BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION

FEBRUARY - 1947

BEACON LIGHTS

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Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VII FEBRUARY — 1947 NUMBER 5

Principle With Our Principal

MR. ANDREW PETERSON — Grand Haven, Mich.

One of the many blessed virtues which the Holy Spirit has bestowed upon His Church throughout all the ages is a clear conception of the antithesis as first announced in Paradise, as recorded for us in Genesis 3:15, and further revealed throughout Holy Writ as God's method of realizing His kingdom in the course of history. We may conceive of this plan in two major revelations, namely, the separation of Israel from all the heathen nations, and the spiritual-ethical separation of the Church in the world.

To the extent the Church adheres to that truth, they truly represent the cause of God: to the extent they deny it, teach otherwise, or neglect to teach it, they truly represent the cause of Satan. It is of utmost importance that we ever keep before us a proper appreciation of this blessed heritage, and earnestly strive to maintain this throughout our generations.

So deeply does the doctrine of the antithesis permeate the Church's fulfillment of its mission, that it is not in the least surprising that it should be the target of the enemy's assaults. And we may hastily add, with immense comfort to the believers, that such attacks cannot even harm the cause of God, because such opposition automatically sets the enemy on the unfavorable side of but still within the sphere of this antithesis. "Even the wrath of man shall praise Thee: Thy design it shall fulfill". Psalter No. 207.

It is from observations of the working out of this antithesis, which we can see but to a limited degree, that this contribution finds its origin. And with it is a desire to encourage each other to not only discern but also to avoid the pitfalls that constantly appear in the middle of our pathway when we are tempted to compromise with those who would discredit this doctrine.

At this point, a word of explanation for using the words in the theme may be in place. The word *principle* we would maintain in its usual meaning, namely, a proper evaluation of and an adherence to

that which is right. The word *principal* is sometimes used to denote a certain sum of money: thus, a possession. It is this "possession" quantity that we should like to borrow as part of our theme, and that with the added meaning of stewardship.

In His good council God has always provided those within the sphere of His covenant with *principal*. Unto Israel were committed the oracles, the laws, civil and ceremonial, and ordinances for sacrificing: even precept upon precept, in order that they should in true *principle* walk in the fear of Jehovah and with expectation look for the coming of the Promised One. But so corruptly had they used their entrusted *principal* that, except for the remnant that should be saved, the darkest woes were spoken over them.

And when the promised Messiah became manifest in the fulness of time the hosts of darkness sought to destroy Him. "This is the heir, let us kill him". Further, throughout the ministry of Jesus the wicked Scribes and Pharisees violently opposed His antithetical teaching, and sought to do away with Him in an effort to retain their allotted *principal* for selfish reasons and to maintain their self-pride and their esteem with the people.

The early history of the New Testament Church was marked by a deep faith. The testimony of Scripture is that "great grace was upon them all". But persecution stalked them and many became martyrs for their faith. How exactly the prophesy of Jesus is fulfilled: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. . . .if they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you". But Satan would not always go about as a roaring lion. He would come as an angel of light. He would come with interpretations of Scripture that would appeal to the carnal mind. After the good seed had been sown he would sow the tares. Arminianism and Pelagianism crept in, and our fathers sought to combat these evils by setting forth sound interpretations of the doctrine of Scripture, with the result that the Three Forms of Unity came into existence. With the aid of these confessions the churches of the Reformation could determine the Scriptural basis for their teachings and the excommunication of the wolves that wore sheep's clothing.

Under this arrangement, and with a faithful use of the keys of the Kingdom, we would expect that the church as institute would enjoy uninterrupted freedom. However, the antithesis is not only ever present but also ever working. Persecution arises from within. Through a long period of years the church had harbored teachings containing erroneous conceptions of the pre-

sentation of the gospel and the significance of the covenant, both with leanings toward Arminianism. Instead of cleansing the churches of these errors, leaders thought it expedient to expel from their midst those who maintained a soundly Reformed interpretation of Scripture and the Confessions with respect to the doctrine of God's sovereign grace and matters relating to reformed church polity. (Consult "History of the Protestant Reformed Churches in America").

In late years much the same method of sinful, hierarchical use of church authority was made in the Netherlands. As a result, a Romish system of church government, which makes the decisions of a so-called major (correct term: broader) assembly binding upon all constituents, without regard or respect for the autonomy of local churches.

This sad portion of church history is related for the specific purpose of encouraging Protestant Reformed youth to highly value the heritage (*principal*) left unto us, namely, a truly Reformed conception of the preaching of the Word and of church government.

The evil spirit of opposition to the well defined truth of God's sovereign grace and its resulting denial of the antithesis is indeed a sad commentary on the history of many churches today. And how intensely this opposition increases when we as churches endeavor to enlighten others on Reformed doctrines. This is evidenced not only in the conducting of regular divine services, but particularly in our missionary work.

This divinely ordained antithesis will continue as long as the church remains in its militant stage. But thanks be to God, Who has given her the victory through Jesus Christ, her Lord.

When His righteous judgments come,

Strong to save and to destroy;

All iniquity is dumb,

All the righteous sing for joy,

Who Jehovah wisely heed,

In His works His mercies read.

The initial contribution of Mr. Andrew Peterson to Beacon Lights, writer of the above article, is very welcome indeed, and we feel assured that our readers enjoy hearing from new contributors. Mr. Peterson, an elder and clerk of our Prot. Ref. Church at Grand Haven, Mich., is a charter member of that congregation and it was in the basement of his home in Spring Lake that the congregation first held its services. Once again.—thanks to Mr. Peterson for his splendid contribution! —ED.

Change . . .

BY REV. W. HOFMAN — HOLLAND, MICH.

All things do. That fact has always been recognized. One hundred years ago, in 1847, a minister in the Church of England expressed that same thought in the words of a well-known hymn which he wrote. Though you have undoubtedly heard and sung the hymn you may have never known the man. His name is the Rev. Henry F. Lyte. In the year 1844 he had been stricken with a fatal illness and three years later he died. Sometime during the year of his death he wrote the hymn: "Abide With Me". One of its lines reads as follows: "Change and decay in all around I see". It is evident that he expressed that fact not only as a matter of observation but also as a testimony of his own personal experience.

But on the other hand there are also principles which never change. All *things* change but in the midst of things there are the everlasting principles of truth which are never altered. This that dying minister also recognized and knew. Immediately following the line noting the change and decay in all things he turns to pray: "O Thou Who changest not, abide with me". He too understood that though all *things* change there was the abiding and eternal reality of the Unchanging God.

Since God does not change, it is evident that His Word likewise is absolute and eternal. As there is in Him "neither variableness nor shadow of turning" so in that which He speaks we have the unchangeable decree of His Sovereign will and counsel. It simply follows that when the Unchangeable God speaks that which He declares stands true and unalterable, no matter what the course of time and history may bring in the way of change and decay. For that same reason He exhorts us to take heed unto His Word as unto a light shining in a dark place.

There are especially two unchangeable Words of the Unchangeable God which need a reemphasis in our own day. The one is: "Honor thy Father and thy Mother", and the other: "Train up a child in the way he should go".

The one has respect unto our duties to our parents, the other concerns their obligations to us. And both are eternal principles of truth that never change no matter how "old-fashioned" they may appear to our "modern age".

We as young people may think that with changing times that Word of God to us can be stretched a bit. Perhaps, we feel that it is no longer necessary to discuss our problems and plans with the "old folks" who don't understand our "fast", "modern" and "scientific" world and age. Undoubtedly, we become a bit irritable when we are asked to give an account of ourselves when we come in late or it is discovered that we have missed our catechism or society meeting. When we are questioned as to our associates and actions we begin to assume that our elders are rather narrow in their thinking and don't keep abreast of the times in which we live. If they reprimand us for engaging in questionable practices or attending worldly amusements we are likely to shrug our shoulders and sigh as if to say: "Oh, what's the use, you wouldn't understand anyway". We feel that we are young and free and must have our fling and that they have no right to limit us.

