THANKS BE TO GOD
BEACON LIGHTS

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The Observance of Thanksgiving Day
Jeanette Clason — Kalamazoo, Mich.

Probably the most typically American holiday which we celebrate is Thanksgiving Day. Its celebration has come down to us from the Pilgrims, and perhaps because of the interesting facts which we know about that early celebration, there seems to be an aura of romance and gaiety about this holiday.

Strange as it may seem to us at first thought, the feast of the Pilgrims was by no means original with them or the first of its kind. Since earliest times there have been thanksgiving days for special mercies or favors. Perhaps one of the oldest of these specially appointed thanksgiving days was the Feast of Pentecost which the Israelites were told to keep. In Exodus 34:22 we read: “And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, . . . .” This feast of weeks is more commonly known as Pentecost and corresponds to our harvest thanksgiving in a sense.

The Greeks also had such a day, or days, for theirs lasted nine days. It was known as the Feast of Demeter in honor of the goddess of cornfield and harvest. At this occasion sacrifices of fruit, wine, honey, and milk were made. The harvest festival of the Romans was called Cerelia. England had many fast and thanksgiving days in times of peril, famine, pestilence, or deliverance from some great evil. To cite one example, Oliver Cromwell proclaimed a day of thanksgiving when the English defeated the Spanish Armada. The English Harvest Home may have been the forerunner of our Thanksgiving Day. It stressed joy over the gathering-in of the harvest. In many localities it was celebrated a whole week.

It seems, however, that America was the first to set apart one particular day each year to give thanks. That day, of course, has its origin in that feast of the Pilgrims with which we are all familiar, even though we may be sure that not one of the Pilgrims had any idea of the influence their feast was to have on the future.
These courageous people had gone through a time of great hardship, a very severe winter, sickness and death, trouble from the Indians, and danger of famine. Of the original group of one hundred and one who had come to our shores, only forty-six remained. But in the fall of 1621 a great crop was gathered in and much game appeared seeking protection, so that this little group indeed had reason for thanksgiving.

Historians differ widely about the details of this first Thanksgiving Day. In his book, The Fast and Thanksgiving Days of New England, W. D. Love points out that, contrary to general belief, this was not a religious thanksgiving set apart for religious worship, but a whole week of festivities. He quotes from an original account, Mourt's Relation, to show that religious services were not even mentioned: "Our harvest being gotten in, our Governour sent foure men on fowling, that so we might after a more speciall manner rejoice together, after we had gathered the fruit of our labours: they foure in one day killed as much fowle, as with a little helpe beside, served the Company almost a weeke, at which time amongst other Recreations, we exercised our Armes. many of the Indians coming amongst us, and amongst the rest their greatest King Massasoyt, with some nichtie men, whom for three dayes we entertained and feasted, and they went out and killed five Deere, which they brought to the Plantation and bestowed on our Governour, and upon the Captaine, and other. And although it be not always so plentiful, as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God, we are so farre from want that we often wish you partakers of our plentie." The author does not speak of religious services of any kind, and from what we know of the Pilgrims, it is difficult to believe that they would have mingled "recreations" with a religious season. We know that they had condemned that very thing in England. Hardly can we picture them coming home from church service in the morning and indulging in a game of ball in the afternoon.

Other points of difference are the duration and the time of the first Thanksgiving. In the preceding quotation the author gives us to understand that the celebration lasted "almost a weeke". We usually think of a one-day celebration. Lillian Eichler in Customs of Mankind writes that the thirteenth of December, 1621, was the day appointed by Governor Bradford. Love states that the exact time is not known, but that it must have been somewhere between September 23 and November 11. Considering the pressure of their work, it is remarkable that an entire week
could be spared for playing and feasting at any time.

There is general agreement concerning the probable bill of fare at this first celebration. Undoubtedly it was very similar to ours today. Certainly, it must have been bountiful to supply the needs of the ninety Indian guests for three days. The traditional turkey, duck, geese, and venison were enjoyed, and perhaps the Indians brought with them fish and oysters as they were wont to do. Pumpkin pie and wild grapes must have found their way to the Pilgrim festive board also.

The social character of this holiday remains to this day. It is a time of family reunions and of entertaining friends. As then, so now, the gatherings are always of an informal nature, gaiety and joyousness being the order of the day.

Some writers claim that the Pilgrims deliberately planned to make Thanksgiving Day a yearly affair to take place of Christmas. The Pilgrims had not approved of the celebration of Christmas because they considered it a relic of popery. However, there seem to be no grounds for such a belief. The first Thanksgiving had all the earmarks of something spontaneous rather than planned, something affording exhilaration to their drooping spirits. It is unlikely that the Pilgrims had any idea of making an annual harvest feast of it.

