BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION

NOVEMBER - 1947

BEACON LIGHTS

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Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VIII NOVEMBER — 1947 NUMBER 2

JOHN DE WYCLIFFE

By Rev. J. Howerzyl — Oskaloosa, Iowa

At this season of the year it is customary to commemorate the great Protestant Reformation when we celebrate Reformation Day.

At such a time as this our thoughts naturally turn first of all to such great reformers as Luther and Calvin. We must remember, however, that the Reformation was not a sudden, violent uprising against papal abuses, against the pope and his authority, against the darkened and immoral lives and teachings of the priests and bishops. Rather it must be viewed as a process, rather long continued, of retrogression on the part of the Roman Catholic church — going from bad to worse — while at the same time God's faithful servants were gradually coming to more and more light. I know, we usually think of the period of the Reformation as being one of darkness, error, heresy, without any light whatsoever, until suddenly it was kindled by that man of God Martin Luther. Rather, we must conceive of it as taking place in a church, officially corrupt, yet in which was much light and real Christianity present, especially in the smaller towns and cities. There were many faithful children of God, good priests who instructed and taught the people. If this were not so the rapid process of the Reformation could never be explained. Nor must we consider Luther to have been an isolated torch-bearer, even though it is true that through him the holocaust engulfed the Roman church. Rather is he the culmination and the focal point upon which the open split took place, but his position was due to the work of of many before him. Thus it is no doubt true that the reformation in Bohemia under John Huss had its influence also upon Luther, and Huss received his incentive as well as much of his spiritual foundation from the Englishman John de Wycliffe.

John de Wycliffe is thought to have been born in England sometime about the year 1324. The exact date of his birth is not known. He grew up and attended

Oxford University where he studied for and was later ordained as a priest. Rather interesting is the account given of his theological training in this university. "The usual course of study allotted two years to the study of grammar, logic and rhetoric, two years to the study of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music and seven years to theology. But theology as then understood was not the same study as now. Lectures on the Bible itself were entrusted to the lowest class of tutors, and were regarded as mere preparation for the more important subjects which were to follow . . . and the doctors of the University regarded it as completely beneath their dignity to occupy themselves with what they considered such mere elementary work. When a man had passed through this primary course at the hands of the lower rank of theological tutors who lectured on the Scriptures, he was transferred to the classes of the higher rank of the lecturers on scholastic theology. He now studied the writings of the Fathers, the canon law of the Church and more especially the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard, who was considered the supreme authority in this science."

Throughout Wycliffe was a sincere and earnest student of the Bible and this served to open his eyes later to the abuses and evils present in the Roman Catholic Church of his day.

The further student and early ecclesiastical life of Wycliffe we have not the space to trace. We turn therefore immediately to his reformatory work. His attack on the Church began with the custom, then strongly entrenched, according to which the clergy, priests and bishops as well as monastic orders held civil as well as religious positions. This, together with the resultant wealth and luxury of the clergy was strenuously opposed by Wycliffe who advocated a return to the simplicity and poverty of the apostolic church. In close connection with this was his opposition to the levying of ecclesiastical tribute upon England by the Pope. In this he was supported by the entire English Parliament. In this connection also he developed his doctrine of the Church in which he distinguishes the two different spheres of power, the civil and the ecclesiastical and maintained that the church has no secular power and is even under the jurisdiction of the civil magistrates in so far as it occupies a place within the limits of the state. "The king must apply his power with wisdom, his laws are to be in unison with those of God. From God, laws derive their authority, including those which royalty have over against the clergy. If one of the clergy neglects his office, he is a traitor to the king who calls him to answer

for it. It follows from this that the king has 'evangelical' control." Even though we see this relation more clearly today and insist that the government does not have this "evangelical" control it must be admitted that this is a step in the right direction when contrasted to the Roman Catholic conception of the absolute dominion both civil and ecclesiastical of the pope.

More important for the work of the Reformation was his conception and his teaching with regard to the Holy Scriptures. The more the strife between Wycliffe and the Roman Catholics developed the more did he have recourse to Scripture as the basis of all Christian doctrinal opinion and insisted more and more that it be the only standard of truth and faith. In refutation of his opponents he published a book in which he showed that the Holy Scriptures contain all truth and being from God are the ouly authority. Directly connected with this teaching concerning the Scriptures was his attempt to bring the Bible directly to the people. This he did in his translation of the Scriptures, with the help of others, which translation bears his name. While this because of its source (as the original manuscripts were unavailable it was based on the Latin or Vulgate translation) is not the best of translation, yet it was the first attempt to return the Scriptures to the common members of the church, from whom it had been hidden for years.

In this connection must also be mentioned the attempt of Wycliffe to have the Word preached. This had become well-nigh a lost art under the Roman Catholic domination of the Island. But Wycliffe sent out ministers two by two who preached and taught the people. And although this work, carried on after his death by his followers the "Lollards", was largely undone through persecution, nevertheless, there in England was laid the foundation for the Great Reformation. On the continent this was to take place through Huss and thus to Luther, and in England, these seeds sown by Wycliffe continued to grow until also there after several centuries it sprang into full life and activity.

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Miss Winifred De Vries
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And Be Ye Thankful

By Homer Kuiper — Kalamazoo, Mich.

Some ten years ago, in the city of Chicago, I attended a concert of Christian music on a Thanksgiving Day evening, and the pastor of the church in which the concert was held selected a portion of the third chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Colossians as part of the devotions preceding the musical program. Starting at the twelfth verse, he read the passage in the customary manner but when he came to the words which constitute the heading of this editorial, he paused and slowly, with great emphasis, he uttered the words, "And be ye thankful," with all the power of his oratorial ability. In so doing, he sharply accentuated the meaning and thrust of the apostle's words in this pasage from Holy Writ.

As it were, the apostle reaches a climax here in these words and emphasizes our obligation to be thankful. Very appropriate it is, we feel, that we should fulfill this admonition in this coming Thanksgiving season.

You will notice that, superficially considered, this powerful command of the apostle includes no definition of what thanksgiving consists nor to whom we should be thankful nor for what we should be thankful. Those who think in terms of material things will tell us that thanksgiving consists of gratitude to God for big crops, good jobs, fine homes, freedom from sickness and disease, a well-stocked larder, full grain bins, and a long list of nice things that we have had during the past year. Still that is really not what the apostle has in mind when he says "Be ye thankful."

There is a tremendous presupposition which underlies these words. That presupposition is that those who hear these words are re-born children of God who have been purchased from the power of sin and death through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Those to whom these words are addressed are the "elect of God, holy and beloved," as he states in the twelfth verse. And therefore, the fulfillment of the command to be thankful therefore is a highly spiritual activity conducted on an

elevated spiritual level and therefore is radically different from thanksgiving of the materialist who really is grateful for a full stomach, a fact which may not be a blessing at all but a curse.

For what then shall we be thankful? For the fact that we are reborn creatures in Christ and that in Him our heavenly Father has given us many benefits. Thankful for homes and parents filled with trust and faith in God, for schools and churches where we may hear the word of God without molestation, for enough of this world's goods so that we may serve Him with these goods, for warmth and shelter, for food and clothes, so that we are not hindered in His service. But the climax is our gratitude for the wonder of His grace whereby we receive from Him the ability to bear our weaknesses, our miseries, our pains and misfortunes, our troubles and our caries, for the grace to bear our cross daily. Consequently there is nothing that we receive for which we should not be thankful.