Well, remember, they do not; the unchanging Word of God does. No matter what the philosophy of our modern age may be they both have the right and the positive calling to know and be concerned about our way and to direct it aright. That unchangeable obligation has been placed upon them by the Unchangeable God. On the other hand that means that we are called to honor, respect and obey them when they execute that calling; that's God's Word to us—likewise unchangeable. Times may change but principles never do; neither for us as youth nor for our parents. It is in that way that we too must learn:

Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day;
Earth's joys grow dim, its glories pass away;
Change and decay in all around I see;
O, Thou Who changest not, abide with me.

Because "Bible Outlines" on the Book of Job have been completed in mid-season and because it was deemed more expedient to wait until the beginning of a new society year to start studying another Book of the Bible, the Board has decided to fill the final pages of this and subsequent issues of Beacon Lights with a continued story. The novel "Charioteer", has been obtained through the gracious permission of its author and publisher for this purpose. We hope you enjoy it.

—ED.

Current Comments

By HOMER G. KUIPER

Kalamazoo, Michigan

THE EIGHTIETH CONGRESS.

During the war years the newspapers of the nation were mainly concerned with news of military importance and international significance. With the cessation of hostilities military news became non-existent and the international situation became more or less static except for diplomatic sniping here and there. Hence we find that the editors of the nation's press are giving domestic affairs the major share of their attention. Not the least of these domestic affairs is the opening of the Eightieth Congress.

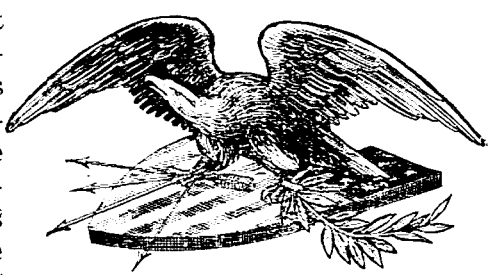
From all indications the present session of Congress will make history in the unusual sense of the word. Upon it will fall the responsibility for returning the nation to a peace-time economy, the approval of peace treaties for the enemies of the United States, the readjustment of the nation's foreign policy, reduction of the national debt, new veteran's legislation and many other matters which will have a great effect upon the life of the nation. Because of the fact that the new Congress finds the Republican party in control for the first time in sixteen years, an unusually large number of changes in governmental policies may be expected.

Immediately at the outset, scandal broke out on the floor of the Senate. The administration of the oath to Senator Bilbo was challenged by the Republican majority. He was charged with violations of the Hatch Act, specifically, the acceptance of bribes from war contractors and dark dealings relative to the church property of the Juniper Grove Baptist Church of which the Senator is a member. Whether or not the charges will be substantiated remains to be seen, but it goes almost without saying that these things are extremely distasteful to the sincere Christian, for such things, to say the least, are a source of embarrassment to those who are committed to the defense of the Christian faith against the attacks of unbelievers and gainsayers.

Having resolved the Bilbo mat-

ter by a compromise, the Senate proceeded to constitute itself and before proceeding with its business, a clash again occurred over the selection of the Senate chaplain. The Republicans, assuming the dubious rights of political patronage, insisted on the removal of the incumbent Methodist chaplain appointed by the Democrats and nominated the pastor of the capital's New York Avenue Presbyterian Church. We wonder if the Senate had not made itself guilty, among other things, of respect of persons in matters pertaining to the Christian religion. We wonder also how a minister of the Gospel, if he were completely committed to the dignity of his calling, would accept such a nomination under the circumstances.

One of the items on the agenda of the new Congress will be closely watched by religious and racial minorities. We have reference to the Fair Employment Practices Commission and the bill introduced by Senator Ball of Minnesota. Senator Ball's bill would specifically forbid the closed union shop. It goes almost without saying that the closed union shop and compulsory labor union membership has brought economic hardship to numerous individuals within the circle of the Protestant Reformed Churches as well as to other individuals in other denominations who have the conviction that they could not identify themselves with the ethics of labor unions. It is interesting to note that the major assemblies of the Protestant Reformed Churches have on several occasions petitioned the government to take action similar to that proposed by the sponsor of this bill. From the point of view of the government we believe that this bill should become law because it is entirely in the spirit of those who wrote the original Constitution of the United States and who sought to safeguard the rights of the individual in their livelihoods and to protect minorities from the tyranny of the majority. We feel that it is not amiss to point out that the security of the Christian does not rest in the power of legislative assemblies but in the enabling grace of our heavenly Father who rules and overrules the affairs of men to eternal glory of His majestic name and the salvation of His people.



The Ship Of The Desert

By MR. C. DE BOER — Kalamazoo, Mich.

It might be interesting for us to note that there are numerous references to the camel in Scripture. Already in the days of the patriarchs these animals were essential to their nomadic way of living. From a ceremonial point of view the camel was considered an "unclean" animal although it was a ruminant (cud-chewing) and had cloven hoofs. However, its cloven hoof did not strictly conform to divine regulations for "clean" animals, because the foot was enveloped in a hardened skin and the pad that covered the sole of its foot also enclosed the two toes. Although its meat was forbidden, the Israelites were allowed to partake of its sweet milk.

The camel was valuable for other reasons: it was indispensable as a beast of burden because of its ability to carry enormous weights (in fact, as much as 1,300 pounds). Then, too, the hair of the camel was used in weaving a coarse cloth which was made into tents and clothing. Also in the New Testament we find a reference to this animal, for in Matthew 3:4 we read that John the Baptist was clothed in raiment of camel's hair, (incidentally, this could prove to be very suitable because of its soft texture and because of the fact that it was water repellent).

Camels may be classified into two types—the Bactrian camel and the Arabian camel. The former inhabits the rocky deserts and snowy wastes of Tibet, Turkestan, and Gobi Desert (north-central Asia). It is adapted to this particular region because of its long hair, which protects it from the cold; it also has shorter legs and harder feet enabling it to withstand the hardships of the rugged terrain. The outstanding characteristic is its double hump, but it is also heavier and much slower and is capable of swimming short distances.

In contrast to this, the Arabian camel is found in India, Northern Africa, Arabia, and Australia. It has a single hump, long legs, short hair, and is unable to swim. There

are approximately 3½ million Arabian camels and about 1½ million Bactrian camels. The dromedary is a special kind of Arabian camel which is noted for its fleetness of foot; in fact, it can cover almost 100 miles in one day.

Camels, in general, are peculiar looking animals indeed, for they have enormous, sad, melting eyes, two large quivering nostrils, tiny ears, and a pronounced "hairlip". Camels are stupid animals but very submissive and live to be about 40 or 50 years old.

How wondrously is this creature adapted to its mode of life in the desert. In times of sand-storms, they can close their nostrils with little flaps, and the eyes have an additional set of lids to insure protection from dust and sand. Then, too, the feet are peculiarly adapted in that they can spread out sideways to prevent sinking into the yielding sand. Perhaps, the most marvelous form of adaptation is the hump which consists of accumulated layers of solid fat, important as a reserve when journeying and the food supply is low. The hump decreases in size as the days go by, for gradually the "reserve" is being used. These humps make up about 1/15 of the total weight (or the equivalent of about 80 pounds in the adult camel.) The hump is an indication of the animal's physical fitness, and the camel driver is very fastidious about the condition of these humps before commencing his journey. However, these humps do not contain cells for water storage as has been frequently supposed; although it is true that the fat when oxidized by the body to produce energy also gives water as a by-product, (thus, 80 pounds of fat will produce about 10 gallons of water).