You may ask then, when did Thanksgiving Day become an annual holiday? Here again we find wide difference of opinion, and such records as we have are incomplete and often vague. Two sets of records are available, church and civil; both are incomplete. Some writers say that the annual appointment of this day began at once. Others offer proof that only occasionally at first was there a revival of this day and that it was not until much later that a national holiday was proclaimed. It seems most probable that the various states first appointed their own Thanksgiving Days, and later the federal government made a national holiday.

There was no civil records of the appointment of a special day in Plymouth until 1668. Church records of other colonies show such celebrations as early as 1636. Sometimes yearly celebrations were omitted because of special reason, war, for instance. In Connecticut by 1649 the Pilgrims' idea of a harvest festival was an accepted custom and thereafter was appointed yearly by civil authorities. In the Massachusetts Bay Colony yearly celebrations were customary after 1660, but were not as prominent because of the Puritan influence. It is interesting to note that the Dutch in New Netherlands celebrated as early as 1644. In general it may be said that yearly appointments became customary
about forty years after the origin of Thanksgiving Day.

During the Revolutionary War the Continental Congress appointed one or more thanksgiving days each year, except in the critical year of 1777. These, however, were not harvest feasts. Some were days celebrating victories in war or deliverance from some great trouble. On November 26, 1789, George Washington proclaimed a day of thanksgiving for the establishment of the new government. Meanwhile the various states were observing different harvest feasts, and it wasn’t until 1863 that President Lincoln appointed November 26 as a national holiday. Since then the custom has been established to appoint the last Thursday of November as Thanksgiving Day and proclamations are made both by the President and by the governors of the states. Only recently, during the term of President Roosevelt was there a slight change in this custom. The fourth Thursday was appointed by him, and as a result we now find that some states celebrate the fourth and some the last Thursday of November in the years when those days do not coincide.

It is fitting that we close this article with the question, what is the proper celebration of Thanksgiving, or how does the Christian celebrate this day? No doubt, all of us know the answer to this question, but a reminder is always in order. First of all, to celebrate properly we must be truly thankful; if that is lacking there can be no celebration, obviously. Are we truly thankful? Are we conscious of all the benefits we have received and do receive constantly? If so, then we realize too that it is only by grace that we receive them. We have merited none of them by anything we have done. The alone Gracious One has bestowed them on us. So our Thanksgiving is to God for His grace. Consequently, only the Christian can give thanks for only the Christian is recipient of God’s grace. The world cannot give thanks, not only because it doesn’t know how, but also because actually it has not received these benefits from God. For them all things work toward their destruction.

We must also bear in mind that when we give thanks we must not think that we can repay God. Even in the world, every act of kindness, for example, cannot be repaid in kind. All the more is this impossible with God, for He is self-sufficient. What can we do for Him Who is all in all? And what can we give to Him in payment? “For the world is Mine and the fulness thereof.” Psalm 50:12. And later in the same Psalm we are told what is required of us: “Offer unto God thanksgiving; and pay thy vows unto the Most High: and
call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.” vss. 14, 15.

“And thou shalt glorify Me.” That is the requisite of true thanksgiving. We must extol His grace and all His glorious virtues. How? first of all, by pointing to the benefits which we receive. Single them out, mention them, number them. Remind ourselves that they are of grace, that we merit none of them, that we have forfeited all right to His goodness. Tell Him about them, in our prayers, in our song, and in our service. Tell others also, by our conversation and example testifying to His goodness and mercy.

For what do we give thanks? Certainly not merely for good crops. If that were the case, what must happen when a bad year comes along? Certainly not for material things in general, for them many would never be able to give thanks. We cannot separate the good from the bad, and give thanks for the good pile, for what are we to do with the bad then? No, but we must give thanks for all things, for war as well as peace, for poverty as well as riches, for sickness and health, for death and life. For He sends them to us all, and in Christ He is our God. For we know that all things work together for good for His people. Our joy is in the God of our salvation.
Our Radio Broadcasts

The growth of the use of radio broadcasting as a medium to witness to the truths of the Reformed faith is emphasized by the recent observation of the three hundredth broadcast of the Reformed Witness Hour in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Much has been accomplished since the first broadcast was aired, and we are grateful that God has blessed this work and this medium so that today there is not only a Protestant Reformed witness in Grand Rapids but in several other localities as well.