The apostle Paul had not heard of things such as Thanksgiving Day. If he were with us today he would probably have some hard words for us. "Thanksgiving Day?" he probably would say, "How absurd! Only one day? What nonsense!" And still we feel that perhaps it is a good thing to have one day a year set aside for thanksgiving. It serves to awaken us spiritually to the fact that all too often we forget about our obligations of gratitude for the manifold tender mercies of God. We should have every day as a thanksgiving day to fulfill the words of the apostle.

But how to be thankful? This question will not be answered with an intellectual description. Thankfulness is inherent in the life of the child of God. It is to be expected just as much as we expect fish to swim, birds to fly, flowers to bloom and babies to cry. It shows itself in many ways in the songs we sing, the way we act and talk, and in our habits, our friends, our desires, in fact in all our doing. If we are truly thankful the query of the Psalmist is ours, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

* * *

Give thanks to God, for good is He,
His grace abideth ever;
To Him all praise and glory be,
His mercy faileth never.
His wondrous works with praise record
His grace abideth ever;
The only God, the sovereign Lord,
Whose mercy faileth never.

Thankful For Everything

By Lois Kregel — Grand Rapids, Mich.

The grim years of the depression are a thing of the past. Prosperity, which seemed to linger around the corner for so long, is now with us. Business is booming: everyone has a job. The dark shadow of the war years is gradually fading, and the brighter lights of a wealthier, gayer, madder America are becoming ever more intense. Here in America, it would seem that freedom from want is the most prominent of the four. There is not only plenty of money, but plenty of food to buy with it.

In a few weeks we celebrate Thanksgiving Day. We shall sit before our over-loaded tables, fill our stomachs to capacity, knowing that there is more—always more; that we need not fear the specter of hunger. Our hearts will be light and gay, as we gather with our loved ones around the festive table.

It is hard to imagine that, elsewhere, people are starving; we cannot even picture anything like that, as we live in the midst of our abundance. Yet, it is true, and we know it well. In Europe there is desolation and want. There the people know what it is to be really hungry. The simple things of life are not taken for granted, but are appreciated perhaps more than we appreciate our luxuries. Their tables are not over-loaded, but they have known days when they were even emptier. Even now, while we have so much, they know only hardship and privation.

Do you think our brethren across the sea are not thankful? Do you think for a moment that they have become stubborn and rebellious because of their lot? Do you imagine that they would like to take the advice of Job's wife "Curse God, and die," because of the burden that is placed upon them? On the contrary, the letters which many of us receive, indicate a very close bond of unity exists among the people of God. There is a spirit of sharing, of selflessness there, which we may well imitate.

What should this teach us? The obvious thing, of course, is that there is much we can and should do to alleviate the want of our brethren in Europe. We must not imagine that the need is past, because we know that it is not.

But we can derive a far deeper lesson from a comparison of this nature. We must learn to give thanks always, for all things. That is true thankfulness. We must learn that the possession of worldly goods is not the yardstick with which to measure the favor of God.

(Cont. on page 14)

EARLY CHURCH HISTORY

Monasticism

By Rev. J. Heys — Grand Rapids, Mich.

In this issue of Beacon Lights we will turn our thoughts away from the doctrine of the early New Testament Church and consider instead a practice which was beginning to reveal itself during and especially after the Arian controversy which we have just considered. Doctrine and practice really are not unrelated realities. They are very closely related, so that our doctrine determines our practical life ,and what we practice reveals what we believe. And so in this issue we wish to call your attention to Monasticism which was beginning to be practiced in the 3rd and 4th centuries and was based on a very wrong interpretation of the Word of God.

Monasticism has its origin in Egypt. The founder of this practice was a man by the name of Anthony who was born in Koma, a city in central Egypt, about the year 250 A.D. When only a young man of eighteen years both his parents died. He found himself the possessor of a rich inheritance left him by his father, for he was born in a wealthy family. However, he became tremendously impressed by the incident recorded in the Scriptures that Jesus has told the rich young man to sell all his goods, give them to the poor and then to come and follow Him. Anthony applied this to his own life according to his own idea of the meaning of the text and gave all his goods to the poor.

For a period of years he practiced a life of severe self-denial in his native village. After about fifteen years he retired into the desert to live as a hermit. He soon had many imitators. We already called your attention in February and in June to the fact that Asceticism was being practiced. Tertullian was attracted to Mantanism because it practices Asceticism, that is a life of severe self denial and strict living. Arius likewise lived such a life. Anthony, as we just stated practiced this in his own native village for some fifteen years. But Anthony is considered the father of Monasticism because he went one step further. He withdrew from the rest of the world, first living the life of a hermit and later on living in a castle with others who had followed his example

and had become hermits. We stated last month that Athanasius was deposed more than once and went into banishment. He went to flee for his life and hid in a monastery. However at this time Monasticism was not in any way connected with the church nor sponsored by the church. It was in its origin a layman's movement.

In the East Monasticism was not officially taken over by the church until the 5th century. The council of Chalcedon in 451 put them under the jurisdiction of the bishops. During the 5th century one was permitted to return from monastic life to the mingling with other men outside the monastary and thus to return to normal life relationships. However in the 6th century this was forbidden, and those who entered a monastic life entered into a life-long obligation.

In the West Monasticism was not readily accepted at all. It was opposed and denounced in strong language as late as 450 A.D. However it had its supporters, and many of the corruptions which were the occasion for these denunciations having been removed it became the accepted thing in the West also.

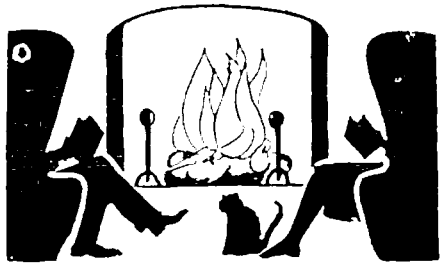
Yet we of course do not put the seal of approval upon Monasticism. It is folly to believe that we can ever get out of the world. We take our fleshly lusts with us into the monastery. Abundant examples can be given where the life in these monasterys was even more corrupt than many places outside of them. Scripture does not teach us world flight. It teaches us world fight. James tells us to count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations. He means that we should rejoice when God surrounds us with temptations, for then our faith is tried, and when our faith is tried we, by the exercise of that faith, increase in strength and endurance.

The examples of neither John the Baptist nor Samson are ground for the Monastic movement. They did not flee away from men. And John the Baptist's sojourn in the wilderness had for its purpose the instruction in the message that all the temple worship, type and shadows would soon pass away, for the kingdom of heaven was at hand. Although John dwelt in the desert, he dwelt on the highway through the desert where he might speak to men. Besides, Christ never left the example at all of secluded life as though this would keep one sinless.

* * *

For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased and I know how to abound.—Phil. 4:11.

Christian Living. . .



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

"Forget Not All His Benefits"

THANKSGIVING

"O praise and bless the Lord, my soul,
And ever thankful be:
Forget not all the benefits
He has bestowed on thee."

How well, and how necessary, that we be reminded constantly of these things and exhort our own souls again and again, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." So often we are not at all grateful; we do not bless our Lord; we forget His benefits, to say the least. We do not understand the ways of the Lord and view them in an altogether wrong light. Or else, we're simply indifferent, carnal, much like the ungodly themselves. We forget His benefits in our prosperities and fleshly pleasures, while we rejoice in the things of the world; and we forget His benefits in our adversities and fleshly griefs and disappointments, wherein we refuse to see oftentimes that and why all these things are good for us and necessary. Therefore there is need of constantly reminding our own souls, "Forget not all His benefits". In our heeding of this exhortation lies true Thanksgiving.