Another amazing feature of adaptation is the ability to go long periods without water, for a camel can go five or six days without drinking. Until recently it was thought that water was stored in two pouches located at the sides of the rumen (first stomach). However, experiments seem to indicate that the pouches do not store water, but merely act as salivary glands absorbing their water from general body tissue and secreting it into the rumen to moisten the food in preparation for digestion. It is thought that the water is stored throughout the connective tissues of the entire body, particularly directly under the skin. When the animal drinks, the entire body seems to fill out. Peculiar as it may seem camels can become intoxicated with water, if the animal is not supplied with salt at the time of watering. Then it develops a case of "mad staggers". The enormous consumption of water (10-25 gallons) so lowers its salt concentration that the body be-

comes weak and it loses its sense of balance.

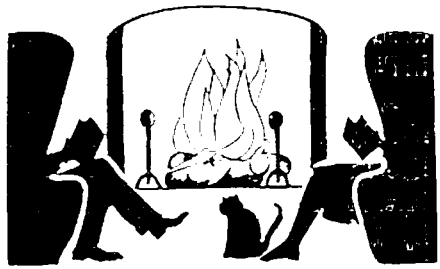
Another factor in making this animal suited to desert life is the type of food which is eaten, for the camel eats the coarsest of foods such as twigs, thorns, shrubs, nettles, leaves. Such a diet enables it to survive the sparseness of the desert, while other animals with weaker powers of digestion would perish.

An interesting historical incident occurred some 2500 years ago when Cyrus of Persia defeated the army of Croesus by frightening the opponents formidible cavalry with a herd of camels. Horses are very allergic to the odor of camels, and, consequently Croesus' cavalry reared and reversed direction when meeting the camels.

During the campaign of the Middle East the Arabs sold many camels for food and transportation to the warring nations. Some of the Egyptian custom officers suspected a certain group of regular traders, for when they offered to purchase some of their camels they refused, even when the price suggested was three times the prevailing price. Suspicion prompted their seizing a few and examining them carefully. Imagine their surprise, when the discovered ¼ pound tins of narcotics in the camel's rumen (crop). Hence, a law was passed which requires routine X-ray of a certain number of camels of the caravan crossing the border.

Thus, from the dawn of history to the present the "ship of the desert" has proved to be invaluable, especially as the burden-bearer in these sandy wastes. Once again we must marvel at the special adaptations of the creature to its own unique environment!

Christian Living. . .



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

ITS SPIRITUAL NECESSITY

(2)

We ended our previous article on this sub-topic by stating: "Only the pure, Reformed conception gives the correct answer to the question: Why is Christian living necessary at all?" In this article we shall try to give that answer.

That conversion and good works *are* necessary, that a child of God must live a Christian life, that unless we do so we cannot call ourselves Christians, is plain from Scripture and the Reformed confessions. In Lord's Day 32 of our Heidelberg Catechism we read: "Cannot they then be saved, who, continuing in their wicked and ungrateful lives, are not converted to God? By no means; for the holy Scriptures declare that no unchaste person, idolater, adulterer, thief, covetous man, drunkard, slanderer, robber, or any such like, shall inherit the kingdom of God" That language is clear and unambiguous. If we continue in our way of sin the end will be eternal damnation. How correct our fathers were is plain from I Cor. 6:9, 10, where we find the same language: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with men, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." Besides, our own consciences bear witness to this same truth. The inmost being of every man testifies: we must repent, be converted, do good works, live Christian lives, —or perish forever.

Scripture, however, also tells us *why* this is necessary. It is because of the nature of our spiritual lives. The necessity is a purely *spiritual* one.

We might put it this way: the child of God simply *must* live a Christian life. He does not ask: what's in it? He says: I cannot do otherwise. He cries with the apos-

tle Paul: "How shall we who are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Rom. 6:2.

And we must live Christian lives simply because Christ works His life in our hearts if we are truly His. He does not only redeem us by His blood: He also renews us by His Spirit. The former He does on Calvary. There He purchased our eternal freedom by paying the full ransom for sin. There He merited our justification, removed our condemnation far from us and purchased our liberation from the prison wherein we lie by nature. All this He did for us on the cross. However, there is more. What Christ did *for* us is only part of our complete deliverance.

It is only the foundation, as it were. There must also be a superstructure. There is also the work of Christ *in* and *through* us. Salvation is not only something that is merited for us: it is also something that is worked in us. The Lord Jesus also renews us by His Spirit. This latter, after all, is the whole purpose of all He did for us. Having blotted out our guilt He also delivers us from the spiritual dominion of sin in our hearts. Having merited eternal life He also bestows it. He does not only *die for* us: He also *lives in* us. As our complete Savior He also makes us one with Himself by a true and living faith, whereby we are ingrafted into Him like a branch into a vine, and whereby we cling to Him, live out of and unto Him, and receive out of Him grace for grace unto eternal life with God. Hence He makes us His imagebearers, gives us life and light and faith and love, changes the heart, inclines the will, enlightens the mind, makes us living, active Christians. Christ *for* us also becomes Christ *in* us.

Don't you see, then, how salvation effects a radical, spiritual change in our hearts and lives, which spiritual change is the root of all Christian living? Now we again love the good, in as far as we live that new life, and our desire is once again to walk according to the law of God in all good works.

Thus the necessity of living Christian lives becomes plain as day to us. God Himself works also this, by His grace in Christ. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God afore prepared that we should walk in them." Eph. 2:10.

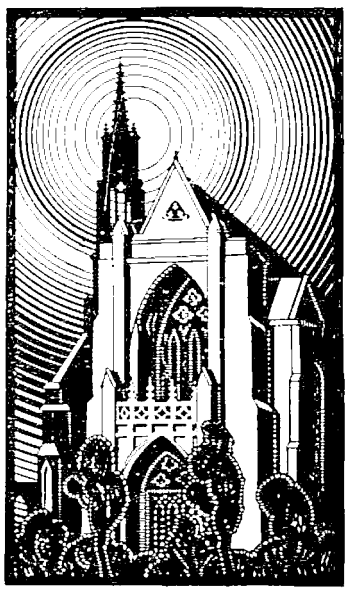
Now we see plainly why a wicked, ungrateful, unconverted man cannot be saved as long as he walks in such a way. It is not that salvation depends on our works, for it doesn't. But, where there is no Christian living there is no living Christian. Such a man has never received the grace of God in Christ and the life that is from above. A

tree that bears no fruit, that shows no signs of life, is dead.

And thus we see why a child of God *must* do good works. Why is a Christian life necessary if we already are Christians? Precisely because we *are* Christians. Why good works if we are saved by grace alone? Exactly because we *are* saved by grace. Why a new life if we are saved by faith, and not by works? Precisely because we are saved by *faith*, and faith lives, acts, and always lives and acts out of and unto God. We breathe, not in spite of the fact that we are alive, not in order that we may live, but simply because we do live. Our lives must be Christian, not in spite of the fact that we are Christians, not in order that we may become Christians, but simply because we *are* Christians.

Our Netherland Confession sums it up beautifully when it says in Article 24: "Therefore it is impossible that this holy faith can be unfruitful in man: for we do not speak of a vain faith, but of such a faith, which is called in Scripture a faith that worketh by love, which exciteth man to the practice of those works, which God has commanded in His Word."

In conclusion let me add one thing. If this salvation in Christ were now complete, if there were in us only that new life, we should have nothing more to say about the entire subject of Christian living. We should be in no need of further instruction and admonition. Spontaneously we would know and do the right. However, this is not the case. We still carry with us the old man of sin. Therefore the life of the Christian, at best, is a continuous struggle. And therefore we are in constant need of being instructed in all that pertains to Christian living, in order that we may know how to heed the word of Scripture: "Walk as children of the light. . . . And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Eph. 5:8, 11.



EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

Peace Under Constantine

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

"We wrestle not against flesh and blood but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand in the evil day." With these words the Apostle Paul warned the church at Ephesus and reminded her of the power and type of enemy which is constantly seeking to destroy her. Church history is full of instances which show us that the church is never left alone by that enemy and that she must always be on her guard and equipped with the whole armor of God.

We have noticed many of the ways in which the devil had been trying to destroy the early New Testament church. He came with false doctrines which appeal to the newly converted Jews. He led men to propogate heresies which appealed to the converts who formerly believed all the pagan mythology. He also provided a false doctrine which was intended to deceive both the serious-minded Jews and Gentiles. Ebionism, Gnosticism and Montanism followed each other and were meant to be bait to lure the believers away from Christ and from their faith in Him.

But, not only is the devil a powerful adversary, church history teaches us that he is a relentless, untiring and persistent enemy of the church. He does not stop. He may change his tactics, but he will not cease to assault the church. And he had one more fiery dart to hurl at the church besides those of which we already have spoken. He came as the wolf in sheep's clothing after a period of walking about as a lion seeking to devour whom he could. After years of violent and almost continual persecution through which the devil sought to destroy the church and its faith, he now moves his servants to make peace and usher the church into a new era. Under Constantine the church was given rest from persecution, and not only was it now posible for one to confess his faith in Christ without fear of persecution, but now it became compulsory for the citizens of Constantine's realm to belong to the church.

The devil is still there, however, and this sudden turn of events was

not due to his concession of defeat. It is but a change of tactics. While formerly he sought to lure God's people out of the church with tempting bait, now he seeks to corrupt the church from within by making it open its doors to unbelievers of every sort. Before this false teachers had crept into the church in the vain attempt of destroying the church, but now thousands upon thousands of unbelievers were ushered into the church and began to corrupt it from within.

It all came about in the year 311 A.D. when Constantine issued an edict of toleration. This was later followed in the year 312 by an edict which not simply tolerated the Christian religion but even gave it complete freedom. Constantine himself cannot be regarded as a believer. His deeds were against any such judgment of him. In fact had he been a true believer he would not have welcomed all these pagans of his realm into the bosom of the church. His reason for setting Christianity free was partly due to his realization that oppression of the church in no way whatsoever stopped its growth as former persecutions had made plain, and partly due to his carnal ambitions to unite church and state under himself as the head. He was an ambitious and worldly wise man.

The point we would have you consider about this incident in early church history is that this action of Constantine brought definitely to a close the period which we have been considering: namely, the age of apologetics. It was no longer necessary for the church to defend its position in the world and to give a reason why it has a right to exist. Constantine saw to it that Christianity was recognized.

Let us not forget however that God is behind this historical event as He is behind all that transpires. He decreed all things, and this work of Constantine is not excluded from His counsel. A new period of church history now begins. A period is ushered in wherein the church, unhindered by persecution and stirred up to greater activity by the false doctrines which arose, began to develop the truth of the Scriptures and led by the Spirit composed many beautiful confessions to which we ascribe today. This of course is the divine purpose behind this new liberty which the church receives at the hand of Constantine. Once again the truth of Scripture speaks to us that all things work together for good to those that love God. In fact the actions of Constantine by the wisdom and counsel of God worked for the good of the church as it stands in the world today. We share in the fruits of the church made possible by the freedom under Constantine.

Your Magazine. . .

Perhaps many of our subscribers are unaware of the fact that each of our congregations has an agent for *Beacon Lights*. The duties of the agents is to campaign for new subscribers to *Beacon Lights*, and to collect donations and subscriptions that are due. This picture was taken in front of our church at Redlands, California, on Thanksgiving Day, showing Miss Alice Reitsma still "on the job".

Of course, everyone knows that Alice was the former business manager of "Beacon Lights", but her interest in our young people's publication has not decreased, for she is still the Junior Journal editor, and Beacon Lights agent at Redlands. The Federation Board and Staff of "Beacon Lights" are always interested in new subscribers because we feel that all of our young people should read this magazine. We feel that many young people in our congregations are not very *Beacon Lights* minded. Our list of subscribers should include the names of many more young people. This is your magazine — let's show our interest! Will the agents in our various churches please remind our young people about "Beacon Lights" and advertise it? The above picture of Alice should truly be an inspiration. Shall we double our subscriptions during the coming year?

And not only are we interested in increasing subscriptions to Beacon Lights, but we are always happy to hear from our readers. Since we have a new social problems department we are expecting a lot of questions from our readers. May we have some comments or criticism for our magazine? Our editor Rev. W. Hofman is always eager to receive a word from one of our subscribers which is suitable for publication. Then we know that we have interested readers.

Let us hear from you!

Wilma Pastoor.

To Our Boys In Service

Grand Rapids, Jan. 31, '47

Dear fellows:—

In times like ours, times of war and confusion, times, too, when the world exerts itself more strenuously than otherwise to realize its dream of a united world, happy with peace and prosperity, apart from God, and without Christ,—in such times the people of God often speak of it that the coming of the Lord draws nigh, and that the end of this present world is fast approaching. They are mindful of the fact that, according to the Bible, certain things must first come to pass, before the Lord will return and usher in the kingdom of glory, and in the present events they see that those things are fast being realized.

Now, although we must be careful lest we begin to talk and to act as if we knew "the day and the hour", and deceive ourselves with false hopes, I, too, believe that conditions in the world of today remind us emphatically that the Lord is coming, and that the world is fast approaching its end.

What special reasons there are in our present time for this belief I will, perhaps, explain some other time.

This time I want to write about another phase of this same truth.

The Bible instructs us that the day of the Lord, that is, the day in which He shall come again in order to judge the quick and the dead, is always near. A few centuries more or less make no difference with a view to this nearness. And so the Word of God admonishes God's people that, in this world, they shall live as if that day were present. They must walk as if in that day. That means that the truth of that coming must be in our hearts, and before our mind, constantly. It means, too, that it must fill us with a strong and glad and lively hope of that coming. We must not be filled with fear at the thought of the end of all things and of the appearance of our Lord in glory, but rather have confidence that in that day we shall be like Him. And the hope of that coming, and of being like Him in that day, must be an incentive, a strong motive for the believer in this world, to keep his garments clean and unspotted, and to walk in the light to the glory of God our Saviour. That day of the Lord, therefore, must, according to Scripture, dominate our whole life in this world, so that we do not seek the things on the earth, but the things that are above, where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God. In that sense, we must live as in that day.

Fellows, our hope and prayer is that you, too, wherever you are, and whatever may be the fashion of the particular world in which you must live as long as you are in the service, may live in the hope of His coming, and remember that "the end of all things is near."

God bless you!

As ever your friend,

Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Choosing A Vocation

— II —

In the January issue of *Beacon Lights* we promised to continue discussing the subject "Choosing a Vocation". Well, here we are once more to resume where we left off the last time.

First of all I like to come back to your remark that there are so many vocations in our day and that this in itself makes it already difficult to make a definite choice. That remark of yours is indeed correct and to the point. We live in an extremely specialized age. Statisticians claim that there are at least 600 occupational groups in our country and more than 25999 specific jobs. What a tremendous field. Of course it is impossible to know something about all of the more than 600 occupational groups, much less can you know something about the 25000 specific jobs. However, it is not at all necessary to know something about everything before you can really make up your mind, before a definite choice can be made. On the other hand it is well and also necessary in our day and age to know at least a little about vocations in general. This is often a help to make a wise choice. Of course there may be such a thing that one's mind is made up very definitely at an early age as to his or her choice of vocation. But even then we cannot just blindly follow our desires in this respect. Usually it is very wise to inquire and find out about the particulars of any vocation or job. There may be angles to certain vocations which prohibit us from choosing them. I am thinking now particularly of principle and spiritual objections.

