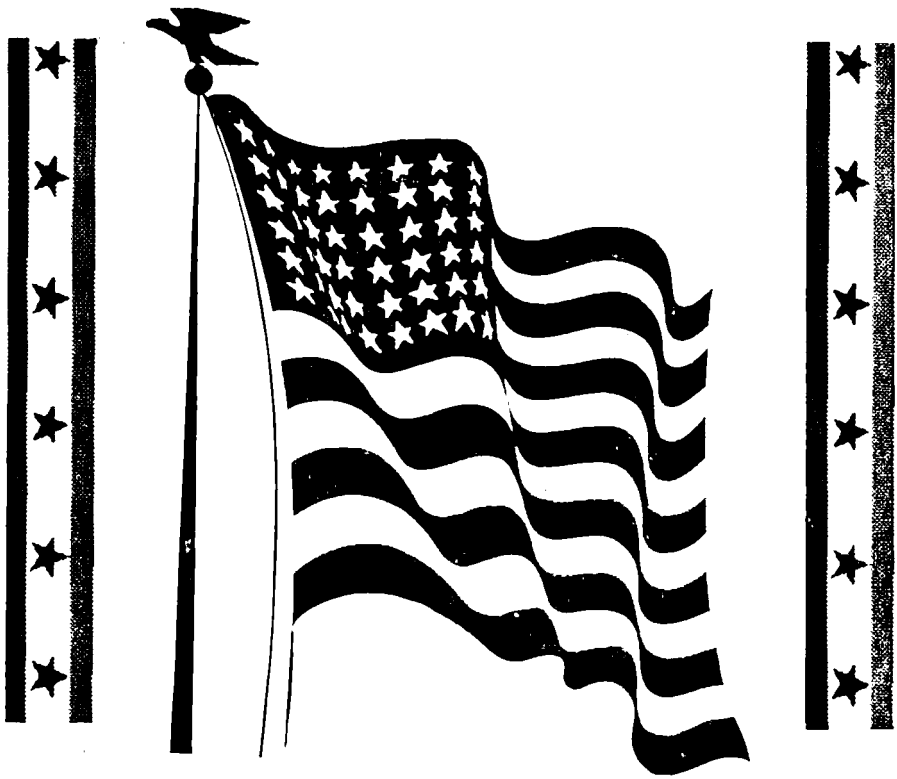
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



GREETINGS TO OUR SERVICE MEN

JUNE - 1948

BEACON LIGHTS

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Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VIII | JUNE — 1948 | NUMBER 9

Now that those War Days are Over!

Andrew Voss (ex-serviceman) Grand Rapids, Mich.

The hectic days of World War II have already been relegated to the misty past in the minds of many of us—veterans as well as those who remained at home. How completely the war and all its implications thrust itself upon us. Everything else seemed minor—and the future —we dared not busy ourselves with thoughts of what it might bring! Those days we were sure would always stand out vividly.

Comparatively speaking, it is but a very short time since the shooting has ceased and this era of so-called peace has been ushered in. The majority of us veterans have returned and have again taken our places in the midst of the sphere of loved ones and of the church. We have forgotten all the anxiety, loneliness and misery of those days; and certainly we would not want to remember many of those experiences.

There are however, certain spiritual experiences and lessons which we should not only keep in mind but which should even now profit us in our present every-day life. In the midst of this headlong pace of life we must stop for a moment and ask, "What has been the effect of being in the midst of the impact of God's judgment—on us as covenant youth"?

To those of us who were in these dreadful things the effect was certainly that we became increasingly concerned about things spiritual—and not only we but also those who normally professed no religion whatever. But to be spiritual only when we are in a tough spot and then to forget, is no different than the reaction of the world. We have personally heard the prayers of the ungodly during concentrated enemy barrages, give way to vile cursing when the firing ceased.

But for us as Christian young men—what about those vows we uttered when we were in distress? What about those mountain-top spiritual experiences when God seemed so very near and real?

I shall never forget the night when we joined the mortar squad with which we served in battle. Arriving at dusk at the edge of a

Normandy apple orchard we were told to dig in immediately as an enemy air raid was eminent. We envied the other fellows who were already "dug in" as we began to chop frantically in the hard sod. Our fox holes were about six inches deep when the German bombers appeared. They circled and released their brilliant parachute flares—night turned to the brilliance of mid-day. My buddy and I lay exposed without any protection whatever. We were panic-stricken as the bombs came whistling down. If only we had some protection! And then, as if to shame me for putting my trust in a hole in the ground, these words of Psalm 4 verse 8 came to my mind, seeming so appropriate under the circumstances—"I will both lay me down and sleep for Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety". Although I did not sleep for the dirt and the shrapnel that was hurtling all about us, the words "Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety" brought a wondrous inner calm in the midst of all that frightful night of noise and confusion.

I know that many of our veterans can testify of like experiences and learned that God Whom they learned to know at mother's knee and of Whose power and greatness they were instructed by the church they had left, was their stay at all times.

And so there were many times in the days ahead when the Lord was to speak the very words we needed to answer our anxious queries. There were sabbath days—many on end—when we had no opportunity for worship of any kind. When finally we paused in our headlong pace across France and Germany and a Protestant service was announced I rejoiced. We were to worship in a German church in a nearby village. A truck was to pick up the men who wanted to go, at a designated place. Of the company of over one hundred men, of which I was a member, I only appeared and so went to church—the lone passenger on a two and a half ton truck. It was experiences like this that made us long so fervently to once more worship in company with all of God's people back home.

After endless days and months we finally took our places once more among our loved ones and in the sphere of our own church. And now what? Are we much closer in our walk because we have been through great danger and have had these wonderful and terrible experiences? We must confess—because of the old man of sin—that we, with all God's people, must exclaim with Paul, "Oh miserable man that I am". We have become so accustomed to all the blessings with which we are showered. Homes, families, jobs, plans, ambitions—not wrong in them-

selves—often crowd our lives to the extent that the spiritual aspect is relegated to the background. Out there everything was gone. And we were alone with God; no fleshly encumbrances. How true it is that we must have losses and reverses and things must be taken from us, or we become so engrossed that the nearness of God is not experienced. Not that we desire these reverses—quite the contrary—but they are always for our spiritual welfare.