* * *

"All His *benefits!*"

It is interesting and important to note, also with a view to the proper celebration of Thanksgiving Day, that this word "benefits" in Psalm 103 is really the simple word "works". A strict translation of the original would read: "forget not one of His *works*". Take nothing away from that simple exhortation, friends. No, that does not mean that the translation is basically incorrect, for God's works are benefts, blessings for the church. Are they not performed by the Father of all mercies for the people of His love? Is not the purpose of all God does, that we shall have salvation, and have it more abundantly? However, the translation "benefits" might leave the impression, that *all*

God's works are not meant, that the works of God may be divided into two groups, benefits and non-benefits, and that we are exhorted to remember the *benefits* only. Such a possible misunderstanding of the text could have been avoided entirely by retaining the word that is found in the original: *works*.

"All *His* works!"

It must also be borne in mind, again with a view to a proper celebration of Thanksgiving Day, that all works are *His* works. There is nothing that is not in last analysis from God. Not only are all His works benefits, but all works are His works. This, too, is so easily forgotten. That makes everything that takes place in the life of the Christian a benefit, and therefore subject of thanksgiving. It is all of Him, Who is the Giver of all good and perfect gifts, Whose are all things eternally, heaven and earth and all they contain, all the gold and silver and cattle on a thousand hills, our bodies and souls, our homes and children, our money and goods, our fields and orchards, our food and drink, our parents and friends, everything. All works are *His* works. It is all of Him, Who is your God, your unchangeable Jehovah, Who elected you unto eternal glory, not only, but Who also ordained all the means to that glory, and that with such infinite wisdom that all must cooperate perfectly toward that one end.

This also tells us how literally we must take the exhortation, "Forget not *all* His works." Count your many blessings, count them one by one. Forget not the benefit of all benefits, the Gift of God's only Son for sin. Forget not all your spiritual blessings. These must be remembered in all our thanksgiving. These include, not only the forgiveness of our sins, the redemption of our lives from destruction, the right and the grace to pray and know the Word of God, and many other things, but they also include many things that might easily be forgotten, our troubles and spiritual struggles, the battle against Satan and the world, affliction and opposition, etc. Not that these things are ever desirable in themselves. We certainly look forward to the day when they shall be no more. Nevertheless, they stand in connection with "His work", and in connection with the whole they, too, are benefits. Forget not all your benefits as church of God in the world, the communion of the saints, the preaching of the Word, Baptism and Lord's Supper, your societies and catechism, etc. And, of course, "His works" include all our natural benefits, not only those things that are pleasant for the flesh, easy to think of as good, but also those things that are painful for a time, our weaknesses and sorrows, sickness and adversity and disappointments. All are

the fruit of His good pleasure and must work together for our good.

"*Forget not* one of His works!"

There is a reason, of course, why Scripture puts it this way. "Forget not" is the same as "bless". Not to forget means to remember, and to remember His works means: to glorify, adore, love, bless. The reason for this emphatic negative, however, lies precisely in our natural inclinations to forget and to curse. By nature we do nothing else. We never magnify the Lord. Because of that flesh we are so loathe, oftentimes, to acknowledge the goodness of God. How slow we are to rejoice in the name of our God, even though we see it on every side. We are so inclined to be lax, indifferent, dissatisfied.—to forget. That's why the Christian, knowing himself, puts it this way: "*Forget not* one of His works." The positive meaning is: bless, magnify, glorify, remember. Give thanks! For everything! Rejoice! Always! Bless the Lord! And that means, that we prostrate ourselves before Him in true humility and adoration, that we speak well about Him and to Him, that we proclaim His praises always and for all things, that we stand in eternal amazement of Him, and that with a profound sense of our own unworthiness we address Him, adore Him, fear Him, love Him, extol Him, and tell Him with heart and voice that He is good and infinite in wisdom and goodness and that we would love and serve Him now and forever more. That's what it means to bless the Lord! That's giving thanks!

* * *

One more thing. If you may thus give thanks, Christian friends, don't for one solitary moment think you're doing anything for God. What a colossal blunder that would be after Scripture tells us: "Forget not all *His* works." You'd be forgetting one of the greatest works of all. The blessing of giving thanks especially is of God. Thank Him for it. Thank Him that you may thank Him. Thank Him that you may thank Him because you may thank Him, etc. etc.

But, you say: where's the end? When do I do something for Him? Where does MY work come in?

Friends, that's just it! Your work doesn't come in. There is no end to this chain . Always He does everything, we nothing. Always He gives, we receive. That's the way it should be, that all may indeed be to the everlasting praise of the God of our salvation.

Thanksgiving forever!

* * *

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth forever.—I Chron. 16:34.

Potpourri. . .

By Rev. M. Schipper — South Holland, Ill.

- - - Radio's New Code - - -

In the "Christian Beacon", a fundamentalist publication, dated September 25, 1947 we came across a lengthy article written by the editor-in-chief, the Rev. Carl McIntire, under the above caption.

The article calls in question the justifiiableness of an action taken recently by the National Association of Broadcasters as it enacted legislation regarding, among other organizations such as political and commercial, also religious broadcasts.

Since our Churches are interested in conducting religious broadcasts, we deemed it important enough to call to your attention.

The new code which effects religious broadcasts, as quoted in Christian Beacon, reads as follows: "Religious programs should be presented by recognized groups and organizations. No offer (other than free copies of the message presented) should be permitted on such programs. Religious broadcasts should place major emphasis on broad religious truths. They should not be used for the presentation of controversial questions or for the expression of partisan opinions or discussions. Appropriate time, other than that designated for religious programs, should be supplied for such use. To every American the Bill of Rights guarantees freedom of worship without fear of intimidations or reprisal. Radio, therefore, which reaches men of all creeds simultaneously, should not be used to convey attacks upon religion."

This is a quotation in full of Section 2 "Standards for Specific Religious Programs."

The Rev. Mr. Carl Mc Intire, who incidentally is also one of the leaders in the organization known as the American Council of Churches of Christ (which stands violently opposed to the Federal Council of Churches of Christ) intimates that the power and influence of the Federal Council is back of this new code.

His contention is that when this new code is put to work the efforts of all fundamentalists and opponents of Modernism will be stifled. The "broad religious truths" of the Modernists such as "the Universal Fatherhood of God" and the Universal Brotherhood of Man" could never be opposed and shown to be false.

He contends, too, that this code destroys the very purpose of it, namely, to sponsor religious free-

dom. Those who conduct independently religious broadcasts, such as the Old-Fashioned Revival Hour, will have to get off the air. And those religious organizations who depend upon the funds they gather by soliciting money in their broadcasts will be ruined.

The writer further contends that protests to the National Association of Broadcasters will be of no avail. The only effective force to combat the new code is to bring the protest to Congress through our representatives there. Congress should be demanded to take the matter in hand and destroy this evil power that chains religious freedom.

The article of Mr. Mc Intire is too lengthy to quote, neither is that necessary. The above, we believe, is a faithful resume of the article in brief.

In the main, we agree with the article, and the question is forced upon us: In how far will this effect the broadcasting as it is being consoon will it be when our stations will notify us that our contracts have been terminated? Is not this the beginning of the end, when Antichrist will begin to speak and demand that all true Christian opposition be put down? Whatever may be the significance, it will be interesting to see what the effects will be in regard to this "New Code".

Protestants will fight New Jersey's New Constitution - - - -

In the Christian Beacon to which we referred in the preceding article we read also another article which should prove to be interesting to those acquainted with the recent debate in the Christian Home and School magazine dealing with the question: Should Parochial schools share in the State funds to pay transportation of school children to their respective schools?