And that leads me to my second, general observations. There are a good many vocations which we, as Protestant Reformed covenant young people cannot choose. You may just as well make up your mind that your field of choice is very much limited. There are e.g. any number of vocations, occupations, jobs, which we cannot choose for reasons of principle. The nature of many vocations is such that they are sinful or anti-christian to begin with, or so closely associated with sinful lusts, practices, worldly amusements, entertainments, etc., that we are positively excluded from such occupations. For example: who would defend the choice of a vocation that would bring one directly into contact and association with the Hollywood Movie industry? Who of you would defend seeking a job which would mean close contact with and helping to promote the business of houses of ill repute? Or, again,

who of you would ever think of learning the trade of bartender, and seek this as your life's vocation? And there are a great many similar jobs or vocations which bring us in such close contact with the world of sin that it is inconceivable that any of you would even desire such an occupation.

However, there are still more, there are not only a good many jobs which are so directly in the service of sin or so intimately associated with it that we should never even think of seeking such vocations, but there are also a great number of vocations which, although legitimate in themselves, make it impossible for us to seek such vocations because they curtail and limit us in the free exercise of our worship of God according to His Word and the dictates of our conscience. This is definitely the case e.g., with occupations which make it compulsory for us to belong to a certain association or union the principles of which are contrary to the Word of God. And this is a tremendous field in our day. And as young people we may just as well make up our mind that while the world becomes broader and while the vocational field expands tremendously, our vocational world is in many respects narrowing down. A vocation may be very honorable and legitimate in itself while the strings attached to it, the things that necessarily go with it, make it impossible for us enter into that particular field. And especially in our day we have to be very careful on this score. By all means investigate before you decide, seek advice before you plunge into something or land in an environment where you must deny the spiritual principles which are most dear to you and where you cannot serve your God according to His Word. And from all appearances in this respect our field is becoming narrower as time goes on. And this is Scriptural too, the people of God will be crowded out. This also is suffering for Christ's sake. For Christ's sake many a vocation, legitimate in itself, is not open for us because it involves either direct or tacit denial of our God. Young people, be wise, be wide awake, be spiritually-minded, let yourselves be guided by the good counsel of those who seek your real and spiritual welfare.

Closely related to the foregoing are also a number of vocations which, although legitimate in themselves, make it positively or well nigh impossible for a conscientious christian to seek and occupy such a place. I am thinking now e.g., of jobs like police officer or fireman. These jobs are not sinful in themselves, why should they be? However, the strings attached to them make it inadvisable to choose such a vocation. For these jobs usually,

if not aways, imply that you must belong to a union with the principles of which you may be reasonably sure, you cannot agree. And it also definitely means Sunday labor. It seems to me in this same category of vocations also falls seeking a career in the Army or Navy, although to me this is worse than the foregoing. There is a great difference between being drafted or choosing the Army or Navy for a career. Many of our boys know from experience that this is not the proper spiritual atmosphere for our covenant youth. Should a Christian seek these and similar vocations? Personally I cannot conceive of this. I think there is something basically, spiritually wrong already with a Protestant Reformed youth if he goes for these and similar jobs. He is drifting away already from the staunch Protestant Reformed conception of the truth, of our world- and life-view. And I think life itself proves that all such young people who seek these kind of vocations are lost to our churches. Don't be indifferent but aware, investigate, be conscientious about the matter of choosing a vocation. Perhaps you reply: "But if you start talking that way the field is very limited." I agree, and that is just exactly what I like to impress upon your mind.

In this same connection we also might mention vocations which of necessity imply following a course of higher education in worldly colleges and godless universities. After all, you must follow the course, you must be trained by godless men in a purely worldly institution. You are under the influence of the educated men of the world who may be very brilliant in their particular scientific field, but who are nevertheless ungodly men that have no place for the God of Scripture but positively deny and (or) attack the fundamental principles of true christianity. Men who boldly declare that they are Atheists, Agnostics, Evolutionists, etc. And it is impossible not to be influenced or impressed by such brilliant but ungodly minds. And then of course there is the association with godless students, infidels, the life on the campus, the unavoidable worldly surroundings in which one must live and breathe. Under such circumstances and in such an atmosphere it must be extremely difficult for a christian student to keep himself free from the pollution of the world. Should we expose ourselves, should we expose our children for a number of years to the modern paganism of the purely worldly institutions of learning? It seems to me we must proceed cautiously and think twice before we are too positive in our defense of some of these things. A particular vocation in itself may be legitimate, even laudable, but in order to attain to it we

must follow a prescribed course and be exposed to a great many spiritual dangers before the goal is reached. Even under the most ideal circumstances and being fully aware of the spiritual leanings of my child I still would fear and tremble if I had children that were daily exposed to the great dangers which we mentioned in this paragraph. Perhaps some of our people would like to give their opinion on this matter in our Beacon Lights. We would welcome this, either from parents or students. Of course, I know very well that we must *spiritually* separate ourselves from the world and that local and literal separation is impossible and even contrary to Scripture. But this is not the point at stake. I also fully realize that God must and can keep me and my child from the pollution and contamination of the world. And I trust that He will also do this in every case where He as it were forces me providentially into situations which are entirely beyond my control and where I have no choice in the matter. We have experienced this very remarkably in recent times when our boys were in the Army and Navy and lived in the very spheres of cesspools of iniquity. But it makes a lot of difference whether God leads me there providentially or whether I choose to be there and then expect that the Lord will take care of me. And as far as practical life is concerned there is abundant proof for the fact that many a young man out of Reformed circles through higher education was lost for the Reformed faith, not to speak yet of those who actually turned their backs on Christianity. Perhaps you say: "This need not be so." Maybe not, but facts are facts, and we certainly are responsible not only for the work we do and the vocation we choose but also for the means and the way whereby our goal is attained. Let's be careful, let's be prayerful. Besides, a vocation may easily be chosen which of necessity leads us away from our own churches or even from the Reformed circles in the broader sense of the word. There are all kinds of consequences connected with choosing a vocation and we do well to weigh these consequences. I can readily conceive of choosing a legitimate vocation while the price we have to pay (of course I am thinking in spiritual terms) is too high, so that it is not worth the cost. And, after all, is there but one particular vocation suitable for us, could we not choose another vocation where the spiritual risks and dangers are not nearly so great? And, again, my young friend, I would like to remind you of the fact that you must be willing to sacrifice all for Christ's sake.

Sorry, but our space is taken for this issue.

SCHUILER.

Junior Journal....

By MISS ALICE REITSMA — Redlands, California

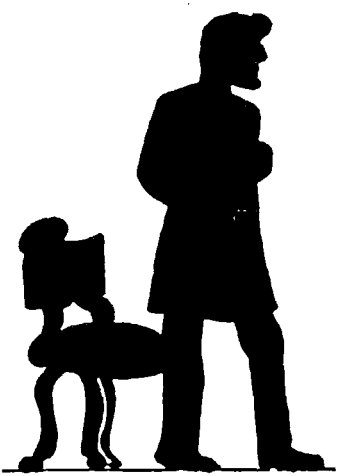
NATIONAL HEROES

When George Washingtin was born at the seldom visited and almost unknown Wakefield Farm in Virginia, the Indians had scarcely left the woods near his home. As a youth, although bred in an environment of Luxury and ease and refiinement, he often chose the rugged life of hunters and Indians, climbing mountains, fording streams, and fighting forest storms. While still a young man, he led the Virginian troops against the French, and later in the War for Independence, he served as Commander-in-Chief for the United States forces.