Not only are we grateful that this witness goes out in many areas but we are pleased that the execution of many duties and tasks connected with this program are carried out by young people of Protestant Reformed churches. Our young people have a record of achievement in this respect that speaks very well of them. It speaks well of them that they are moved to give their time and energy to the propagation of the truth. Not all of us are qualified to be speakers or ministers of the Word but in this radio work we are given an opportunity to use other talents such as musicianship, secretarial ability, organizational work and leadership.

We feel that at this time it is especially proper to renew our attention to this work by using our time to participate or listen to these radio broadcasts on Sunday. Although these broadcasts are directed in many instances to those outside of our circles, there is still much benefit to be derived by our listening to the messages. As young people we ought to be concerned with the truth, concerned about the witness of the church. We ought to give close attention to the material presented in these broadcasts.

Currently, Rev. Hoeksema has started a series of talks on the subject of predestination. Where do you stand on this vital doctrine? Do you know what the proper attitude is towards this truth? Do you know the stand of those that oppose this doctrine? Are you capable of defending this doctrine which is becoming so unpopular to-day?

(Cont. on page 13)
Last month we ended with the question: Just what did the Reformation of the sixteenth century contribute to the church of the New Dispensation? What was its outstanding gift of the grace of God to us?

Various answers may be given to this question. The benefits of the Reformation are manifold. By it the church of God was delivered from many vicious practices that had become part of the apostate Catholic religion, as well as from equally vicious conceptions regarding the infallibility of the "Holy Father" and the supreme authority of the church and her ecclesiastical assemblies. The Reformation marked a return to sound doctrine and healthy practice all along the line.

However, all this and much more is included in what is beyond all doubt the central benefit of the Reformation: the restoration of the Word of God in its written form to the church.

The BIBLE, my friends, was restored to God's church. That is the outstanding gift of God's grace in the Reformation.

That Bible is everything for the church of Christ, is it not? Without it we walk in total darkness. It is the revelation of the Living God in Jesus Christ. Only in and through the Scriptures do we possess the Christ in all the fulness of His salvation and grace. Reconciliation with God and the right to eternal life, the hope of eternal happiness and of an inheritance incorruptible and that fadeth not away, sanctification and preservation and glorification, the knowledge of and communion with the ever blessed God, God Himself, Christ, heaven, glory—all this we have only in connection with the revealed Word of God in the scriptures. Without that Word we have nothing. It is the "Lamp before our feet and the Light upon our pathway". Take away the Scriptures and you take away God, Christ, all light and joy and salva-
tion, everything—you have a complete blackout.

Of that precious Word of God the Roman Catholic hierarchy had robbed its people during the course of those dark, very dark ages. Nothing made that period of history darker than this one thing. At best, you understand, there were not many Bibles in circulation at that time. That was due to the fact, that printing had not yet been invented and every copy of the Bible had to be written in long-hand. You can easily imagine what that meant. It took one man as long as ten months to produce one copy of the Holy Scriptures. Consequently, Bibles were few and exceedingly expensive. Only the wealthy could afford one. What a far cry from conditions as they are today, when complete Bibles can be had for next to nothing. However, this is not the point here. The church did have the Bible even when they were few and expensive, and that Word of God was regarded throughout the early ages of the history of the church as the only rule of faith and conduct. The Roman Catholic hierarchy, however, robbed its constituency of the Bible ITSELF. It did so deliberately and systemically. In its place it offered a pile of traditions and ecclesiastical edicts. It places the doctrines and institutions of men on a par with the Word of God. What the ancient fathers taught, the church councils decreed and the "Holy Fathers" declared was all regarded as of equal value with the Scriptures. Thus, according to the Catholic Church, there was no need of the Bible. These other things were more than enough. Only snatches of the Bible were given the people to read, and even these they were not to interpret themselves. The church would do the exegeting and expositing and all the people had to do was accept the church's interpretation and abide by it.

What was the inevitable result of this Satanic philosophy and this appropriation unto self of authority that belonged only to the Scriptures themselves? More and more the Bible was withheld from the layman. Scripture itself was no longer read. Every possible attempt was made to do away with the Bibles that were in existence until finally it became impossible even to find one. Luther himself had never seen a complete Bible until he was twenty years old. And thus the church was robbed of everything: her God, her Christ, sound doctrine and the true knowledge of salvation only by faith in Christ. And substituted for these were: the doctrine of man, the hierarchy, salvation by works, forgiveness via indulgences, purgatory, etc. Stones for bread; the church for the Scriptures: the pope for Jesus Christ.
BEACON LIGHTS

Thus the light went out all over the world, and a stygian darkness settled upon the entire church,—a blackout such as the world had never known.