The article acquaints us with the fact that through Roman Catholic influence the matter was brought to the attention of the legislature of the State of New Jersey. A committee for the Revision of the State Constitution has completed its task, and will submit it to the voters of the State in the November election.

The article further calls for the support, both morally and financially, of another committee, known as the Taxpayers Committee for the Separation of Church and State. Its aim is to get every county to organize immediately, using radio, sound trucks, newspapers, bill-boards, letters, and other means at their command to defeat the adoption of the new constitution. The main appeal is set forth in two paragraphs which read as follows:

"Several thousand dollars are needed at once if we are to keep

the Roman Catholic Church from dipping its hands into the State treasury."

"Protestants in every county and town of New Jersey, get busy now! Don't wait! Organize! And dig down deep! Religious liberty is precious. It is going to cost us something—but a whole lot more if we lose this fight."

The question we have in mind is: If the revised constitution passes the approval of the majority of voters, how soon will they attempt to bring this legislation to the States of Michigan, Illinois, and Iowa?

However, it is our opinion that as far as our Christian School children are concerned, who are neither children of the State nor to be classified as parochial, it will make no difference. We believe in independence. We will continue to pay our own way.

Should the N.U.C.S. Take Over Calvin College? - -- -

Such is the question raised in the September issue of the Christian Home and School magazine. Evan Observant is not of the opinion that Christian Schools should be Church schools, though, as he says, there is some feeling in the board of the National Union of Christian Schools that such they become.

The opinion of Evan Observant is rather that the N.U.C.S. should take over the whole field of education, from the kindergarten thru the university. Calvin College, he intimates should become the university and Junior Colleges should be established in various communities. Then, like the Roman Catholic School System, we should have the control of the entire education of our children.

I wish Evan Observant would have been so kind as to say what they would do with Protestant Reformed young people who aspire to higher education in the present set-up. Another question that could not be suppresed is: Suppose that not only Calvin College but also the whole present system of Christian education would come under the complete control of the Church (for that is the Roman system), would this not be a mighty force to impel us to have our own parental schools?

* * *

THANKFUL FOR EVERYTHING

(Cont. from page 6)

Then we shall sit down at our full tables and give thanks, to be sure; but when less prosperous days come, when we too, shall have to endure privation, fear, and even persecution, then also we shall lift up our hearts in humble thanksgiving to Him Who doeth all things well.

The Sacred Beetle

Sacred to the men of yore
This lowly insect of the dust.
They worshipped not Whom
we adore,
But in this creature put their
trust.

———

In the days of ancient Egypt living organisms as well as heavenly bodies were worshipped as gods. Among those so distinguished was a small black insect known as the scarab beetle. Why was this ebony bug held sacred by the ancients? A very fascinating story presents itself in this connection. Already the early Egyptians observed the unique habit of this insect in that it selected choice bits of dung and rolled them firmly together in the shape of a sphere. According to the Egyptian astrologers this ball which the insect rolls represents the earth and the scarab's actions were supposedly stimulated and guided by the stars. Hence, it was considered divine and was called the "Sacred Beetle".

Although, we certainly do not consider this insect divine; nevertheless, it is worthy of our attention because it provides an excellent illustration of providentially directed instinct.

Shortly after the insect emerges from the ground it commences selecting choice bits of dung which it firmly rolls into a ball and proceeds to move to a suitable location. Frequently, it encounters enemies who attempt to steal this treasure. Sometimes the incline is too steep and requires repeated attempts to "scale the heights". After having transported its burden to the selected site the scarab buries it. In order to conceal the location of its treasure the beetle constructs a tunnel from this chamber to the outside.

Contrary to the ancients' supposition that the egg was already enclosed in the center of the ball of dung, Fabre proved by careful investigation that the buried sphere is altered into the shape of a pear, for bits of refuse and soil are added to this bulbous structure. Skillful as a mason, the insect smooths the entire surface with its horny legs. In the absence of all light and without any previous instruction it instinctively constructs this perfect geometric figure. The new addition is hollow and provides an excellent hatching chamber. Carefully the beetle plasters the inside of the chamber with a laver of partially digested food called "pap", which is particularly nourishing to

the newly-hatched, and prepares the larvae's stomach to attack the dung proper. Now she lays a small yellowish-white egg about the size of a kernel of wheat. Then the chamber is closed with a fibrous plug which permits the exchange of air necessary for the hatching of the beetle.

After several days the egg hatches into a small white grub with slate gray markings. Immediately it begins feasting on the "pap" that lines its hatching chamber. Soon it has grown strong enough to partake of the spherical storage of dung. Within four or five weeks the larvae matures. Then another interesting event takes place—it sheds its skin and becomes a chrysalis. If only the Egyptians had studied the stages thru which this insect passes as carefully as they observed its habits they would have noticed in the chrysalis stage something much more striking and similar to their idol gods, for the scarab's chrysalis poses with its fore legs folded under its head and its wing cases extended forward suggesting a mummy in a sacerdotal pose. Fabre describes this chrysalis as follows: Semi-translucent and honey-yellow, it looks as tho it were cut from a block of amber. Imagine it hardened in this state, mineralized, made incorruptible; it would be a splendid topaz jewel." This jewel-like chrysalis displays in recognizable form all the adult characteristics of the sacred beetle. Life entombed!

During the avid month of August the silent chrysalis begins to stir. The excessive heat of the August sun has baked the soil, and the pear-like chambers become as hard as stone, insulating the insect from the drying effect of the heat. Should the heat continue for an extended length of time the insect will vainly struggle to release itself from its sun-baked cell. However, the early September rains soften the chamber walls enabling the scarab to break thru. A drenching rain is frequently a matter of life or death for the sacred beetle. The ancient Egyptian Horapallo was correct when he claimed that it was the clouds which provided the liberating ablution, for shortly after the rain, numerous scarab beetles made their appearance.

Soon it finds its way to the surface and one would conclude that food would be the most pressing problem after such a long period of abstinence. This is erroneous, however, for it refuses victuals but rather sits motionless to enjoy its first bath of radiant light. After some time has elapsed, it searches for food and immediately commences the innately guided routine of its parent—that of gathering and rolling select bits of dung. Thus, the cycle continues in its

(Cont. on page 29)

From The Editor's Desk. . .

The Federation Board and the staff of *Beacon Lights* wishes to express its grateful appreciation to its resigning Managing Editor, Mr. Dick Vander Wal, whose pressing duties have made it necessary for him to leave us. We thank him for his unstinting devotion and service.

* * *

We welcome to the staff a veteran in the work of publishing our magazine, Miss Alice Reitsma. Miss Reitsma formerly was an active editor, and while in California she conducted our Junior Journal. She taught in our Redlands school for a year, and now has returned to Grand Rapids, where she is completing her educational course at Calvin College. Henceforth, all correspondence should be sent to her.

* * *

The Federation Board and staff regrets that, in the past, certain personal references have been allowed to creep into the various articles written. We assume full responsibility for failing to edit these articles, and in the future will endeavor to prevent the recurrence of any similar incident.

* * *

Do you ever have the desire to express yourself in writing, but have no outlet for your thoughts? Let us hear from you. This is your magazine, and it is a good place to air your good ideas. Write to us; and, by the way, address all correspondence to:

Miss Alice Reitsma
706 Franklin St., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

* * *

— NOTICE —

The Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies doth hereby resolve:

1. To assume full responsibility, as sponsor of Beacon Lights, for the appearance of the selection entitled "Poem", by Mrs. A. Poortenga, in the August, 1947 issue of our paper.