And so calling the experiences of war to mind, we as veterans can especially see that God never forsakes His own. May we by grace rededicate ourselves to fight as never before and to be good soldiers of the Cross of Christ.

Let us remember the days and months when the exercise of the communion of saints was only a memory and now that we are again in the midst of God's people, let us not allow a single opportunity to increase our knowledge and strengthen our faith go by! It is by doing this that we by God's grace strengthen our armor and have the weapons to fight against the evil one for he goeth about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may destroy. We as covenant young people are in the midst of this powerful current of materialism and we must struggle mightily against this sweeping trend. The enemy *is strong* and we are weak, but even now as we are still in the midst of the noise and confusion of battle, we are already more than conquerors through Him that loved us!

— P O E M —

To our Servicemen! — Past and Present!

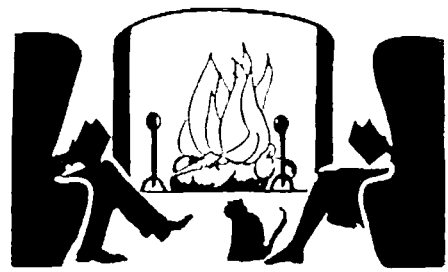
On history's page again we read
Another war is o'er,
And now for a brief episode
The sun's bright rays do pour;
Though memories indeed are grim,
As piercing as satire,
Unfeignedly we saunter forth,
Groping in peacetime's mire.

To you who battled in the fight,
Answering our country's call,
To homeland's shore have now returned,
Our welcome, one and all;
To those serving in the land,
The nation's call obeyed,
When clothed with righteous armor,
No need to be afraid.

God's Hand in all we clearly see,
As ebbs the sands of time,
Thus wars and peace do e'er descend,
On every race and clime;
Culminating to one great end,
The Kingdom of the Lord,
His own great glory will receive,
Unmerited reward!

—Jeanette Pastoor.

Christian Living. . .



George Lanting (ex-serviceman) South, Holland, Ill.

We as young men and women have been raised in the sphere of God's covenant. From our earliest youth we have been instructed in the things pertaining to this Covenant. We have learned to know God as He has revealed Himself in His Word, and also to know the Reward we receive when we fully trust Him and live a life that is in full accord with His law and statutes. Also, we have come to know ourselves as we stand in relation to that Covenant, namely, that we are obligated in all that we do to serve Him perfectly for He demands perfect obedience from His own. By faith we do this willingly.

But, oftentimes our faith and spiritual life are at a very low ebb. We live, it would seem, in smug complacency. We hear the same thing over and over, and we become numb to the admonitions and commands to serve Him in all that we do. No more does the preaching quicken us or build us up. Nor does Society life seem more than a social meeting or another intellectually pleasant gathering. I know that we all experience this at one time or another, and so it is also in our daily living. We have no more time for reading and meditation, but are wholly occupied with our own material or mercenary objectives. Our mind is completely vacant of any spiritual thoughts.

Yet, by Grace we are again renewed. Through His Word and Testimony and the working of the Spirit within us, we are brought back into that Covenant fellowship. We feel our deep need for the Word of Life. We long for it and through it are refreshed and can again have sweet communion with our God. Our whole life is transformed and again peace is with us. Then also our social life is a means whereby we become stronger and more sure of our living a true Christian life. Our friends are those who are like-minded, and our homes become a veritable center of Christian Living, truly a bulwark amidst the unrest and strife of the world.

But, often God calls us from these homes and from amongst

those who likewise show forth true Christian living. We all know the events of the past years, when the very foundations of earth were shaken. Wars raged in lands afar off and men were called to the colors. The Church as well as the world had her young men taken from her midst. They were scattered far and wide and usually no two were together leaving one alone in the center of thousands who know not of the Covenant nor have ever experienced Covenant relationships. So he stands truly alone. If he speaks of these relationships and his Christian life, he is often put to dismay by laughter and mockery. They know not of what he speaks nor do they care. In fact, they refuse to hear for then they are brought into the light and stand open before all. If possible, they will make the Christian foolish in his own eyes and then lead him in their way.

And with them he may even go for a time, but, God will not allow him to fall far. The Spirit must again quicken and lead and does, to a level never before reached. And he stands as it were in heavenly places, no, he is never alone.

As most of our ex-servicemen will testify, God leads and keeps us no matter where we may be. Though often we fail to fulfill the demands of His law, yet He is able to forgive and also lead us into new realizations of true Christian Living.

We could never advise our younger men to seek a life in the service. To do so would, to me, be advising to leave the blessed fellowship and communion with which God has blessed us. Nor could a child of God desire to leave the realm where God truly reveals Himself through Word and Sacraments. There may be exceptions, but, we do not feel either that God calls men to a peace time service life. One who has material abundance does not leave all to receive only the bare necessities of life, and much less can the child of God leave the place where Fathers hand leads and guides with spiritual abundance.

Let us then with true and contrite hearts live a life that in every respect is in gratitude for the great redemption we have from so great a degradation. Let our "conversation be in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ who shall change our vile bodies, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

NEXT ISSUE — AUGUST 5!

Notice: — The next issue of Beacon Lights will be devoted to mission activities. It will be mailed August 5. Contributors, please observe the deadline— July 23.

Army life, I can say, that too was good for me, because it was my Covenant God's will that I should be there and He strengthened me through it all.

Clarence Van Essen.

* * * *

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Dear Editor:

I received a letter from my pastor, Rev. S. Cammenga of our Second Church, requesting me to write a letter concerning my attitude as a returned serviceman.

Well to begin with, I have found readjustment to civilian life very easy. Ten days after my return home in March of this year, I began a job as a general clerk in the office of Grand Rapids Fiber Cord Co. However, the fourteenth of this month I will begin a new job as full-time bookkeeper for Western Lumber and Hardware which is located just two blocks from my home. This type of work is what I really want to do. Next fall I plan to enter a course in accounting at Davenport Institute Night School.

Since returning home I have realized more than ever what my Church and the Protestant Reformed faith means to me and I think that any of our fellows who were in the service, both during the war and those who are still serving in our peacetime Navy and Army will agree that this world is a very sinful one. You realize this more than ever when you have been away from your home, church and friends.