* * * *

That Bible, exiled by Rome, doomed to extinction by the hierarchy, Jehovah God restored to His church. That is the heart of the Reformation.

To realize this purpose the Lord of all grace prepared the great Reformer, Martin Luther, — the impetuous, brilliant, God-fearing Luther. We thank God for him. The first time Luther came in contact with the whole Bible was in the library of the University of Erfurth, Germany. One day—Luther was now a young man of twenty years—while opening book after book to learn the writers' names, he came upon a volume that particularly struck his attention. Never before this had he seen it. The brilliant historian D'Aubigne continues: "He read the title—it is a Bible! a rare book, unknown in those times. His interest is greatly excited: he is filled with astonishment at finding other matters than those fragments of the gospels and epistles that the Church has selected to be read to the people during public worship every Sunday throughout the year. Until this day he had imagined that they composed the whole Word of God. And now he sees so many chapters, so many books of which he had no idea! His heart beats, as he holds the divinely inspired volume in his hand. With eagerness and with indescribable emotion he turns over these leaves from God. . . . He returns home with a full heart. Oh, that God would give me such a book for myself, thought he. . . . He soon returned to the library to pore over his treasure. He read it again and again, and then, in his astonishment and joy he returned to read it once more. The first glimmerings of a new truth were then beginning to dawn on his mind." Indeed, the seeds of the Reformation were sown. Thus had God led him to the discovery of His Holy Word.

Next he came in contact with the Bible in the convent of Erfurth, in which he had locked himself up in the hope of there finding peace for his troubled soul. There one day he found a Bible fastened to a chain, buried under inches of dust, and to this chained Bible he found himself returning day after day. As yet he had but a limited understanding of the Scriptures, but oh, how he loved them. It sometimes happened that he passed a whole day meditating upon a single passage. Parts of that Bible he would commit to memory. It was still some years before his break with the Catholic Church, but the seeds that were sown were sprouting out
and beginning to bear abundant fruit.

In the years that now followed Luther came nearer and nearer to the light. Leaving the stifled atmosphere of the cloister and becoming professor at the University of Wittenberg, he lectured and preached a great deal. And there was something really different, novel, refreshing about those sermons and lectures. They were not vain repetitions of the teaching of medieval theologians, but expositions of the Scriptures. No one spoke and preached as did Luther and soon students came to him from all over Germany. Through his own preaching and study he came to understand better and better the true meaning and value of the Scriptures as well as the position of the Church with respect to those Scriptures. Thus the stage was being set by the grace of God for the mighty revolution that would presently shake the Catholic hierarchy to its deepest foundations. Luther’s convictions were ripening day by day, year after year, until finally it required only a single spark to set off the explosion and set the entire world ablaze. That single spark was provided by Tetzel and his vicious traffic in indulgences. This traffic led to the nailing of the 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church, and these theses, containing all the germs of the Reformation, bore their fruits for the church of all ages.

Gradually these principles were again stressed as the fruit of the Reformation: that the Scriptures themselves are sufficient unto salvation; that we need nothing more than the Word of God; that the Bible is clear unto salvation and must not be interpreted by any Church, but by itself alone. Our Belgic Confession, itself born out of the Reformation of 1517, puts it beautifully: “We believe that those Holy Scriptures fully contain the will of God, and that whatsoever man ought to believe unto salvation is sufficiently taught therein”. . . . Article 7.

Thus the Bible was restored to the church of Christ. It was placed once more in the hands of the people of God. Presently one translation after another appeared, one version after another, especially the Tyndale Bible in 1526, the popular Geneva Bible in 1560, and the incomparable King James Version in 1611. By the providence of God printing was invented about this time and presently Bibles were being published and sold in ever increasing numbers until in recent times as many as seven million are printed in one year. Also, creed after creed was born, including our own Heidelberg Catechism and Belgic Confession, and the Holy Scriptures were studied far and wide.

(Cont. on page 13)
SERICULTURE
Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

One of the first things of which fallen man took cognizance in the Garden of Eden was the fact that he needed clothing, and so he provided himself with an apron of fig leaves. Later he used animal skins and hair. Not until after the deluge did it occur to him to use the delicate threads of the silk-worm.

According to Chinese historians silk was first used as a fiber during the reign of Huang-Ti some 2000 years before the birth of Christ. In fact, the term silk was derived from the emperor’s wife’s name “Si” because of the tremendous interest she showed by encouraging the planting of Mulberry trees (their source of food), by rearing worms, and by reeling silk. She has been credited with inventing the first silk cloth weaving loom. The traditional heathen custom of the Chinese was also practiced in regard to her and she was made the Goddess of Silk-worms.