At a time when he would have preferred to spend the remainder of his life in peace and quiet at his Mount Vernon home, he was unanimously elected President of this new nation. Now he is hailed as the "Father of our Country", and we read of him as a man with admirable physical traits, a strange dignity of manner and a calm seriousness which compelled confidence.

* * * *

Twenty years after Washington took his oath of office as President of the U.S., Abraham Lincoln was born in a Kentucky log cabin. Although schooling was limited, somehow he learned "readin', writin', and cipheren', to the Rule of Three". He moved to Indiana about the time that state entered the Union, and later to New Salem, Illinois, where he tried to earn his living by farming, splitting rails, clerking, or surveying, but always studying law and politics.



After waging a campaign of intense enthusiasm on the part of his friends in the North, and intense bitterness on the part of his enemies in the South, he won the election as the Nation's head. When he entered the National capitol, the whole nation seethed with unrest, suspicion, secession. Four years of Civil War followed. And then just as the Nation was rejoicing over the restored Union, came the mourning over the assassination of its leader. Now we read of Lincoln's intense humanity, his deep sympathy, his firmness for the right and his unswerving desire to do his duty to "preserve, protect, and defend" the Union.

There are our Nation's heroes! Their birthdays are marked in red on our February calendars, and this gives us occasion to reread the historical accounts of the lives of these men. But we must look beyond! And when we do we do longer see these heroes, these men, but we see God. We see the infinite greatness of God! We see God qualifying men, using men, and destroying men in the realization of his own plan for the history of the world.

* * * *

RANDOLPH JUNIOR BIBLE CLUB

I am a reader of the "Beacon Lights". I read the articles which are written by the various contributors. Amongst other articles that interested me and especially attracted my attention was the article written by Rev. Vermeer "Concerning Movies" on the Young People's Convention. Seeing I have not the opportunity to attend a Christian high school I must attend the public school here in Randolph. And because of this I do see a great deal of movies, both educational and entertaining. It is a fact that entertaining movies are more popular than the educational type of pictures. This of course is to be expected in a public school. Is it not so that sinful human nature will take the wide way and will disdain the narrow way as Christ portrays to us in Matt. 7:13, 14.

What I really had in mind in writing this letter for the Junior Journal was to acquaint Beacon Lights readers with our young and small but prosperous organization here in Randolph. As secretary of the Randolph Junior Bible Club I was requested by the society to supply you with this information about our society.

We have in our constitution two articles which are not subject to change: articles two and three "The Basis of the Society" and "The Purpose of the Society". Six members are enrolled into our society. We may seem small but Christ says in the Scriptures, "where two or three be gathered in my name, there I shall be in their midst."

Before recess we have Bible discussion. At present we are studying the book of Judges. On our after-recess programs we have our business, after which a short program is sponsored by one or two members of the society. We plan to have a book report, essays and debates on our after recess program. If book reports are welcome, possibly a specimen of our work can be sent to the Junior Journal.

Miss Reitsma visited Randolph last fall and at that time she asked me to write. I am sure she would enjoy it if other Junior Societies would inform us of their activities and Junior life.

Let's keep the letters flowing into the Junior Journal.

Your Christian friend,
Agatha Lubbers.

Thank You, Agatha, for your interesting letter. We are glad to hear that Randolph's Junior Bible Club is so active and we certainly welcome all contributions your society may wish to send in. I hope all our Junior Societies follow your excellent example. How about sending in a picture of your society with your next contribution. —A. R.

DELINQUENCY

Wait a minute!

You ought to read this!

I know, you've heard so much about that subject that you are probably inclined to say, "That's ancient history." And, without realizing it, you are saying more than you intended to say. It certainly is "ancient history", as old, I should say, as the human race itself. But don't forget that it is also very *modern!* It's history, past and present. It's history in the making.

One hears and reads a great deal today about *juvenile* delinquency, which, as someone has said, could perhaps better be called *adult* or *parental* delinquency. There is little doubt as to the truth of this. What else can one expect from homes that are broken by continual strife and wrecked by the evil of divorce, where children are left to shift for themselves without the proper parental discipline, supervision and guidance?

However, it is not from the mere general point of view that we wish to call attention to this evil. One can expect those things in the world where men have nothing but contempt for God's commandments and are motivated by carnal, selfish desires in enmity to the living God. And although we as christians bemoan this sad condition in the world, we nevertheless know that it must be so because of God's judgments upon the ungodly. We know also that this condition shall steadily grow worse in the measure that the man of sin is revealed and the day of Christ approaches. If we could merely let the case rest there and wash our hands in innocence, if this condition existed only in the world and we could look down

upon it from some exalted position with garments that were unspotted by this crime, we might assume an attitude of indignation in respect to the world and feel quite satisfied with ourselves.

But can we?

We know only too well that we can't. The evidence is too convincing to be easily denied. No one can deny that this evil exists also in the sphere of the church of Jesus Christ. I am not thinking now of such exceptional instances where "christian" young people are haled into court and charged with this crime. Nor am I thinking at the moment of those "christian" parents who are remiss in their duty and through their own delinquency are the cause of the delinquency of their children. One might say a whole lot about that and the parents who read this may certainly take it to heart. But since I am writing in a magazine that is intended especially for christian young people, I may limit my remarks on this subject to them.

Webster defines delinquency as. "failure, omission, or violation, of duty; transgression of law". A delinquent, therefore, is one who is "failing in duty; offending by neglect or violation of duty or of law." But why not call it by its right name? Delinquency is *sin!* In fact, one may say that all sin is essentially delinquency because it is a "missing of the mark", a failure on our part to give to God that honor and glory which is due Him, an offense against His holiness, a transgression of His law. This, however, does not preclude the possibility of speaking of delinquency as a particular manifestation of sin, as distinguished from the delinquency of sin in general. Considered within the scope of our present discussion, we may say, therefore, that there is, among the many sins that characterize our walk of life, the particular sin of delinquency. Although the term is in itself contradictory, for lack of a better term, we may speak of "christian delinquency". By this term we mean to refer to our neglect of duty as it pertains to the religious and spiritual exercises which God requires of us within the sphere of the church. In this respect, there is first of all that gross form of delinquency by which we fail to attend the service on the Lord's day or "skip" the hour of catechism and thus neglect the means of grace. When this is done wilfully, such an individual becomes a liar and practices the lie in respect to his parents, who assume that he attends, in respect to the church, which requires that he attend and thus also in respect to God, to Whom he must give an account. (In this connection, parents do well to make sure not only that son or daughter leave at the

proper time but also that he has prepared himself and that he has actually attended, lest they unawares contribute to this delinquency of their child by their neglect or by a proud presupposition that *their* Jane or Johnny wouldn't do such a thing.) However, I am not, at the moment, interested in that type of delinquent. I am glad that I may say that this miserable delinquent is an exception. I want to speak to you, who, I feel assured, also condemn such wilfull "skipping" and neglect of duty. Isn't it possible that, while we condemn delinquency in others, we ourselves are guilty of it, in some other form perhaps? Are we not guilty of that same sin when we allow some form of selfish pleasure to keep us from attending our class? Do we not choose, in such instances, for our own carnal and temporal pleasure rather than the service and blessing of God? And does not this same thing hold for us when we permit ourselves to be caught up in the spirit of this pleasure-mad world so that we have no time for our membership in some society that serves for mutual edification? But suppose that you can justly point to the record to prove that you faithfully attend both catechism class and society meetings, does that absolve you of all contamination of this evil? True, you have then avoided every external form of delinquency. But have you avoided its real stain? Delinquency is not first of all a matter of external form but an internal reality in the heart. Is it therefore not true that you are guilty of delinquency when you do not prepare yourself properly for such spiritual exercises or when you do not give attendance to the instruction that is given? Then, although you have avoided the form, you nevertheless practice the same lie in your heart before God. And when year after year you faithfully attend catechism and in every physical and intellectual respect have become an adult but fail to become one spiritually and fail to take an adult-position through confession of your faith, are you not a delinquent? Must not the church conclude that you have failed to realize the end which God has in view in the instruction you have received?