In August of this year I will have the honor of attending our Young People's Convention, as a delegate from our church. About the only thing I can add to this letter is that I am truly glad to be home and each day I pray that neither myself nor anyone else will soon have to leave home to fight another war.

John H. Wiltjer.

* * * *

Grand Rapids, Mich.
June 6, 1948

Dear Editor:

It's been over two years since I have been discharged from the armed services and its kind of difficult to write something on readjustment in civilian life. I will do the best I can with it.

My first readjustment was getting back to civilian life, in civilian clothes and above all to my own church and the truth. I got married the latter part of 47 and that was another thing I had hoped to do.

When I came home things seemed so different, it was hard at first, I'll admit that. I know I wasn't the only one to have these difficulties but at times I felt I was one of the lost sheep, but I finally was found again. I am thankful to be away from all the confusion, noise and dodging of all kinds of ammunition. I am also thankful that the Lord has spared my life and led me home safely to my loved ones.

George Engelsma.

* * * *

Pella, Iowa

Dear Editor:

I was inducted into the U. S. Marine

Corps the 23rd of July, 1945 and discharged the 25th of August 1945.

Most of this time I was stationed on the east coast or aboard ship in the Caribbean Sea. Being a machine gunner in the First Special Marine Brigade.

You have probably heard the phrase "The Pride of the Marines". Marine pride is really an awful thing in this world. I pity those who have pride in such a corrupt thing. Maybe first I should state why they are proud, surely not because they have never lost a battle, that would be untrue. It is because they are rough and tough. There are many drunkards. They can swear harder, and fight among each other more than in any other branch of the service.

What I disliked most of service life was being mislead, or going along with the crowd in their sinful ways. This was my worst temptation and many of the ex-service men I have talked to have told me the same. Here in civilian life you can have church services and fellowship with those who are like-minded and who have the same world-and-life view as you do. This is a pleasure and I am very grateful for this. I am now engaged in farming. Then a person realizes how free he is in religious and home life, and how much more he dislikes life in the service. If this much talked about Universal Military Training is passed as a law in this country, and the young boys are called from out of our churches, then we must remember they leave their home environment and come in contact with the men of this world. We must pray; pray that their faith may be strong to fight those awful temptations. Life in the service is not good and wholesome for spiritual wellbeing. My choice would never be a military career.

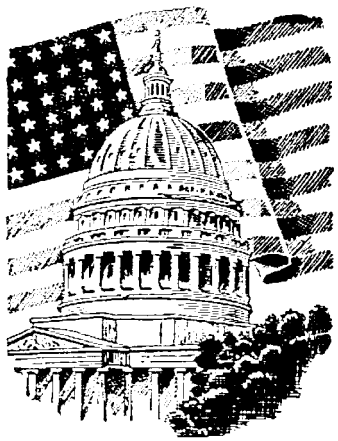
Gysbert Van Weelden.

* * * *

Orange City, Iowa

Dear Editor:

I am a disabled veteran of the last war. Upon returning from service I found it hard to do work of the same nature as prior to my army duty. I was then given a job here at Orange City as



manager of the Legion Bowling Alleys because of my disabilities.

This work I find of strictly recreational nature. As a Christian I see many things that are not good. We see the many pleasure-bent people active in sports, but never mindful of church activities. Also there are church-goers who have little time for church activities, but they have plenty of time for bowling. Also there

are those who bowl because it is a clean healthy pastime and who bowl only when it does not interfere with church activity and who wish to spend an hour at some recreation. I do find this interesting work. It makes one ever alert as a Christian to see how it interferes with ones church and family life. I am sure today in this world that we are more easily led to sport and recreation than we are to the things of God and His Kingdom. The lusts of the world soon become the big things, and the things of God which are good for us soon become secondary. I find it hard to seek out the right and that which is best for me, and am very thankful for the grace of God through the Holy Spirit that we may learn to see the right and shun the wrong and let others know if we see them leave the good things to enjoy these sports.

The readjustment from military life to that of a civilian often receives much attention. That to our government leaders was a big thing. They saw men returning from life in service, of abnormal conditions, to settling down in a home and to a job. As a Christian it was my desire to again be with my family to serve God in the surroundings of the Protestant Reformed way of life. Surely God was our protector while away, but there were some things we missed. The chaplains would preach to us the free offerings of salvation in their modern way, and we missed the true word of God that gave strength to meet all things as they would arise.

To us as Christian soldiers the war was a revelation of the corruption of this world, the greediness of nations to attain power. As Christians we went as a duty to our country and again we returned not mostly concerned about jobs and homes for we knew that whether we are weak or strong God supplies these things to us as He is our constant provider.

We still go to Him to ask for guidance. We are now not fighting a battle of guns but the battle of faith and He will yet "our burdens bear, our sorrows share" and give us all things necessary.

Art. P. Wassenaar.

We have the names and addresses of the following three servicemen:

Lawrence Hager, F2-c
U.S.S. O'Hare, DD 889
c/o F.P.O., New York, N. Y.

Pvt. William Van Sprange
A.S.N. 46066719
Co. A, 3rd Eng. Combat Bn. A.P.O. 24
c/o P.M. San Francisco. Calif.

Pvt. F. C. Arthur Bykerk
H. S. Co. 340th Eng. Bn. APO 901
c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, Calif.

Unless we hear either from our servicemen or from their families, we have no way of knowing whether these addresses have been changed or whether these servicemen have been discharged. So if you fellows haven't been receiving your Bea con Lights, send us your address. Keep in contact with your church, also through your young people's magazine.

Zoo Without Bars

Kenneth Ezinga (ex-serviceman) Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Have you ever owned a monkey? Do you know what it feels like to ride an elephant? Ever see a snake-charmer? No? Well, all these experiences and many more could and probably would happen to you if you spent a few months in India. This strange and interesting country is full of queer and interesting animals. One does not have to wander thru the dark, steamy forests to see India's wild life population. Nor does one have to visit a zoo. The whole countryside is a zoo—a zoo without bars.

Join me, and we'll take an imaginary trip through different sections of India.

We'll start our trip in the city of Calcutta. We'll pretend we landed at the local airport last nite, slept in a local hotel in town and are just beginning our first day in Calcutta.

This is really a modern town you exclaim. Look at all the streetcars, busses and trucks. And look at that nice park across the street.