For nearly 2000 years the Chinese had the monopoly on silk. Persians, Arabians, and the inhabitants of India were very eager to secure it and sell it to the nobility of Europe, Northern Africa, and Asia Minor, but they could not determine the origin of this beautiful material. The source and method of manufacture remained a secret to the Chinese under penalty of death if anyone betrayed this coveted information to foreigners.

In the 4th century B.C., Aristotle, a great naturalist and philosopher is said to have correctly accounted for the origin of silk. However, centuries passed before his ideas were confirmed and accepted by the people of Greece and Rome. They had thought it was a specially processed cotton. Its value was evidenced by the fact that it was worth its weight in gold.

During the reign of the Roman Emperor Justinian the European source of silk supply was severed due to a war which he was waging with Persia. Justinian attempted to establish a new route via Abyssinia, but this proved futile. Then he sent two Nestorian monks who had formerly been Chinese missionaries upon the difficult venture to secure silk worm eggs and establish sericulture in Europe. These aged monks, after encountering many difficulties and overcoming great obstacles finally returned with the producers of silk cleverly hidden in the hollow of their bamboo staffs. According to history these silk-worms are the progenitors of most European silk-worms to date.

The term “silk-worm” is a mis-
nomer, for the creature is unrelated to worms as we know them. In fact, it is a caterpillar or larva which develops from an egg about the size of a pinhead. The female moth lays from 200 to 500 of these minute bluish grains. In approximately ten days the eggs hatch and produce a black, hairy caterpillar about one-fourth inch long, equipped with sixteen legs. Even a caterpillar outgrows his "suit" and needs a change of clothes. During the course of his larval existence he outgrows his skin and molts four times, developing from one-fourth inch to three inches in length. As this stage is terminating, he literally stuffs himself with food—not a varied diet as it is exclusively the leaves of a white mulberry tree. Only two varieties of a possible 273 strains of white mulberry trees are usable in producing good silk.

Finally the gluttonous caterpillar is satisfied. He becomes languid and refuses all food. He is ready to build his cocoon. He suspends himself by his ten posterior legs and drops a continuous thread thru an aperture in the lower jaw just beneath the mouth, carefully guiding and placing it on the walls of the cell with his six anterior legs.

Along each side within the silk-worm's body are long glands which produce the transparent fluid that solidifies as soon as it leaves the spinnaret. When this delicate thread is examined under the microscope, it is possible to observe the two separate strands — each produced by a separate gland. If the cocoon is unraveled, it becomes apparent that it is not spun in concentric circles but in "figure eights". It may surprise the reader to learn that this tiny creature produces and spins this silken fiber at the rate of 6 to 12 inches per minute; not merely for one hour, but from two to three consecutive days and nights, producing some 3000 feet. However, it consumes itself in so doing—shrinking during the process from 3 inches to one and one-half inches.

About two days later the skin of the shrunken caterpillar splits at the nose and is pushed back off the body revealing the chrysalis (an oval cone about an inch long, shaped like a robin's egg). This egg-like object within the cocoon has only six legs instead of sixteen, and it also has four wings folded over the breast, and two feelers. Soon it hardens and turns brown; it is now the embryonic moth.

Two or three weeks later there is a rumbling and stirring within—the moth is ready to emerge from the cocoon, but it no longer has any jaws, but merely a small tube. How is it to escape from this multi-layered cell? The moth then ejects a strongly alkaline substance thru this tiny mouth-like tube which dissolves the tough cocoon.
Of course, the cocoons in which the moth has been allowed to escape are badly damaged and of little value commercially. Thus, the sericulturists kill the chrysalis before it is ready to emerge by heating it either in an oven or steam chamber. It is then ready to be reeled or unraveled. Recent experiments have proved that the chrysalis can be kept in an inactive state by subjecting it to freezing temperature. The latter process not only saves time in reeling the cocoon but allows the silk to retain more lustre and greater strength and elasticity.

Isn't it amazing how God has designed this tiny creature to produce such valuable textiles and has given man the ingenuity to use the strands of a cocoon to clothe himself. God provides! May we endeavor to appreciate His providence in creation.

"The man who has begun to live more seriously within begins to live more simply without."
—Phyllis Brooks.

* * * *

FIVE POINTS OF CALVINISM

T—Total Depravity.
U—Unconditional Election.
L—Limited Atonement.
I—Irresistible Grace.
P—Preservation of the Saints.