2. Because of the personal character of the poem we wish to express our deep regrets for the appearance of this poem in our publication and also our apologies to the persons and churches involved.

3. To spread this resolution upon the pages of our magazine, Beacon Lights.

THE FEDERATION BOARD.

Book Review

MRS. H. C. HOEKSEMA

Grand Rapids, Michigan

CHARIOTEER - - - -

by Gertrude Eberle.

This fast-moving story gives a picture of life at Joseph's time. Raanah, a heathen slave lad, was with the caravan which found Joseph at the pit. Joseph and Raanah become fast friends as they shared the dangers and excitement of caravan life. Together they become slaves of Potiphar, and both rose to honor in his house. Raanah loved horses, and though at first a stable boy, finally realized his dream of becoming captain of Pharaoh's famed Basilisk Guard. But his happiness was not complete, for Bashia, a slave girl in the caravan, who had promised to marry him, disappeared. Joseph also was imprisoned.

He couldn't understand why these things happened. Indeed, he no longer believed in the goddess Ishtar, whose image he had carried with him for years. The jewelled Ishtar was supposed to bring luck in any situation, but she had failed him. Joseph told him of Jehovah, and Raanah believed. Even then his old superstitions haunted him when he tried to trust in Jehovah. Sometime after his beloved Bashia's return and Joseph's freedom, he found peace for his soul.

The book gives vivid descriptions of the heathen religions and superstitions of the time. It is not written from a Reformed viewpoint, however, for the author through Joseph often expresses weak and wrong views, as, for example, when Joseph told Raanah that conceited human beings cause trouble, but that God will eventually work some good out of it, instead of saying that God does *all* things for the good of His own.

* * *

"My Lord is ever with me
Along life's busy way:
I trust in Him completely
For guidance day by day."

Sex Information

One of my young friends has asked me a couple of questions about sex. The first concerns the matter of sex-education or information in general. The letter accompanying the question makes it rather plain to me what my friend has in mind. I will try to follow the virtual outline of the letter.

It is simply a fact that we are living in a world where there is something radically wrong with the relation between the sexes. Educators and law-enforcement officers speak of: "The postwar increase in sex crimes." Statistics prove that in spite of the 'inventions' of our time there are still hundreds and thousands of people afflicted with venereal diseases. And recently the daily papers informed us that venereal diseases in the poverty stricken European countries are alarmingly on the increase. In many High Schools and Colleges in the land the faculty and the school authorities are confronted by tremendous sex problems. And that there is something radically wrong with "sex" in our day and age is very plain from the ever increasing number of divorces. the wrecked homes and the wrecked bodies of men and women.

Now, we can disregard all this and say: "That's the world". This is rather naive and that for more than one reason. In the first place it is naive because our children and young people live in the world as it is today. And not all of them lead, what we might call, a sheltered life. Many come into contact with the filth and corruption of the world, and are often practically forced to listen to smutty, lurid, filthy sex talk. But that is not the only thing: it is also a simple fact of the times that the sexes mingle rather freely. (I have of course in mind the adolescent youth, including our own young people). The days of grand-mother and grandfather are passed. Besides, let us not forget sex is a tremendous power in our life, not the least in our young life. It is a wonderful experience when the powers of sex awaken in the youth. A new world, a world of vistas and great potentialities opens up before us. When we are rather small, innocent children we are not very much self-conscious. But presently, with the one sooner than with the other, the time arrives that the opposite sex attracts us. We build our air castles, dream our dreams, have our strong likes or love affairs. Older people often smile (forgetting that they were young themselves) and call such love affairs 'puppy-love'. But, said the boy: "It's mighty real to the puppy."

Should our children and our ado-

lescent youth receive sex education? There is but one answer to this question: "Yes, by all means". If you ask the next question: "Why?", the most simple answer is: "Because sex is a fact, a reality in the life of every person, nobody is immune to it but everybody is confronted by the reality of sex and all that is connected with it." We can not ignore "life". There are many things in the world you do not need to be acquainted with for the simple reason that it is not in your line, not within the scope of your vocation, etc. That is different with sex . This is a reality in the life of every person, hence, it is but logical that you must know about it. And you will receive your sex information either from one source or another. You will obtain it the right way or the wrong way, the barn-yard way or the proper way.

But now our trouble starts as far as our subject is concerned. Now the question arises: "Who must give sex information to our children and youth, and when should it be given?" Personally I believe that this is first of all the task of the parents. Who can better inform the child about the realities of life but the parents themselves? Perhaps they need a little advice as to how to go about it. Perhaps they do not always have the necessary tact to give their children the information they need for the good of the children themselves. However, it is much better that father and mother make tactical mistakes than that the youth receives sex information from the wrong sources from crude and often filthy ways.

We are not finished with our subject but I would like to make the following observations and concluding remarks for this time.

1. We must approach the problem of sex as a natural phenomenon. The mysteries of sex and sex-life are no matters to be ashamed of. There is nothing awful or bad or sensational about it. God has made man that way. That is a fundamental principle from which we should proceed. Sex is not the result of sin but a creation ordinance. It belõngs to this earthly dispensation.

2. Scripture is sober but frank about sex. Oft times Bible reading will give the opportunity to casually make a few remarks about the actuality and the wonders of sex. It is definitely wrong, as some people do, to skip certain chapters or portions in the Bible when we read Scripture at the table. That shows a certain prudishnes on the part of father and mother which is sinful and definitely a wrong psychology. Sex must be treated as something 'natural', and our children will accept it as such. The prudishness of parents can easily lead to a reluctance on the part of the children which makes them 'keep

still' toward their parents about the matter of sex.

3. Parents should try their utmost to create a confidential sphere between them and their children. Children and young people often have questions to ask. It is wrong for parents to ignore the questions of their children or lie about them with telling all kinds of fairy tales. And as young people we should make it a point and it should be our greatest desire to first of all consult our parents when there are particular questions in our mind that directly refer to sex matters.

4. As young people we should be ever conscious of the fact that sex is a natural phenomenon. That we were 'fearfully and wonderfully made', as Scripture expresses it. We must ever keep in mind that God has given His laws for our every sphere of life, and that also includes sexual life. Live close to Scripture, subject yourselves to the Word of God, ask Him that you may lead pure and clean lives, that you may be ever mindful of the fact that your body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. And as we grow to maturity it also might be well to 'read up on sex matters. Provided we read the proper material and not the sensational filth of the world. Why should we be able in our physiology class to dissect the body of an animal and know next to nothing about the wonders of our own body?

5. As to the question: "When should sex education be started?" the answer is: "That depends on the particular individual." And just like with everything else, so also here, we gradually gain knowledge. We need not know everything at once. Also in this respect parents have a great responsibility and know the particular need of the child or the youth.

6. If any one, it is the christian who can give the necessary sex information, and it also is the christian youth who can receive this information as a matter of course. After all, the christian is fully acquainted with the principles of Scripture. He knows that he is bound by the seventh commandment and its wide and varied application. We know that we owe our all to God and that everything must be pressed into His service. That is also true of sex. Sex is not there for the satisfaction of the flesh but for the service of God.

SCHUILER.

P.S.—As we mentioned, we are not yet finished with this subject. If in the meantime some of our young readers (or older ones), have a particular question in this connection, send it up to Beacon Lights. SCHUILER must know your name but all letters for this department, unless differently stated, will be treated confidentially.

BIBLE OUTLINES

By REV. M. GRITTERS

Oak Lawn, Illinois

The Book Of Judges

OUTLINE V.