We could write a great deal more on this subject but space will not permit. Nor is that really necessary if you have understood the point in question.

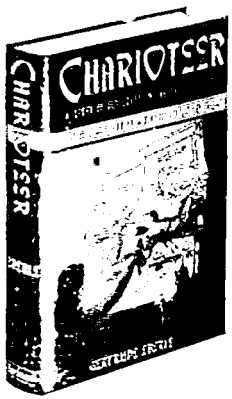
Instead of looking at others, let us ask a question of ourselves: am I, perhaps, in spite of all appearances, a delinquent?

Remember that delinquency is a tool of the devil!

May God deliver us from it!

Rev. Hubert De Wolf.

CHARIOTEER



A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph

By GERTRUDE EBERLE

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

LIKE some fabled dragon, a long caravan of Ishmaelite merchantmen crawled around the low hills and through deep valleys on an ancient ribbon of roadway between Chaldea and Egypt. It had crossed the Moab Mounains and was drawing near Dothan in Canaan. It twisted along its way leisurely, for it had LIKE some fabled dragon, a long cara- of Ishmaelite merchantmen crawled around the low hills and through deep valleys on an ancient ribbon of roadway between Chaldea and Egypt. It had crossed the Moab Mountains and was drawing near Dothan in Canaan. It twisted along its way leisurely, for it had women in its train and many slaves, and the camels were burdened with the usual trademen's supplies of ivory, sandalwood, spices, rugs, silks, and linens.

At the head of the caravan strode Raanah with several dogs trotting beside him. He was a slender youth whose dark eyes were banked with eager fire. The day was young and glorious. The healthful life of long trails caused the blood to leap in his veins, and his high spirits could not be restrained.

"Give me foes to fight! Give me legions to conquer!" he sang in a rich and lusty baritone, while his feet kept measured beat to his martial song. Love had not yet touched his heart, but adventure was calling to him.

His shapely head, cameo-cut features, and graceful stride gave hint of proud Chaldean ancestry, but the iron bars in his ears marked him as a slave, and his clothing was coarse and scant.

As he marched and sang, the tinkle of tiny bells on the donkeys drifted musically toward him. A sudden breeze stirred up the acrid smell of the animals, and he paused on a hillock to look back at the caravan.

Heading it were eight fat, bearded tradesmen with restless, piercing eyes, each astride a grey donkey that traveled with careful, mincing steps. The men

were all gowned alike in monkish robes and padded turbans. At first they had been strangers, but had joined forces on this long trail for mutual protection.

Behind this straggling group stretched the huge, lurching pack camels, each attended by a slave who clucked to his charge and occasionally whacked it on the rump. Behind there were other camels with howdahs containing the women, who were relegated to the rear because they were less valuable than the merchandise.

The sight of this crawling, dragon-like line fascinated Raanah. He felt that it was nosing him into adventure. His eyes lighted as they ran along its twisting body to its tail.

"Ha—dragon!" he challenged it, "where are you heading— for some cave in the moon, or the end of the rainbow?" He laughed at his conceit: then turning, let his gaze sweep far ahead while he burst lustily into song.

His tune was interrupted by his master's grumpy voice. "Hey—cease your efforts. Your tongue is always wagging as if it were loose at both ends. You will set the dogs and donkeys to howling next."

Not the least abashed, Raanah grinned at the speaker. Accid-Adab's stormy face atop his barrel-shaped body towered high above his donkey, while his dangling feet almost touched the ground.

Just then a savage gust of wind ballooned his clothing, veering the donkey to the edge of the road, while Accid-Adab flapped his legs and arms in an effort to save himself. As the wind abated, Uruk managed to prop himself stiff-legged on the decline. There they hung, while Accid-Adab's olive face grew livid with fright and wrath. Raanah could not suppress a chuckle, and a faint snicker rippled among the merchantmen.

"You ruffian!" Accid-Adab roared, eager to set blame on another. "You have left the bellygirt too slack! If you are so careless again, I'll call a plague on you—I'll tell Obal to give you twenty lashes!"

Although his face sobered as he stepped toward his master, Raanah displayed no concern at the threats. "I can quickly fix it," he offered amicably.

"Bah! Think you 'tis no trouble for me to dismount? I could more easily fall and break my bones. Hurry—prop your shoulder against the brute before he pitches me down the ravine."

As Raanah pressed his weight against Uruk to ease him on to safe ground, he cocked an eye behind his master's back at Egiba and Isme-Dagan.

Eager to prolong the fun, Egiba laughed throatily, his teeth glistening like ivory in his fat brown face. "It seems, Adab, that your sail is too heavy for your keel."

"Be silent!" roared Accid-Adab.

"It is always easier to turn the tongue than a ship," Isme-Dagan took the cue. "Have a care how you tack back to the road." He was a squatty man who habitually spoke in a growling tone.

"Both of you be silent!" Accid-Adab tried to shake his fist at them, but dared not turn his head.

"Peace—peace!" drawled Dungri, a soft

spoken man. "Surely, the day is hot enough without heating yourself further with anger. And it is said," he glanced significantly at the tormentors, "that even a fool is counted wise when he holds his tongue."

Raanah maneuvered Uruk into the road, and without further concern whistled to the dogs and strode forward. His high spirits could not be suppressed by heat or rebukes; for the road to Egypt, stretching along or curving mysteriously behind the hills, lured him like some beckoning imp of adventure.

As he trudged along the narrow golden ribbon, he lived in a dream world. Five years before, in far-off Chaldea, a wealthy sheik had stopped at the home of Raanah's former master, Rath, with a string of Libyan horses. Raanah had never seen such superb creatures, only some shaggy runts of the Asiatic steppes. Those North African horses had long slender legs, arched necks, flowing manes, and exhibited sensitive intelligence and high courage. The sheik had boasted that with all their beauty they had the speed of hounds and the endurance of camels.

Afterwards, the bondboy had longed for a horse of his own, though he knew that only the wealthy could own horses. But maybe, some day—

As he trudged along, deprived of song, he imagined himself in a chariot behind four mettlesome, Libyan horses. The landscape faded. He was skimming a racecourse with other chariots behind him in swift pursuit. His breath quickened—then a movement ahead caught his eye and shattered his dream.

In a field nearby, several men were gathered around a pit. He watched them for a moment, then called the attention of the tradesmen to them.

Instantly the merchantmen were agog with necks craning. "Robbers!" Dahmru suggested nervously. He was a reticent, shy little man with weak eyes that habitually wore a squint. "Perhaps we had better arm our attendants."

"Nonsense!" Isme-Dagan dissented tartly. "More likely they be only cattle and sheep herders, gathered for lunch. The rich pasture lands about are dotted with grazing animals."

Egiba chuckled. "And what a temptation for hungry rovers like ourselves!"

"But look!" Raanah cried. "The men are casting down a rope."

Egiba stroked his beard reflectively. "Now what can the knaves be up to?"

"Some lamb must have fallen into the pit," Isme-Dagan suggested flatly.

"Bah," Egiba reproved him, "you are forever plucking the glamor from life."

"Well," Isme-Dagan grunted truculently, "why invite trouble with your thoughts?"