OUR RADIO BROADCAST
(cont. from page 6)

day? Do you realize that the doctrine of predestination is the cornerstone of the Reformed, Christian faith? You can answer these questions by listening to this new series of broadcasts beginning this fall.

New program material is being prepared for other broadcasts later in the season. Not only are various speakers engaged but there is a variety of musical talent available. We repeat again, do not miss cut on these fine broadcasts and be sure to tell your friends about them.

—H. K.

THE REFORMATION
(cont. from page 10)

Truly, the light went on again all over the world!

The blackout had come to an end, thanks to God's grace!

That is the significance of the Reformation of 1517!

In the light of all this, so wonderful and so necessary for our salvation, Christian friends, what should October 31 mean for us henceforth? Halloween? Or Reformation Day?
LESSON VI.
"The Miracle At Cana" (John 2:1-11)

The First Attestation Of Jesus.

John the Baptist had testified of Jesus in various ways. The result was that John retreated into the background and Jesus became more prominent. John's disciples also followed Jesus. Thus far we read of six of them. Also to them Jesus attests of Himself, as we saw in the last part of the previous chapter. Now the Lord enters His public field of labor, with the one purpose in mind of manifesting that He is indeed the Son of God, come in the flesh. This He will do by word and deed, namely by miracles.

The first of these miracles we will study at this time. Remarkable it is that the sacred writer of this book mentions only seven miracles performed by Jesus before His crucifixion. From the other narratives we know that He performed hundreds of them, perhaps thousands. He was busy day after day as the Great Physician. But John mentions only the greatest, and then those in which the work as the Son of God clearly shines forth. In the end all are left without excuse who do not believe, while by the same mighty signs He causes His own to believe in Him as the promised Messiah.

The Miracle, vss. 1-10. (Read the verses first).

The third day spoken of very likely refers to the number of days that had passed since Jesus called Philip and Nathanael. It is very apparent that Jesus is invited to this wedding through His mother, Mary. And the disciples go along because of Jesus. God will have them see the mighty sign. To Cana they go. (Find it on your map). In those days weddings usually last approximately seven days. With betrothals the couples were really married, i.e. ceremoniously, but they did not live together until the day of the wedding. From here and other passages in Scripture it is plain that wine was used very freely in those days, often gallons were drunk.

The first thing that strikes our attention here is the position and action of Mary. Very likely she had some affiliation with the attendants. What would she as guest know about the supply of wine? Then, when the present supply is exhausted she goes to her son. Why? Did she expect Him to buy some in the
town? Mary expected great things of her son. True, she did not yet know what would all take place, nor understand His work, but from all her past experiences with the angel (Gabriel), with Elizabeth, with the shepherds in Bethlehem, and with Jesus when He was twelve years old, she gathered that He would do great things, and may even have believed that He was the Messiah.

Jesus' answer to her seems almost rude. "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" In the kingdom of heaven Jesus is no more to her than a woman. Spiritually there is no more connection between the two than between others in the kingdom. Jesus' hour is not yet come. By hour is meant His final hour of suffering on the cross, which would be THE work of the Messiah. That hour had not yet come.

In terms of gallons the amount of wine made by Jesus was, at the very least, 120 gallons. What a wine! It is also sure from the remarks of the governor, that there was a marked difference between this wine and the first served, which very likely was also their best.

QUESTIONS: What does our Marriage Form say about Jesus' presence at this Wedding Feast? Much is made of this visit, some emphasizing that Jesus also could have a good time, others that we may also use wine and liquor, etc. What do you think is the lesson Jesus means to teach? What position do the Catholics give to Mary even now in relation to Jesus? Does this doing of Jesus prove that there is no sin in the use of alcohol? Didn't Jesus cater to Mary's desire after all when He changed the water into wine?

The Beginning Of His Signs, vs. 11.

This verse is of tremendous significance. It states that this miracle was the beginning of Jesus' signs (better translation than miracles). Jesus' wonders are often called signs. Now signs are visible manifestations of that which in itself is invisible. The servantman's clothes are a sign of his being in service. Here the sign is a visible manifestation of the real spiritual work of Jesus, as the Son of God. This will be fully realized after while through the cross and the resurrection. This sign manifests His glory. What glory? Again. His glory as the Son of God come in the flesh. Now glory is the radiation of virtue. Here the virtues of power and majesty shine forth, and prove that He is the Son of God come into the flesh. This would be the beginning of His signs, better, according to the Greek, the fundamental pattern of all the other miracles. Men must know that He is the Son of God, His glory they see.