Judges 3:1-5

Israel Amid the Canaanites, or: *The Church in the World.*

Introduction: —

This passage of Scripture must not become a bit of ancient Hebrew history. It will become just that unless we understand that God, in kindergarten style, is holding before us certain eternal Principles. These principles underlie the Kingdom of heaven. One of these is the principle of the Antithesis. Israel is surrounded by the world in order that it should say "no" to that world. God had said "no" to these nations for He had principly destroyed their power. Now Israel must be imitators of God (Eph. 5:1). No less important is the ever-recurring truth that the Covenant is established in the way of obedience, and in no other way. Moses had long said: I set before thee blessing and cursing, life and death. On Calvary's brow we finally see that there was but ONE who was able to render that obedience.

There Were Nations Left in the Land of Canaan: (vs. 5, in view of 1-5). There were seven nations in Canaan when Israel entered. . . there are remnants of these nations here now.

OBSERVE: The wonderful unity between our responsibility and God's sovereignty. Chapter 1 and 2:1-3 and 2:20 tell us that Israel defaulted. Chapter 2:21 tells us that these remnant nations were the result of Israel's negligence. But 2:23 tells us that "the Lord left these nations here" and He did that already before Israel defaulted. Chapter 3:1 tells us: "The Lord left these nations here". You recall, do you not, how Eli's sons disobeyed their father, *because* the Lord would slay them. And when Amaziah disobeys the word of the prophet, the prophet says: I know that God hath determined to destroy thee because thou hast done this, namely, disobeyed the Word of God. Israel's disobedience is a symptom.

1. In the way of Israel's default God lets the nations around Israel. If God discovers so much of His secret to us, He also wants to tell us *why* He left these nations here.

REASON 1 — To prove Israel by them. I.e. Silver is tried by fire and gold is purified by flame, so Israel shall be tried, it shall become manifest, it shall make itself known. Both now and in the future God tries His workmanship. And as Jesus said once upon a time, every plant which the heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted out. It shall become manifest who is Israel and who is not.

Observe: James says we also have fiery trials which try us. What does this mean?

REASON 2 — To teach Israel war, i.e. to provide them circumstances to engage in the Holy War of the Lord. The Lord is always at war. Who of Israel are of God's Party? Let it become evident. Will they fraternize with the world with which God is at war? Or will they be of God's Party?

DISCUSSION: 1. Are we often (always? ever?) tried by circumstances which we ourselves have brought on? 2. James 1:12 speaks of the END or fruit of trial in the children of God: what does this mean? 3. Can you cite some examples of the church fraternizing with the world instead of being "at war". 4. If into a rural community there is to come a theatre or dance hall or saloon, must we fight to keep it out or must we assume the attitude that it is perhaps just as good that it come in, since then we shall be able to show our colors better?

2. No less than with Israel of old we have the world round about us. We have the world in our hearts. Our old human nature remains with us until the end.

Observe: That the Covenant shall be established in the way of and where men fight the good fight of faith.

The Common Grace theory stands condemned because it dulls mens' senses to the necessity of warfare and inspires them to look at the world as a cripple who wants our help instead of an enemy who seeks our downfall.

Question: How can we in our family life engage in this holy warfare? What place has the Christian School in this Covenant scheme? In what sense is Christ the Captain in this Warfare?

NOTE: In the letters to the 7 churches in the book of Revelation, there is one statement recurring every time, and that is that the victory shall be to "him that overcometh".

OUTLINE VI.

(Judges 3:6-11)

Defection — Deliverance)

Foreword:—

This passage identifies Israel's sin (vss. 6, 7) tells us that wrath came, but acquaints us with the fact that in the midst of wrath comes grace, and there appears the first of the long series of Judges.

1. Israel's awful sin (vss. 6, 7). In direct and flagrant opposition to the entire Law of God, Israel joins itself very intimately with heathendom. It makes friends of God's enemies. As if making friends of God's enemies were a small matter, they go beyond, to marry them.

OBSERVE: Israel, in its sons and daughters, is married to the Lord. Now they marry also the world.

Question: I Cor. 6:15—how did ' apply to Israel and how does it apply to us today? Discuss this. Israel forgot the Lord, i.e., they put God out of their minds in order that they might satisfy themselves with idolatry.

WE MIGHT ASK: What was there about it which made this heathen idolatry so utterly attractive, and completely appealing to the covenant people? Think of it this way: This idol worship went accompanied with extreme sensuality, BUT it went under the excuse of being religious. In other words, it provided them a license to indulge fully, in all manner of sensuality and sexual perversion. Isn't natural church member always looking for such a license?

NOTE: Don't our bathing beaches provide people with license to dress and act shamefully?

DISCUSSION: 1. What constitutes a mixed marriage? Does marrying across denominational lines imply (always, ever) a mixed marriage? 2. What holy irony: that which was labeled by the world as "culture" is actually so abominable that if Israel touch it, God's wrath breaks out against them. Can you find an analogy in today's culture? 3. When Israel engaged in this synthesis: had they forgotten about the Law. . . did they argue against the Law, or did they do this under pretense of keeping the Law? Which? Or what else?

2. Israel's Distress. Wrath pours down from heaven, in a very tangible way. God "sells" Israel into the hands of a northern army, Syria.

QUESTION: What does it mean that God "sells" them? Do you think the Syrians knew that they were a tool in God's hands?

NOTE: It must have seemed strange to these heathen nations that they could so easily conquer a nation which henceforth had been so mighty. (Cf. II Chron. 24:24).

3. Israel's Deliverance. Israel cried unto the Lord. This includes repentance . . . does it? Or was it only terror? How are we to account for it that eight years of bondage had passed over them before Israel cried? How come they did not cry at once? Does the eight years perhaps show how far they were away from the Lord?

God's Spirit comes upon a man called Othniel. And for His Covenant's sake the Lord delivers Israel. Notice the Spirit. The same Spirit always operating to redeem the people sealed by grace. In Christ that Spirit finally brings complete and eternal deliverance. It is the Spirit of Christ already operating toward redemption and deliverance.

WARNING: Grieve not the Holy Spirit.

* * *

OUTLINE VII.

(Judges 4:1-13

Twenty Years Oppression

Introduction: Rembrandt was a master painter. Frequently he would start a picture with painting a dark background. But he did this purposely. Against that dark background he would draw his picture and the contrast was beautiful.

In every one of the Judges we see deliverance by the miracle of grace. That's the picture God wants us to see. But we must see it against the dark background of Israel's sin.

Our present lesson will be an attempt to see and help each other and then, in the next sketch to see the Master Painter outline deliverance by grace at the hands of Deborah another forerunner of Christ. We shall have to jump about a little in this lesson, but you will follow, I'm sure.

1. Israel sinned again (chapter 4:1). This is the ever-recurring refrain (cf. 3:12). Remember there had been a rest of 80 years (3:30) as result of Ehud's deliverance, and during that time Israel prevailed over its enemies. When Israel walked in righteousness they were exalted. But every time we read: they sinned again, and at once they are brought low.

OBSERVE: The defection shows itself again in the new generation. There is usually at least a one-generation gap between the deliverance and the new apostacy.

The apostacy shows itself in a certain corner of the land, now here, then there: but defection anywhere is a symptom of apostacy

everywhere throughout the land.

DISCUSSION: 1. How must we account for the repeated appearance of an apostate generation? Solomon saith: Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart therefrom. Had this generation not been trained? Shall we account for it thus? How else shall we account for it? 2. Do the seeds of apostacy always already lie in the previous generation? In other words, here is a matter worth considering: In how far is the present generation responsible for the reprobate state of the succeeding generation? Election is realized "in the way of obedience", reprobation is realized "in the way of disobedience". . . In how far is one generation responsible for it that that other generation walks in the way of disobedience. 3. If Israel had had a central form of government would that have helped to maintain unity? 4. Doing evil again and again and again . . . could that be said of us too, us who are regenerated?

