Lord's way of judgment is to bring to the ground in the dust, all the proud. This certainly indicates complete victory over all workers of iniquity. If Job is able to govern the world in righteousness, then the Lord will concede that Job can save himself. In vs. 14 the Lord makes the point that also all salvation is therefore of the Lord.

The remaining part of chapter 40 contains a reference to Behemoth, probably comparable to the hippopotamus, and a great beast well known to Job. We refer you to the text for the description of Behemoth which brings out his exceeding power and ways which makes him one of the greatest of water and land beasts.
This is a continuation of chapter 40 and in this chapter we have the reference to the second great beast, leviathan, which is probably comparable to the crocodile, or an early species of crocodile which may have been of greater size and power even than present day specimens.

From the very poetic, accurate, and striking picture drawn of the leviathan, the Lord challenges Job's ability and power in order to show to him in a final way his weakness. If he would but consider these monsters and compare his weakness over against them, how much more so would he feel his impotence over against the Almighty. This is directly stated in vs. 11. After this point, the Lord still continues to impress upon Job the powerful characteristics of the beast, vss. 12-34.

The Problem.

Again this reference to these monsters has caused us difficulty in seeing the word of the Lord. 1. First of all some have answered that these two chapters do not belong to the speeches of the Lord, because it doesn't answer the problem of the book at all. 2. Some have suggested that the Lord is referring to the powers of wickedness as is done in the reference to the beasts in Revelation. The very good commentator Delitzsch does not say this but only suggests the possibility. 3. In the third place there is the explanation that God is directing Job to His Almighty power in reference to these beasts. The latter explanation is certainly the correct one. God is impressing by way of well known examples to Job His power, for He made and controls these beasts. This is also plain from the following confession of Job. Nevertheless, this explanation would not exclude the second suggestion. Even so the great forces of evil as pictured in Scripture as residing in the beast are also in the control of God. The power of God is over all things, in heaven and in hell, in earth and the sea.

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Chapter 42.

Job's second confession: 1. As was indicated it makes plain what the point of God was in the preceding descriptions. 2. Job's confession is of his own foolishness. 3. And in advance to his preceding confession Job expresses humbly that he is desirous of guidance. He asks for and submits himself to the instruction of the Lord. Such was also the purpose of the Lord. Elihu had prepared the way by explaining that there was an affliction which was chastisement; had insisted upon the righteous-
ness of God and had called Job to fear and glorify God for all his greatness. It only remained for the Lord to appear Himself to convince Job. He appears in a whirlwind. Is not this symbolic of the overpowering conviction of the Holy Spirit. This conviction is seeing for Job. He expresses himself in vs. 5:—he has heard, now he sees. That is the final glory of faith. It lays hold of; it sees the unseen.

In this sight of Job we have the end of his faith and the end of the drama of the discourses. There only remains the epilogue.

In the epilogue there is the final sketch of the historical ending of the life of Job. 1. There is the justification in the eyes of the three friends. 2. There is recognition among his friends and relatives. 3. There is a token of the favor of the Lord. He receives double from the Lord. It reminds of Isaiah 40:2: “She hath received of the Lord’s hand double for all her sins.”

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Conclusion.

The outlines of this beautiful and deep book cannot be closed without a few remarks. The question of a fitting theme still remains. In this book we undoubtedly have much instruction about affliction, about the problem of evil. This book teaches that it is the way of all God’s children. It is the way of the cross; it shows what is taught in Hebrews 2:10: “For it became him (God), for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering.” This book pictures Job’s great patience in affliction. It shows his faith as a marvellous reality in the midst of the greatest trial. Nevertheless we could not express the purpose of the book in just one of these realities. We must look for something which would express all of these in one. I would suggest, the book of Job gives us the great lesson for faith: Reconciliation Thru Affliction. It does not teach us that faith must serve God blindly, for God’s revelation is too glorious and clear to say that faith must be blind. It teaches, however, that faith is to serve God humbly. Humility is the greatest virtue of believers that is pleasing to God and which He rewards with everlasting inheritance.

May we have seen how small we are in the pictures of God’s greatness as given in the book of Job. May we even see how incapable we are to interpret God’s Word out of ourselves. We must have God through His Spirit.

(The End).