QUESTIONS: Do miracles by themselves work faith? If not why did Jesus perform them? Since Jesus' words were efficacious why was it necessary for Him to perform wonders?

LESSON VII.

"The Cleansing Of The Temple" (John 2:12-17)

The Cleansing, vss. 12-16.

This undoubtedly is the first Passover Jesus attended since He began His public ministry. Some four or five months have
during this time we know little of, except elapsed since His baptism. What He did His work at the wedding feast, and the performing of a few miracles in Capernaum. But such is Scripture, it is no history. Nor are the Gospel narratives a history of the life of our Saviour.

The Passover festival lasted seven days. Its crowning glory was the eating of the roasted lamb by a party numerous enough to consume it together with bitter herbs. Every man of the Jews from twelve years up was supposed to attend this festival at Jerusalem, which overflowed the city with pilgrims. Although Jesus had made Himself known in Galilee, both in Cana and in Capernaum (Mark 1:21-34) very few in Jerusalem were acquainted with Him. The Passover Feast created a perfect setting for this.

One of the first things He did at Jerusalem was to go up to the temple. Having entered one of the outer courts of the temple (there was also an inner court where the Holy Place, etc. were found) a spectacle met His eyes. There, all along the walls, were lines of booths or shops in which money-changers were plying their usurious trade. The center space was crowded with oxen and sheep exposed for sale, and between the buyers and sellers all the turbulent traffic of a cattle market was going on. But why all this? In a way we can understand its origin. At all the great festivals, but especially at the Passover, an almost inconceivable number of animals were offered up in sacrifice. Josephus tells us of more than two hundred thousands victims sacrificed in the course of a single Passover celebration. Since most of the worshippers lived at a distance from Jerusalem it was quite impossible for them to bring their animals along. Hence, they buy them in Jerusalem. Then, too, it was the law that each worshipper cast one-half shekel in Jewish money into the temple treasury. And Jewish money was scarce, Roman money being much more popular. This explains the appearance of this market as well as the money changers. Naturally all this took place with the permission of the priests, perhaps they even took part in the business affairs. Possibly there was also much greed and graft in the whole matter, as history so plainly teaches to have been the case in times past.

Into the heart of this throng Jesus enters. Of the hundreds or thousands possibly only a small number knows Him. Popularity He does not yet have, like with the second cleansing shortly before His crucifixion. Therefore the question arises how He was able to so drive them all out. At the touch of His slender scourge buyers and sellers stop their traffic and flee before Him. The resistance of a few men could have stopped Him. But no such resistance is attempted. The only possible answer is that He exerted here the same influence that He did much later in the Garden when all His would-be captors fell before Him as dead.

"Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise". This was too much for Christ. Was not the temple the house of prayer, but also the place where God dwelt with His people? And doesn't
Israel know that Jehovah is holy, never dwelling with sinful men. He dwells in the light.

With sinful and polluted men He cannot and will not dwell. Therefore this cleansing is symbolic and prophetic of the very work Christ came to do, namely cleanse God's temple, purify His own to give them grace to dwell with God. As God's appointed Highpriest He would really cleanse God's temple.

QUESTIONS: What was the difference between the first and the second cleansing? Why isn't Scripture a history book? Can you cite other incidents of pollution of the temple, either by the people or the priests? Does it still happen today?

The Disciples's Version of the Matter. vs. 17.

These men, being acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures, see in it a fulfillment of Psalm 69. In a measure David had manifested the same zeal for the house of the Lord. Cf. also Psalm 27. 63. and 132. The purpose of this verse, however, is that John will show us how the disciples immediately recognized Jesus as the Messiah, the Great David. By the Scriptures they believe, they don't need signs as the Jews do. Truly men fit for the tremendous task unto which they are called.

No doubt, they failed to realize how all this would materialize. As yet they didn't have the faintest idea that Christ because of His zeal would be consumed by the enemies of God. So it was also with David, principally, Psalm 69:10. Nevertheless by faith they already cling to their Lord and recognize Him as such.

QUESTIONS: In which way would Christ be consumed (eaten up)? Why didn't the Pharisees recognize Christ in this action like the disciples. they also being acquainted with the Scriptures?

LESSON VIII.

"Jesus and The Temple" (John 2:18-25)

Christ's Credentials. vss. 18-21.

The commotion caused by Jesus with the cleansing of the temple and the quick report of his unheard of procedure brought the authorities down upon Him. Possibly this was a representative body of the Jews accompanied by some of the Temple police. They demand that Jesus show His credentials to them. Without them He has no right whatsoever to act as He did. Only authorized men can perform such exceptional deeds. It may also be that they fostered a faint hope of Jesus being the promised prophet of Deut. 18:18, since Christ spoke of the Temple as being His Father's house. They demand a sign. They want an unmistakable, visible sign from heaven proving Christ's authority. Then they would believe in Him. Read Matt. 12:38. John 6:30.