Egiba ignored him. As the caravan crawled forward, the actions of the men around the pit grew more discernible and exciting.

"Oh, see!" cried Raanah, "the men are straining on the rope. They draw up no light animal."

"And the pit is deep," Asaph offered, mentally measuring the curling rope on the ground in his practical manner.

Then amazement silenced the onlook-

ers as two men reached down, grasped the hand of a youth about Raanah's age and drew him out of the pit. Apparently he was unharmed, for he shook himself to rights vigorously. He was well-dressed and fastidious, for he brushed the dirt from his garments carefully.

"Now what villiany have we?" Egiba grunted.

The men about the pit began to argue and gesticulate angrily. The youth stood apart with eyes on the ground, scuffing the soil with his sandal.

It was apparent by their dress that the men were Midianites. The youth was a Hebrew. As the caravan approached a Midianite signaled for it to halt and motioned the youth to come with them. Their leader was a squatty, dirty fellow and cunning in a simple way. He bowed to Accid-Adab and again to the other merchantmen.

"Peace to you, and may your journey be profitable."

From his elevated seat Accid-Adab strained to bow to the speaker.

The Midianite jerked a thumb toward the youth. "Some misfortune has befallen him. He will not say what it is. We heard his cries as we were passing. Now he is ours to dispose of. He seems to be of good blood, sound and intelligent."

The ends of Accid-Adab's mustache drooped in a horse-shoe curve. "How much for the beggar?"

The Midianite glanced craftily from one to another of the merchantmen and answered with a shrug, "Thirty pieces of silver. Such a price is almost nothing, but we must hurry on."

A cold silence followed. Dahmru fidgeted and could not restrain his eagerness for a bargain. "The price is much too high. For you the sale is all gain. I will give you fifteen pieces of silver.."

Accid-Adab's mustache curled lower. He turned on Dahmru cuttingly. "It is my bid first."

Rebuked, Dahmru shrank back in his saddle. The Midianite growled in protest, "I cannot listen to such low bargaining. 'Tis known that a Hebrew slave gives the most intelligent service."

Accid-Adab appraised the youth from his smoldering eyes to his sandals, then turned to the Midianite. " 'Tis plain he is resentful and may prove troublesome. I will give only twenty pieces of silver." Without waiting for a reply, he drew his purse and counted out the money.

The Midianite accepted the silver and turned toward his associates for approval. They looked sullen, but made no protest. They wished to get away before friends could rescue the youth.

Instantly the merchantmen broke into a chatter. Accid-Adab squirmed in his saddle. Courtesy demanded he should have given them some voice in the trade. Now he could not face them. "Here, you—" he roared at Raanah to relieve his feelings. "Take charge of him."

Raanah had been taking in the proceedings with wide-eyed interest. He had sized the other youth up with approval. Now he looked frankly and sympathetically into his troubled eyes and spoke in a low voice. "Please come with me."

The other lad stepped along beside

him. It was evident that his misfortune pressed heavily upon him.

Raanah realized that the other youth must make some mental adjustment to his changed fortune, so he kept silent but from time to time as they trudged along, Raanah glanced covertly at him. He noticed, that although the youth's clothing was soiled from the pit, there was unusual richness about it. Undoubtedly he belonged to some aristocratic family. The latches of his sandals were laced to his knees. His tunic was woven in one piece of fine twilled linen, such as women of a wealthy household only could weave. Its neckband, girdle, and hem were embroidered. A sheered badgerskin cap confined his dark curls. Raanah's curiosity pricked him sorely. Finally he was impelled to speak, "I am called Raanah. What are you named?"

"Joseph, son of Jacob of Hebron." The reply came briefly in a modulated voice.

Silence fell again, but the sociable nature of youth soon brushes aside restraints.

"Did robbers put you in the pit?"

"No, it was my brothers."

"Your brothers!"

The youth nodded as if afraid to trust himself to speak.

"Why did they hate you?"

"I had a dream—"

"Ah—". Raanah remembered his own bright visions.

"And I told it to my brothers." The youth seemed to find relief in explaining his plight. "In my dream we were all binding sheaves in a field; and my sheaf stood upright and their sheaves bowed down before my sheaf. My brothers grew angry and said, "So-o, you would stand over us!"

"It was no fault for you to dream," Raanah consoled him.

"No, but I had another dream and told it to them. In it the sun, the moon, and the stars bowed to me. Then my father said, "What is all this about dreams and bows?"

"You see, my brothers have always been envious of me because they are sons of Leah and the concubines, and I am a son of Rachel, my father's beloved wife."

"But how dared they harm you before your father? He—."

"It happened this way. My father's tents are staked in the Valley of Hebron, but my ten brothers drove our flocks up near Dothan to greener pasture. Not hearing from them for many days, my father sent me to see if all was well with them and the flocks. . . . And—."

Raanah saw the sharp misery in Joseph's face and whistled to the dogs to give him time to control his emotions.

"When I came upon them," Joseph continued, "they were still angry and handled me roughly and stripped off my coat. One of them whispered, "Let us kill him, then see what will become of his dreams." But Reuben said, "No, we will put him in the pit."

"You might have drowned."

"No, there was no water in the pit, but I might have died of thirst and hunger. I heard my brothers say they would smear my coat with the blood of a lamb

and tell our father that I had been devoured by some beast. I begged them not to leave me, but they would not heed. I was in the pit for hours before the Midianites heard my cries. And now I am being taken to Egypt, and my father . . . ."

"I know just how you feel," Raanah said thoughtfully. "But you must now discover different ways of finding happiness than has been your custom. And sometimes that which seems to be bad luck turns out to be good. This road is beset with adventure, and we—".

"Whoa—whoa!" The startling yell of camel drivers started near the rear and rippled forward from man to man along the caravan. Raanah ran back within hailing distance of Calah, chief steward of the train.

" 'Tis only a cameleer prostrated," Calah shouted between cupped hands.

When Raanah reported the matter, Accid-Adab scowled. "Tell Calah to bundle him on a camel with the women; or if he be a Bantu, leave him by the roadside so we can move along."

"But all the men and animals are wilting under this heat," Dahmru ventured timidly. "Even the dogs are lagging with tongues out. We must find water soon or some of them will sicken."

"So say I," Egiba agreed. "Besides, it is near the lunch hour, and my stomach is growling." He patted his heavy pouch tenderly.

"If I remember rightly," Asaph volunteered, "there is a stream on the opposite side of this hill. The road goes by it."

Soon they saw it glistening through the scrub tamarisk along its banks. Some small trees clustered about it, casting dancing shadows on the ground. The thirsty animals smelled the water and quickened their pace, and the peaceful landscape suddenly turned into a scene of wild confusion.

"Quick!" Raanah yelled to Joseph. "Grab Uruk's reins before he carries the master into the stream!"

As Joseph sprang toward Uruk, Raanah headed off the thirsty donkeys of the other merchantmen before they could befoul the water. With fine organizing instinct he assumed command. "Gaza, Selah, Bilbec," he called to some Nubian slaves, "help us keep the asses back and lead them father down the stream to drink." He seized the bridles of a couple of thirst-maddened creatures and held them until the black boys came running to his assistance. The uproar grew deafening. Donkeys brayed a protest. Camels snipped and snarled. The curses of donkey boys and cameleers split the air.

Finally the rumpus simmered down. The merchantmen dismounted stiffly, stretched their champed muscels and gathered along the bank of the stream to dip their cups in the clear cold water.

After drinking with gusto, they became bland and smiling. "Now I am ready for the fleshpots," Egiba announced. "Why, I am so hungry the middle of me has caved in." He poked his portly belly with mock concern. "Ho, Shobal," he called to a grinning black man, "bring on the banquet!"

(Cont. in the next Issue)