Say! what's that? Isn't that one of those sacred cows? Sure enough! there it stands, right in the middle of the street, paying no attention whatever to the traffic passing by.

After a couple of days sacred cattle are no longer a novelty. Neither are the big black water-buffalo with the huge horns. We've seen a lot of them plodding patiently through the modern traffic, pulling two-wheeled carts loaded with different articles. They are guided by a rope which passes through their nostrils.

We never will forget the sight of that big sacred bull ambling slowly through the market place, occasionally upsetting a basket of fruit or eggs as the natives smile tolerantly at his clumsiness.

The snake-charmers also were very interesting. Remember how they sat cross-legged in front of a basket containing a live cobra? They would play a shrill tune on their flutes and both charmer and snake would sway slowly from side to side in time to the music: their faces only a few inches apart. That's one job we can do without.

Remember the men with the trained monkeys? How they were dressed—Mama monkey in a red dress. Papa in a baggy pants; and wasn't Junior cute when he danced as Papa beat on a little rawhide drum and Mama shook a tambourine? Mama passed the money cup too.

Then there were the parrots and lovebirds that one could buy for almost nothing. And the unbelievable sight of live crows sitting in the meat-market, gazing longingly at the fly-covered cuts

of meat lying uncovered on the shelves.

We'll never forget either the hawks who would swoop down out of nowhere and steal food right out of our mess-kit on that last army post. We soon learned to crouch over our food as we passed through the chow-line. It was fun to tie a piece of meat to each end of a long string and toss it into the air. Swoosh! and a hawk would dive for it. The other piece would be dangling below him and soon another hawk would have that. There would be quite a tussle in the air and we never tired of this trick.

Then there were the huge vultures circling high in the air. Sometimes we would see them devouring the carcass of a dead cow or goat. Once we even saw one sitting on the bloated body of a cow as it floated slowly down the river. A wingspan of from 10 to 12 feet was not uncommon for these scavenger birds.

Have you forgotten what an experience your first elephant ride was like? How the huge beast knelt at a word from its driver and the horrible feeling as it lurched to its feet? Down the road we went—lurch, jerk, bump, roll and bob—quite a sensation, wasn't it? Clinging madly to our seat we were lowered very ungently to the ground.

The nites—we'll never forget the nites! The hair-raising howls of the jackals practically on the doorstep of our hut, or the crashing through the brush of a wild boar, the incessant slapping at mosquitoes, and the unearthly cries of some unidentified animal.

Then, of course, there were the dancing bears in every small town, surrounded by a crowd of curious children.

Yes, indeed, India certainly is a zoo without bars. In the large cities, in the small towns, out in the wilds, wherever one went there were animals.

Some of the lumber yards in the northern part of the country used elephants to shove and pull huge logs into place. In the western part of the country camels were a common sight. Crocodiles inhabited quite a few of the rivers, and tigers, although not everywhere, were not an uncommon beast.

Interesting though our visit was we were nevertheless glad to board our ship and head out to sea toward the good old U. S. A.

Now we visit a zoo in some of our large cities and as we gaze upon the animals pacing uneasily back and forth in their cages, we think of those days when we paced uneasily back and forth as we stood guard at nite and strange animals gazed at us through the darkness; perhaps they thought as they watched us the same things that we think when we watch them.

When courage fails, and faith burns low,
And men are timid grown,
Hold fast thy loyalty, and know
That Truth still moveth on.

The race is not unto the swift,
The battle to the strong;
When dawn her judgment-days that sift
The claims of right and wrong.

—F. L. Hosmer.

8th

ANNUAL

P. R. Y. P.

CONVENTION

AUGUST 17

18

19

At the

Protestant Reformed Church

Holland,

Michigan

Convention Program

Tuesday — August 17:

Registration
Lunch
Business Meeting

Inspirational Mass Meeting

Song Service
Special Music

Speaker — Rev. H. Hoeksema,

on the Convention Theme:

"Faith Of Our Fathers"

Wednesday — August 18:

Business Meeting
Outing at Lake Michigan

(Detailed plans are not yet complete enough to be divulged at this time)

Evening Hymn Sing at Kollen Park

Special Music by the
Holland Christian High School Band.

Thursday — August 19:

Pancake Breakfast
Trip thru Museum and "Little Netherlands"
Banquet and Program

Special Music

Debate:—Subject???

(Can you think of a good one?)

Speaker — Rev. C. Hanko

on the topic:

"Faith of Our Fathers — A Mighty Challenge"

Let's All Be There!

Are you planning to attend? Have you made your reservations for lodging? Write: Marilyn Casemier, 40 E. 26th St., Holland, Michigan.

Let's make our 8th Convention our biggest and best.

Quotes from War Issues

Alice Reitsma — Grand Rapids, Michigan

December, 1941 — "Whether you be a young man or woman at home, moving about in troublous times, in a world of unrest and confusion, full of doubts and fears; or whether you are a soldier in the training camp threatened with the possibility of being called to the field of battle, the Peace of the Prince of Peace is your only vanguard." Editorials—Rev. C. Hanko.

January, 1942 — ". . . .a new year which finds both hemispheres engaged in a bloody business of warfare; hearts of parents bleeding at the departure of their sons, sturdy young men in the prime of their lives called to hold a rendezvous with death. . . . There is one ray of hope shining through all the dark and weary night."

Editorials—Rev. C. Hanko.

January, 1942 — "How much damage was actually done at Pearl Harbor in this surprise attack is at present not fully known." Our Day—P. Zuidema.

February, 1942 — "Beacon Lights now has 479 subscribers! ! !"

Fireside Chats—A. R.

March, 1942 — "War is a grim business . . . . We hope you are enjoying the Beacon Lights that are being sent to you and especially the pages set aside for your benefit. . . .let us hear from you!"

An Open Letter—Rev. C. Hanka.

March, 1942 — "How are you. . . . ? Now that I have a real taste of what it is like to be away from home and in the army, I prefer home. . . . .Tomorrow I start drilling and learn how to use my gas mask. . . . I'd write more about the camp but all such news is censored."

Letter—Pvt. S. H. Van Weelden.

May, 1942 — "Beacon Lights now has 502 subscribers and has crossed the boundary lines of 10 states in the Union. Besides this, we have 27 soldiers on our mailing list, who are stationed in all parts of the country."