2. Israel's lamentable condition at this time. a. Chapter 4:2 mentions Jabin, king of Hazor. Now if you will turn to Josh. 11:10, 11 you will find that Joshua once upon a time had utterly destroyed Hazor and routed this Canaanitish federation. How must we account for it that here Hazor is become a world power again? And they have 900 chariots of iron.

OPINION: Israel is no longer interested in fighting the wars of the Lord, they have put the thought of war far from them. They are too interested in their carnal enterprises to notice the enemy growing up under their very noses. Too deaf to hear the enemy blacksmiths pounding out the chariots . . . too drunk to realize that this is an enemy preparing to destroy them.

OBSERVE: Chapter 5:8 tells us also that while Hazor made its implements of war, Israel had neither shield nor spear. Certainly a picture of a church fallen into a deep sleep of lust.

WARNING: If we as church do not even see the enemy (antichrist) preparing to attack us, and if we do not hear the enemy smiths pounding out the iron chariots, we too are asleep. Let the ministry warn us about the chariots the enemy is making and let us arm outselves. (Eph. 6).

b. Chapter 4:17 contains a hint of fraternization with the enemy.

c. Chapter 5:16, 17 tells us of at least four tribes, who when time came to do battle, refused. Too busy with their private concerns to be interested in the cause of the Lord.

d. A situation finally develops in which Jabin, with nine hundred chariots comes upon Israel, drives them out of the villages, takes their

highways and impoverishes them completely.

e. No deliverer. There was no MAN in Israel. There was a Barak yet (as there always is a remnant) but he dared not take the initiative nor obey. (chapter 4:6). The very fact that a woman had to go out indicates how deeply the nation lay in shame and helplessness.

QUESTIONS: 1. Can you mention some things which engage the attention of the church today so that she loses sight of her real calling? 2. What enemies do you see in the offing which can become real threats to the church? 3. How must we as young people conduct ourselves in view of these things?

* * *

OUTLINE VIII.

(Judges 5:18-31)

The Helpless Delivered.

NOTE: It is necessary to read Judges 4:14-24 and the song of Deborah (chapter 5) out of which our present outline is taken. The thing which at once arrests our attention is that while Israel lies in her helplessness it is the Lord Who goes out before Deborah, Barak and all the people and delivers them (4:14; 5:4). In the matter of salvation no flesh shall boast, at least not church flesh.

1. Israel cries unto the Lord. Confronted with nine hundred chariots of iron and an Israel paralyzed by fear and lust.

OBSERVE: It is Israel that cries, but no doubt, the elect remnant on the foreground. Really, I believe it is Christ in them, crying for vengeance (5:2) and victory. Christ suffers already in this people from whom He will be born. He cries from out of the loins of a church, almost swallowed up. That cry God hears. For His sake and the Covenant's sake God lets Himself be pleaded to.

DISCUSSION: Did the Lord simply overlook their sinfulness now to deliver them nevertheless? Moses used to plead for the sinful people . . . how now?

2. God raises them up a Deborah who with Barak goes out to battle. Barak had originally been instructed as to what to do (4:6, 7), but he lacked the courage. Deborah calls him to his task but also goes with him.

NOTE: God does not FIND servants, or FRIENDS. God makes them. a. God bids Barak go to Mt. Tabor. God draws the enemies after Barak. Then the Lord falls upon the enemies and destroys them. "They fought from heaven" we read, the stars in their courses fought against Sisera. The mighty River swept them away. What was left Barak pursued. The last of the enemies' might Jael pins to the tent floor with a pin. And thus all

the enemy is destroyed. The vengeance of Christ already appears. The Day of Salvation and the Day of Vengeance are ONE. b. The victory is entirely of the Lord. But in this victory Zebulon and Naphtali gained renown. They, of all the tribes were faithful. Certainly when the Lord stirs up the people a remnant appears. c. Vs. 31. The shout of victory. A prayer for destruction of all the enemies. The voice of the Christ, the Conquering Hero of the Covenant.

QUESTIONS: Have you any idea why Deborah's Song in vs. 30 pictures the enemies as imagining that they had conquered, while really they had been most completely destroyed? HINT: Does not this help to bring out that according to human reckoning Israel could never win against so formidable an enemy as Jabin?

Do you find any connection between the songs of Hannah, Deborah and of Mary? Is not the Spirit of Christ already singing in these three mothers of the Old Testament.

* * *

OUTLINE IX.

(Judges 6:1-10)

Strange Answer to Israel's Cry

Introduction: Hebrews 11:3 describes the church as sometimes having to hide in the caves and the dens of the earth. In our present outline we find Israel also hiding there. Pitiful sight! The more pitiful because she cannot array herself with the heroes of faith in Hebrews 11. THEY are in the dens of the earth because they have been faithful to the Testimony of Christ, but Israel is at present in the caves of the mountains because she has forsaken the Testimony of Christ, and she hides now before the wrath of Him Who punishes apostates.

The Church underground. To this underground church God sends a prophet.

1. Another nation flies upon Israel (vs. 1-6). This time the Midianites (a nation sprung from Abraham—by Keturah—where lived a Jethro once . . .who at Baalim's time lured Israel into fornication and upon whom Moses once took vengeance because of the War of the Lord).

a. Israel sinned again. She evidently engaged in sensual riotings, Midian being to Israel what Hollywood is to modern men.

DISCUSS: Had Israel forgotten that every previous apostacy brought quick judgment? Did Israel think she could play with fire and not get burned? Or don't sinners think at all?

b. The Lord gives Israel into the hands of Midian, and her confederates, Amelek and the Arabians.

SUGGESTION: Israel lived as a sheep among the wolves, safe, however, as long as she trusted in and obeyed the Lord . . . helpless

as soon as she turned from the Lord. The question is sometimes asked: why did the nations repeatedly attack Israel? Whatever political and economical and financial reason there might be for this, behind it all lies the Enmity of the cross. The nations are so many flesh-and-blood manifestations of the Dragon that seeks to devour the Woman (Rev. 12) and devour the Child that is to be born.

QUESTION: Why is it that Israel does not look at the nations as variations of the Dragon? Why do many so-called Christians also today look at life as a circus instead of a battle-field?

c. The Midianites plunder Israel most completely. They allow Israel to sow, then storm upon their fields with their cattle and herds, and destroy the increase. Instead of the fun and the abundance they expected as obtainable through their idolatry, they stand face to face with starvation. How blind we become when we fall into lust.

2. Israel congregates and cries unto the Lord (6:7-10).

NOTE: Some new thing occurs: Instead of sending them a Judge, God sends them a prophet. And this prophet instead of announcing deliverance reminds them that the Lord has delivered them so often, and admonished them, but they ever disobey. Period. No word of deliverance, no hope of escape in this sermon.

SIGNIFICANCE: 1. Israel must know that heaven has grown weary of that awful cycle. God's "patience" is nearly gone. 2. Shall God deliver them . . . so they can turn to some new sin again? 3. They are not worth delivering, the only fruit will be more disobedience.

QUESTION: We seldom read of Prophets during this time, why must there be one now? Can we speak of "patience with God, if so, how? Can it come to an end?