News Flashes—A. R.

November, 1942 — "This year, the Executive Board is making it a Federation project to send Beacon Lights, free of charge to all our Boys who have been called to the Colors." —Editor's Desk.

December, 1942 — "But, you ask, are there no exceptions to the rule that war marriages should be avoided? No doubt, each case stand or falls on its own merit and must be judged individually. Yet it is equally certain that any young couple must have an absolutely air-tight case, especially in times like these, to escape the maxim, 'marry in haste and repent in leisure'."

Editorials—Rev. C. Hanko.

December, 1942 — ". . . .I think the societies are doing a wonderful job in

writing to us. . . .it cheers a fellow up . . . .you should see the faces brighten when we have mail call. . . . The people here in Australia are about like the folks at home".

Letter—Corp. T. Henry Koster.

December, 1942 — "I received my first copy of Beacon Lights yesterday and read it through immediately. . . . It made me a little home-sick while I was reading about the activities of the different societies. It seems as though one never appreciates what he has till he loses it." Letter—Cornie Nobel.

January, 1943—"Our Prot. Ref. Churches now have 111 boys in service, 61 of these young men are from our Fuller Ave. Church." Editor's Desk—A. R.

February, 1943 — ". . . .Then as I look out of my window tonight over the plains, wondering where you are, and I see the silvery moon and twinkling stars illuminating the entire plain, I know they also shine on you and it gives me peace; for so, too, the same God that watches over us at home watches over you somewhere. . . .over there." Letter—Rev. A. Cammenga.

February, 1943 — "132 young men in service! 20 are overseas; 3 in Hawaii, the others are scattered over 28 different States."

Editor's Desk—A. R.

March, 1943 — "No one thought when our paper first came into existence that it would be called upon so soon to serve a double purpose, one for the societies at home, and another for our boys in the armed forces."

Editorials—Rev. C. Hanko.

March, 1943 — "I enjoy the Beacon Lights very much. . . .I read your editorials in the December issue and got a lot out of them. . . . There are times when a fellow has the blues. . . ."

Letter—Robert Kelderman.

April, 1943 — "This is the first spring in World War II that the Allies are holding the initiative and choosing the battlefield instead of awaiting with fear and trembling the next blow of the enemy."

Current Events—Rev. H. De Wolf.

August, 1943 — "We now have 212 servicemen receiving Beacon Lights each month. 63 are overseas."

"This past year we brought our mailing list up to 700!" Ed. Desk—A. R.

August, 1943 — ". . . .War is no fun. Still we as God's children know there is but One who directs all shells that burst and bullets that whistle through the air. . . ." Letter—Johnny Kimm.

February, 1944 — ". . . .And suddenly I felt that letter writing, though we may be thankful for its possibility, is but a poor means to abridge this distance in experience and I wished I could visit you all for a while, and talk to you face to face. . . ."

Letter—Rev. H. Hoeksema.

March, 1944 — ". . . .Approximately 250 Servicemen are receiving Beacon Lights each month. . . ."

Editor's Desk—A. R.

June, 1944 — ". . . .What should be OUR prayer on D-Day? . . . June 6 . . . give us a part in that Eternal Kingdom of Peace." Article—Rev. L. Vermeer.

June, 1944 — "131 boys with A.P.O. addresses!" Editor's Desk—A. R.

August, 1944 — ". . . .wounded—Marine Pvt. Charles Sikkema, Pfc. Bernard Miedema! Prisoner—Sgt. Charles De Jong! Missing in Action—Lt. Lawrence Kooima!

". . . .Killed—Pfc. Bernard Holstege! June 9. . . .Died—Sgt. Howard Van Solkema, July 11. . . . .Killed—Pvt. John M. Swart, July 13. . . ." In Memoriam.

October, 1944 — "300 Copies. . . .being mailed to men and women in Service, in the States and Overseas."
"Wounded—Pvt. Sybrant J. Schaafsma, Pvt. Andrew Voss. . . ."

December, 1944 — "Missing in Action—Pfc Bernard J. Miedema. Died—Pfc. Ben Weessies, Nov. 5. . . ."

January, 1945 — "Wounded in Action—Andrew Vanden Top. . . .Sgt. Arthur Kerkstra. . . .Sgt. William VandenTop.

March, 1945 — ". . . .The Allies now have the initiative and are on the move . . . .First and ninth armies have started the offensive toward the Rhine . . . .Fate of Germany. . . .decided in this battle. . . ."
Current Events—J. Boelema.

May, 1945 — "San Francisco is the place where "The United Nations Conference on International Organization" is being held. This meeting takes the news today. . . Germany in her death throes.
Current Events—J. Boelema.

October, 1945 — "Lt. Maurice Herrick—killed. . . .Pfc. Gerrit J. Vis—killed." In Memoriam.

November, 1945 — "It requires but little imagination to surmise that the end of the war caused a momenteous change in your daily life."
Letter—Rev. H. Hoeksema.

October, 1946 — "A word of welcome was first of all addressed to our veterans. . . ."
Convention Speech—Rev. J. De Jong.

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Current Comments

REV. L. DOEZEMA

Bellflower, California

This issue is especially for servicemen. Events seem to be shaping in such a way that such issues labelled "for servicemen" will be more in demand than at present. Though this month's Beacon Lights is directed to servicemen who are at present in the service, it seeks also to interest ex-servicemen—and so we can say it is of interest to all of us. Potentially we are all in the service.

Important news items of this month will have interest in June and for some time to come. For these days it is increasingly evident that God's hand moves all things with great rapidity to accomplish His one purpose—the coming of His kingdom. In former days a long period intervened between the harbinger of a great event and its final appearance upon the stage of history. Today we not only see important change taking place, but we see that there is a definite resemblance to the prophetic utterances of the Word of God.

It ought to be of interest to all of us who shall be witnesses of these happenings to even now make comparisons between current events and the general prophetic character of Revelations. Especially while we have our time for calm reflection ought we to inquire into the meaning of future catastrophies. Of course, it should not be our error to make foolish detailed predictions. But if we carefully examine Scripture, interpret it correctly, and compare with the trend of affairs, we profit in two ways. We understand, in the first place, the Word of God as we see it tested in the laboratory of human living affairs; and secondly, current events become the works of God—signs of times instead of catastrophies.

At this writing especially the following occupies my attention:

First there has been a meeting in the Hague of six hundred leading individuals and statesmen, including the greatest living statesmen who was also the main speaker, Winston Churchill. The nations of Europe met, calling themselves a Congress of Europe, in order to lay plans for a United States of Europe. Without a doubt an effort

of this kind will receive participation and support by the United States at some time, in some way. It draws our attention to the real possibility of a strong "western power".

Another item is the headline of today's paper: *Jewish State of Israel Has Been organized.* This is supported by the earnest pleas for further aid by the American Christian Palestine Committee. Harold Ickes goes farther and answers a telegram of two Christian ministers, by writing in defense of lifting the arms embargo to the state of Israel. This shows the feeling of leaders and it indicates that if it were not for the oil in the Arab territory and consequently the necessity of pacifying the Arabs, our country would back Israel as Britain promised to do in by-gone days.

What has this to do with our dreaded but inevitable relations with Russia?

1. We can see that there is need to study the pattern of history as it is given in Revelation, which makes clear that the final war is a battle between East and West.

2. For the first indication of that fact, turns to Revelation 9. There we read of the locusts of the fifth trumpet and the triple monster unloosed by the four creatures of the River Euphrates of the sixth trumpet. The locusts are the evil spirits set loose by Satan to influence men, to cause them to become beasts with perverted passions in every respect. A picture of that fifth trumpet was shown us in pre-war Germany with its insane philosophy and perversity spurred on by the pretentious aims of their science and philosophy as directed by human genius. That will certainly be repeated on a greater scale. We must be prepared for the break-down of morality and ethics on a large scale among the so-called civilized and Christian nations — an adultery and idolatry that far surpasses that of the Israel of old. Servicemen are acquainted with the perversity of human nature by personal contact. We all are aware of it and can be warned not only by Scripture but also as it shows itself in modern literature and scientific literature on the behavior of human beings, which causes the majority to believe the delusion that their depravity and shame is highly standard and normal, a matter of pride. This results in a great break-down of political and religious standards which were governed in a measure by the "works of the law of God" (Rom. 2). This prepares the way for God's final judgment of the monsters set loose upon the powers of the east and west. I think the pattern of Revelations can again be seen more clearly now than since the time of the last struggle in Europe.

MEDITATION

Rev. G. Vos — Hudsonville, Michigan

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."—Romans 8:28.

This text is part of a New Testament song.

Oh, I know it, I know it, it is not a song in the accepted, mechanical and technical sense of the word. But it is a song nevertheless.

Let us see.

A song is an expression of happiness and great joy.

A song is sung by those who are contented, by those who are at peace with everything. You sing when you have no care in the whole wide world.

Well?

That is exactly the fact of the matter here.

Go with me to the head of the chapter out of which this verse is taken. There we read that there is no hell, no curse, no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit.

If you are in Christ Jesus, you are at peace with everything, and I would have no limit to that word.

Paul had outlined to the Roman Christians that they are justified before God, that they are clothed with the clothes of righteousness so that there is nothing against them before the tribunal of God. For this righteousness is His, is thought out by Him and brought about by Him, realized by Him and centrally fulfilled by Him.

And all this realizing, fulfilling and working of this righteousness is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If you are in Him, you can begin to sing your song of utter contentment.

Paul had finally done so in the eighth chapter. He sang of that righteous estate when singing of the walk according to the Spirit of God. The Triune God thought out this justification, planned it, revealed it and had begun to realize it in the hearts and lives of the happy beings who are to be partakers of it.

And the realization, the fulfilling of this great redemption is by the Spirit of God.

The Holy Spirit of God is the Divine Agent through Whom you become partaker of the bounties of justification. It is the living God, dwelling in the depth of your heart, and praying there is that heart if you do not know anymore what or how to pray because of your infirmities.

And we know, says Paul, that all

things work together for good to them that love God.

Let us begin with that last statement: to them that love God.

That statement makes for distinction, for separation. There are just two kinds of people in the world: those that love God and those that hate Him.

We all hate Him by nature, and are children of wrath.

But when the Holy Ghost comes into the depth of our heart, He changes that heart and spreads abroad the love of God. (Rom. 5)

To love God. What does it mean? It means that your deepest heart, and that is the real you, is knit together with God in the bond of His covenant. It means that His life is yours. It means that you really have only one interest in life, and that interest is God! For that interest you will sacrifice everything, and again I would not see a limit put to that word. If they would offer a man all the goods of his house for that love he would be utterly contemned. To love God means that you are united with God in the bond of perfection.

And that is wrought by the Spirit of God.

When you have the love of God in your heart it is the proof that God loves you. And His love is from all eternity and to everlasting.

To express that love He made the world, counselled it to fall again in darkness so that He might show to the sons of glory how utterly lovely He is in Christ Jesus that died on the accursed tree, which Son raised the world to untold glory and beauty.

Can you now understand that all things *must* work together for good unto you? Of course, they must work together for your good. He made all things for the revelation and manifestation of the love of God which is in Christ Jesus the Lord.

What things?

All things.

And the Holy Ghost will enumerate here. Death, life, angels, principalities, powers, things present, things to come, height, depth, nor any other creature can harm us.

What is the only and real harm that can come to the sons of glory?

This: that they would be found outside of the loving arms of God!

I ask you: can you think of a greater evil than that?

Of course, there is no greater evil than that. All other evils are as nothing. Paul calls all the evils that visit us here below "our light affliction" and he adds to it: "which is but for a moment".

Ask it of the man who is so often mentioned when we talk of evil that comes over us in this sorry earth. Ask it of Lazarus, and he will smile. He will tell you: Attend to my name: Lazarus! He whom the Lord aids! The miser-

able wretch he was, lying in all kinds of weather at the gate of the rich man, the rags, the sores, the licking dogs, the hunger, the gnawing hunger! And his only answer is: God helps me! God loves me. What else do I want?