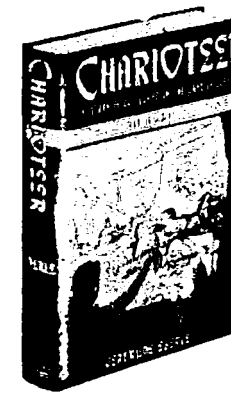
THE SACRED BEETLE

(cont. from page 12)

minutest details according to the instinct with which God has endowed it from the beginning of time. A summary of this may be found in the words of the great naturalist — Fabre — who states: "There is no apprenticeship, no first attempt: the spherical form is obtained as regularly as though after long practice. . . ." Here we find the novice thoroughly versed in his art. No experience, however prolonged, will add anything to his talents."

Once again we marvel, do we not, and must admit that the words, "Our life in all its perfect plan, was ordered 'ere our lays began," is not only true of man, but even of those seemingly insignificant creature—the sacred beetle.

CHARIOTEER



A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph

By GERTRUDE EBERLE

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

Chapter V.

THE SKIRMISH

Egiba looked plainly relieved. "How about you, lads?" he called jovially. "We would have worried about you sooner had we time to think of it. But what have you there?" He stared incredulously. "Can I believe my eyes? It's a horse! Where did you find him, O warriors?" Without waiting for an answer, he called, "Hey—Dungri, Kedar, Asaph! See what these scalawags are bringing! Ha-ha! They have snatched the crown of victory from our heads!"

The merchantmen pressed around the boys. Accid-Adab's eyes were glued avidly upon the horse. As a trader he knew its worth. But the animal, a shy, wild buckskin with a white star on its forehead became frightened at the crowd, rolled its eyes, snorted and reared, and the men backed away quickly.

"He seems to have a streak of meanness in him," Kihai-Del commented. "I say, boy, can you ride him?" Kihai-Del knew that he was pricking Raanah's self-esteem. One of his unmatched eyes shot a malevolent wink at Accid-Adab.

"I believe so," Raanah panted unsuspectingly, full of pride in his horse. He was struggling with the reins. "That is, if somebody will hold its head—so I can mount him."

A dozen hands grasped the reins and boosted the youth into the saddle. "Now, ride him, horseman! Stick to him!" Egiba yelled as they released the reins.

The horse whirled, rocks his head from side to side to make sure he was free, then ducked it between his stiffly spread legs and reared up behind. The next instant he reversed the order, reared up in front and pawed the air with his forefeet. He shook himself and raked his forefeet from side to side rigidly as if in some devilish dance. The merchantmen gasped in amazement. The camel boys paused in their work to look on.

Inexperienced in roughriding, but with the instincts of a born horseman, Raanah crouched over the neck of his plunging horse and clung to it. The horse jerked about violently in its efforts to dislodge

him, but finding itself unable to do say, lay back its ears and bolted along the road ahead. The merchantmen and Joseph gazed after them with varying emotions. The slaves rolled their eyes. None of them had ever seen an animal behave like that before.

I did not dream that a horse was such a skittish animal!" Egba scratched his head anxiously.

"Even so, you were too eager to urge the lad to ride the brute," Isme-Dagan snapped, his face tense, his eyes clouded with concern.

Joseph dropped on the embankment by the roadside and held his head in his hands. He was too spent physically and emotionally to think of what might happen to Raanah, and he would not look.

Kihai-Del spread his hands eloquently and shrugged. "I see no need to worry. At the worst, there will be one less slave for Accid-Adab to dispose of in Egypt.

"Oh, well—." Egiba made an impatient gesture as if to cast off the annoyance. "Can anyone doubt that the rascal will come riding back as cheerful as ever when the brute has spent his wind?"

"He surely will! So let's forget him and bestir ourselves," Asaph urged. "Before night, we should be as far away as possible, for the raiders may return under cover of darkness." That was sound advice, so the order was given for the caravan to take the trail.

They had not travelled far before Raanah came riding toward them. He sat jauntily in the flat saddle, his face beaming with pleasure. The horse looked tired and subdued. Raanah patted its neck and talked soothingly to it. His conflict with the little animal was over. He was its master, and it obeyed his touch on the reins.

That evening as the boys sat apart, eating dry barley bread and curdled camel's milk, Raanah described his ride to Joseph. "Truly, that horse is a tricky little animal," he laughed contageously, "yet I was not afraid. At first I wondered if I could hold on, for he plunged so furiously and came down so hard, but when he took the bit and ran, I knew that I could stick. Believe me, he ran so fast the wind slapped my face. It tried to tear my tunic off. It whistled in my ears, and the ground seemed to be rushing backwards. Oh, Joseph, I never felt so alive in all my life. Why, to be a racing driver would be the finest sport in the world." His exuberance made him restless. "Come, let's go over and look at the horse."

They found the animal hobbled and grazing by itself. Raanah got an alof of fodder from the camels to piece out its meal, for it looked as if it had never had enough to eat in its life. This was not strange, since it had been living in the stony Wilderness of Shur where grass grew sparsely. Raanah found a square of cloth among the baggage and rubbed the little horse down until it presented a much smoother appearance. "I am going to call him 'Star'," he decided, "for he has a perfect one on his forehead, and my moon-goddess gave him to me."

"I presume the raider stole it from some traveler," Joseph offered. "Egiba said there were several horses in the band. Do you suppose Accid-Adab will

let you keep him? It would bring considerable money should he care to sell it."

"But the horse is mine! He would not dare." Raanah burst forth in panic, then quickly recovered himself. "I mean—I had not thought of such a possibility."

"Of course," Raanah paused in his work, "but I am already so fond of the horse, and I had not thought—." He patted Star to cover his agitation.

Joseph was sorry that he had spoken. Making some slight excuse, he left him to regain his composure.

Raanah always took troubles lightly. Now he whistled softly to keep up his spirits. Dusk had fallen. The camp was settling into slumber. He sauntered toward the women's quarters, hoping to see Bashia. Instead, he almost bumped into her amah, who was prowling in the shadows, mumbling to herself. She was a withered old woman with strangely lighted, deepset eyes. Her mouth, puckered and toothless, was so sunken that it gave her a prominent chin. Her skin was yellow and full of fine wrinkles.

She glanced up sharply and recognized him. "Ha! 'Tis well you are here, for I would have a word with you, young man." There was a thin quaver in her voice, and she shook a bony finger at him. "And you must heed me. I say, 'Beware!' "

"How now, old mother," he began to jolly her kindly, "of what must I so solemnly beware?"

She blinked her owlish eyes at him. "You are prone to think that all is fair for you, but your fortune is written in the stars. I read their messages. And I say, 'Beware!' The gods of Egypt are very powerful." Without explaining she passed on, mumbling, leaving him to stare after her.

M-m-m. Queer old croaker, he thought as he walked slowly back to his pallet. She must be mad to presume, fortified as he was by his goddess, that anything but good could happen to him.

He found Joseph awake and told him about the encounter. "Of course," he added, "there are bound to be changes for all of us after we enter Egypt. It is inevitable that the members of the caravan should scatter."

"Yes," Joseph agreed, "and that might be what the old amah meant."

Raanah lapsed into silence. "I wonder," he said a few minutes later, "If gods are potent only in their own countries. She intimated that I must beware of the gods of Egypt."

"Before long", Joseph said, "we shall know what the people of Egypt think about the power of their gods."

Raanah looked at the stars and wondered what portent they held for him to make the old amah so positive. Life had hithertoo stretched so alluringly before him. There was, he believed, such a thing as luck. But what made luck turn from good to bad, or from bad to good? Was it controlled by the stars or by the gods, or by the person himself? He sighed, for he did not like to confess, even to himself, that the words of the old crone disturbed him. Still, he could not help wishing that on this eventful day he had not met her.

(To be continued)