I know it, I know it! Some of us have given our lives on the battlefields of the world. There are sorrowing parents and brothers and wives. But I would ask all of them this question: Do you love God? And if your answer is in the affirmative I will preach the Gospel to you, and I will tell you in God's name that you do not sorrow even as the world sorroweth, but that you are blessed even in your bereavement. Your son and sweetheart went to his death so that God might be good to you. That is the message of the text! The death of our beloved is a message of love of God for us. They had to die when they did die. It is all ordained. Their deaths and your sorrow were so many links in the chain of eternal salvation of the church of God.

It did not bring separation between you and the love of God as it is in Christ Jesus, did it? Of course, it did not. It strengthened that love, if anything.

And so it is with all things.

If you are safe in the arms of God, the eternal God is your Refuge. And He has never suffered that anyone or anything really did you wrong. All the things that made you cry and groan were so many tokens of His love for you. They were the necessary way to His heart.

For we are the called according to His purpose.

His purpose is realized when all are safe in heaven and time ended. The way to that fulfillment is called His Counsel. Say this: He will lead me with His counsel and afterwards He will take me up in glory.

Just suffer a little longer, and He will finally come to relieve you.

Then He will wipe all tears from off all faces.

Then you will be satisfied. You will see there that all things were for His praises and glory, and that your place in that scheme is utmost happiness.

Methinks, I hear the strains of the heavenly melody!

THE GOOD FIGHT

(1 Tim. 6:11, 12)

Follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness.

Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.

* * * *

"To those who fall, how kind Thou art,
How good to those who seek."

Ralph Baas, (ex-serviceman) Kalamazoo, Mich.

Another Memorial Day has come and gone. Across our great nation the President, the Governors of the States, and locally the Mayors of our cities have issued their proclamations concerning the observance of the day. They plead that the day be spent attending church services and praying for peace for the world. But this peace that they speak of is not the Peace that we as Protestant Reformed people hope and pray for.

To many people Memorial Day is just another day, and others join the world in celebration and fun. Yes, we too feel the effects of this celebrating only in a more reverent way. We as veterans of World War II also think back on our service rendered, and many of our memories are focused on those of our congregation who did not return to our homeland, but were called from the fields of battle by our Father in Heaven to their home in Glory.

But I am not supposed to be writing a theme on Memorial Day. I am supposed to be writing of my attitudes and convictions toward and derived from my military service.

It was the last part of March 1941 when I received my greetings from the President of the United States, to report on April 6th for induction into the Army of the United States. I was the first of our congregation in Kalamazoo to receive such a greeting. Those days were not happy ones as we by nature look at them, but it was God's way for us. It was not the fact that our friends

and neighbors had selected us, nor that our number was drawn from a bowl in Washington, nor the act of Congress that sought to defend this country from the aggressions of the nations already at war then, but it was a purpose of our Almighty God and the reasons are for Him to know and for us to obey.

So we left our homes, our loved ones, and we were sent to various camps where we were tempted daily by worldly leaders, activities, and other evils. We left our Christian circles to become surrounded by the children of Evil. It was a hard struggle but our colors must always be kept before us. We were not merely soldiers of the United States Army but also soldiers of the Cross.

The days, months, and years of training while our country was yet at peace with the world were not so bad generally speaking. We could attend church services in Camp or in neighboring towns each Sabbath Day. At various times groups of various denominations met regularly to discuss the Scriptures together, but even these groups disappeared with the moving of troops here and there.

Then came the days that all servicemen and their families wanted least of all to come. The day of embarkation, when we had to leave the shores of our country. The coming days seemed dark. The battle sounds echoed around the world, and we were afraid, but yet there was something we as Christians had that our fellow servicemen did not have. We had peace of mind in that all things are well with those who fear the Lord. Yes, the battle came still closer, it claimed the lives of our friends. But for those who died fearing God, their reward is the Everlasting Peace.

Now we have returned home again and have tried to forget the terrible past. We are happy to be able to participate in Society, and other phases of Church activities again. Yet there are those empty seats of those whom God has chosen to go before us into Glory, to the Peace that He has prepared for us. In that way we too have Memoirs, not only on Memorial Day but every day.

I thing I can speak for all of our exservicemen when I say we are thankful for the efforts of Beacon Lights in getting the reading material we desired to us wherever we were. May God further bless the efforts of that most worthy cause.

Think On These Things

Whatsoever things are true,

whatsoever things are honest,

whatsoever things are just,

whatsoever things are pure,

whatsoever things are lovely,

whatsoever things are of good report;

if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

—Philippians 4:8.

Appreciating The Church

George Kunz (ex-serviceman) Grand Rapids, Mich.

Time passes swiftly, and with it all things come and go as God has seen fit in His eternal counsel. Nearly three years have passed from the time that we lived the nomad life of a service-man, and now many of the boys have heaped upon themselves the greater responsibility of husbands and fathers. The former days were times when we let others do the thinking for us, but now most of us must think for ourselves and must feel responsible for the welfare of our families. Not only for material things of life, but above all, as husbands and fathers, we must be most concerned with the spiritual welfare of our families. Where formerly we could always look to our superiors for advice, now we must make our own decisions. How much more difficult it would be if we had to leave home again now, especially with a wife and children to leave behind. Not only with our family ties would it be difficult, but also with the ties that we have with our church, the church which we have learned to appreciate.

We often learn to appreciate something more after we have felt a lack of that certain thing. For example, let us say we take that long looked for summer vacation and we leave home for a few days, yet it always seems that upon our return, we are glad to be back again. It simply is natural, it's our environment, it's our customary home life, it's where we belong and where we feel most at home. So also it is spiritually, as it has been with the boys who have been in the service. Sometimes God wills that we are separated from the church and the gathering of believers, and casts us into a world that is morally corrupt and spiritually dead. Yes, it is for our own good, and in perfect accordance with the will of our Heavenly Father.

While in our absence we certainly did miss our respective congregations where we were accustomed to worship. We missed our pastor, our friends, our society life and our fellowship with one another. Instead, we had to seek our public worship and our fellowship in a church atmosphere which we thought was very distant from our own. Often we felt the need of the proper preaching of the Word, but rarely was it found. The administration of the sacraments as it was found in the chapels certainly did not appear to us as the distinguishing marks of the true church. We knew of discipline in the military sense, but not the discipline of the church of the living God.

Speaking from my own personal experience, we can say that as a rule when we attended chapel services, we walked out after it was over, feeling absolutely no spiritual uplifting whatsoever. It simply wasn't there. On other occasions, during the course of a so-called sermon, not once did we hear the speaker take upon his lips the name of God or of

Christ. How then can the child of God grow spiritually in such a church worship when there is so little room for the name of the Triune God? However, it can be understood. The army, consisting of the masses of the people really does not want the Lord of the Scriptures. The way of the righteous God and His commandments are much too hard, too straight, and too narrow. Rather, it desires an interesting speech with a core of modernism, and a small sprinkling of Christ to make it appear as though it were preaching. However, we do not say this was always true in regard to chapel services in the army, for undoubtedly there was some good preaching as we also experienced ourselves, but as a rule it was a far cry from the Truth.

Certainly it is our duty to serve our country when called, but even more so is it our duty to serve God, and live worthy of the calling whereunto we have been called, also in the midst of sin. And sin there was; not to overlook temptation. To be sure, the devil was in his glory and the child of God he tried to make his victim. Always, over and over again, the long strong arm of Satan seemed to draw you into his own devilish bosom in an attempt to tear you away from the love of God and the church. Yes, the devil is very strong, and perhaps all the boys experienced that even to the extent that oft'times we also stumbled and faltered, for as children of God we were the choice victims of his intentions. In such was the environment that the child of God had to strive to fight the good fight of faith.

In spite of this all, yet we knew that God was working for us. For during the period that we were away from our respective congregations, we nevertheless dearly felt the tie that binds our hearts in christian love. We hoped and prayed that some day we would be able once again to experience the fellowship of one another in the fear of God's name from Sabbath to Sabbath. Our hope was in the Lord.

We appreciated in our absence, that at regular intervals our pastors would faithfully write us words of encouragement and cheer, keep us well posted on how the congregation was going, and above all, give us the spiritual uplifting that we so much needed. We appreciated the letters from the consistory and the various members of the congregation, not only as personal messages, but in view of the fact that they were lively signs of ties that bind our hearts in love, as it can only be found in the body of Christ, the church. For, so it must be; we must live in true spiritual harmony with one another. We knew also, that not only our dear ones, but also our congregations were carrying us upon the wings of prayer, from day to day and sabbath to sabbath.

The time passed, and one by one we returned again to our places, at home and in our church. Not all returned, but God knows His own, and our comfort is in knowing that what He has done, He has done for the good of those that love Him. The world is without hope, but for the child of God, the Father has prepared a House of many mansions.

For those of us who returned we must also render thanks to our heavenly Father who spared us, not only physically, but also and above all, spiritually. It is He who carried us through the very worst of sin and temptation. Although we must humbly confess that many times we stumbled and faltered, yet the God of all grace led and guided us, and enabled us to fight the good fight of faith through the darkest of those days. However, we must continue to fight, even now, until the end, for the battle of the church and God's people against the devil is not yet over.

We thank God that He has given us this church wherein we have a name and place. We have seen the world in all its terrible sin, we have missed the fellowship of one another, but through it all God has performed a good work, for now we have learned to truly appreciate that God has established a church in the midst of the world, and that we may be members of that one body of Christ. May God give us as young men, grace, that we may truly appreciate His Word, that we may be built up in the faith and seek the welfare of the church. While we are young, let us be strong, uphold the tradition of our fathers and walk in a way of sanctification. Thanks be to God who unceasingly cares for and upholds His church.

Father Speaks

Father speaks to us from glory:
"Just obey Me, trust in Me;"
Throw thy bread upon the waters,
Fruits of it you sure will see.
Lay up treasures there in heaven,
preach the gospel far and wide;
For My grace in mercy given,
Shall fore'er with thee abide.

I'll supply your need a plenty,
Overflowing great you'll see;
When yourself for Me you'll empty,
Then by grace I'll prosper thee.
Then your founts will be o'erflowing,
And your hearts too small will be;
For the bliss which you'll be owning,
Which in love I'll send to thee.

Then your hearts shall bubble over,
With thanksgiving, love and praise;
I'll deliver thee from trouble,
Throughout all thy pilgrims days.
For I never will forsake thee,
And your heart's joy shall be full;
With a taste of heaven I'll bless thee,
'Tis the bliss none can annul.

Bliss of heavenly joy and comfort,
With a peace from heaven above;
With a trust to trust I'm faithful,
I'll o'erload you in My love.
Grace supplied, 't will be sufficient,
To fulfill your every joy;
Which exceeds all earthly pleasures,
For My praise thou shalt employ.

Trusting praise, to trust thy Father,
That both heaven and earth are Mine;
Seeking heavens' treasure you'll gather,
Joys which speak of heaven sublime.
Father knows your need; I'll fail not,
Go forth, simply trusting Me;
For My promise I forget not,
Crowned with joy you then shall be.

Then when this thy journey's over,
This thy treasure thou shalt see;
In the heavenly (bank) above there,
With a joy eternally.
Grace and glory in abundance,
In accordance as you've done;
It shall be yours, 'tis Father's promise,
In heavens' glorious, Heavenly Home.

H. A. Van Putten

Holland, Mich.

A Last Appeal To Our School Teachers

Undoubtedly you have noticed the ad in *Concordia* under the heading "*Who Will Help!*". In the June 10 issue it appears on page 2. Thanks to our helpful editor it had a very prominent place so that no one could fail to notice it.

But in spite of what *Concordia,* and our school board, and a few others have been able to do, we here in Redlands are as yet without teachers for the next school term. As you will understand, *no teachers, no school!* You will agree that that would be a deplorable situation. Must this be after 14 years of existence?

Now the case in Redlands is this. If we are unable to find a teacher (or teachers) in the very near future, the parents will have to try and enroll their children in the Christian Reformed School, if at all possible. We say *if possible,* because the Christian Reformed School in the past season had all the children they could take care of. Therefore, enrollment would be necessary now. If that should fail, the only other way left to us is the public school. We feel that we do not need to make a plea or stress the necessity of our own Protestant Reformed School. The Truth which we as parents by the grace of God love so dearly — should not our children be taught that same Truth in the day school?

Therefore we come with the urgent plea

"*Who Will Help!*".

The Board of the First Reformed
Christian School Society.
Redlands, California.

Mr. John Zandstra, Jr.
182nd St.
South Holland, Ill.