How strikingly Jesus answers them. Signs? Why all His miracles are signs of His power and Divinity! In the Greek they are actually called such. Are not His words sufficient? If they will not believe His words, then let them see His mighty wonders. But this is no seeking faith. It is unbelief, and unbelief receives no sign, except one, a very con-
Beacon Lights

vincing one. It is the sign of Jonas the prophet: in a certain sense Jesus expresses the same thing here in vs. 19. Destroy this temple, etc.

This seems to be a dark saying and we are inclined to criticize Jesus as being somewhat ambiguous. Why not answer these Jews in plain terms? An answer of this nature is often called a mashal, denoting a veiled and pointed saying, sometimes equal to a riddle. This riddle they can solve by further listening to Jesus and beholding His works. If Jesus had told them outright, they would only resent the telling; but since it is told in this way His words stick in their minds and secretly haunt them with their mysterious, threatening meaning. And the Jews never forgot, as is plain from the false accusations regarding this matter when He was before the Highpriest and on the cross.

Break down this temple, etc. It means that Jesus foresaw the wicked doings of the Jews in crucifying Him. And in this they will tear down their own Sanctuary. Was not Jesus the fulfillment of the large temple that stood before them? Is not that blessed covenant-fellowship of God dwelling with His people realized first of all in the incarnation? With Jesus it is God in the flesh. He is the real Temple. This Temple they will break down, but it will be their judgment and condemnation. However. He will raise it up in three days, and so be victorious and establish heavenly temple fellowship. This is the sign Jesus gives them.

QUESTIONS: In which way is the doing of Jonah a sign for the unbelieving Jews? Why didn't Jesus once and for all give these Jews a sign from heaven which they so often requested? What do the Greeks seek? I Cor. 1:22. Would signs today make more Christians, or strengthen the faith of God's saints?
The Mashal Understood, vs. 22.

The disciples at this time also fail to understand this dark saying. But by faith they cling to their Lord. And after the resurrection they remembered all the things Jesus had told them. Then they receive the key to the explanation. The thought is not that they at first disbelieved or doubted but that then their implicit faith became clear and definite. Such is always the action of faith. Though not understanding, it believes also mashals. The child of God certainly does not believe only the things he understands. Principally he will then believe in nothing, for he really understands nothing of the heavenly realities. It is all faith. And these Jews were called upon to do what the disciples did, then they would understand. But disbelief refuses.

Jesus' Reservation, vss. 23-25.

We hear no more about the authorities who demanded of Jesus His credentials. The case must have been dismissed, and was as far as the writer John is concerned. Now we read what further happened in the metropolis of the Jews. In the midst of the multitudes Christ performed many signs (not miracles as in the A. V.) The result is that many believed in His name. But it seems as if they believed only on account of the signs
or miracles, and not the word of Jesus. However, Jesus didn't become enthused with this following as ordinary men might do. These are not able to deceive Him. He remains aloof from the "many". An ordinary man would have been deceived by their first flash of "faith" and would have consequently wrecked himself by relying on it. But Jesus does not commit Himself unto them, i.e. trust in them, like He did in His own disciples.

He needed no testimony of men concerning men. In no way was He dependent upon information from others. He knew what was in man, seeing the bottom of every heart and detecting all sin and hypocrisy. He knew a Nathanael, a Nicodemus, but also the hypocritical Jews.

QUESTIONS: Did Jesus know all things? What is the difference between the Reformed and the Lutheran conception concerning the relation of Christ's two natures in re this matter? Why do you suppose John tells us about this non-committal of Jesus?

LESSON IX
"Jesus and Nicodemus"
(John 3:1-8)

Nicodemus, vss. 1, 2.

If Jesus would appear on earth today and make a grand speaking tour He would receive tremendous audiences. Millions would listen to Him. This, according to popular conception would be the thing. But would it? Would there be more believers than today? Would many believe in Him? The number would be when He was on earth. Here is the mighty Sanhedrin, totaling seventy members, the very leaders in God's Church, but only one of them is interested in the cause of the Son of God. God's cause is always small and insignificant in the eyes of the world and the so-called church. 1 Cor. 1:25-28.

Who was Nicodemus? He is fully described. His party connection (a Pharisee), his name (Nicodemus) and his official position (a ruler of the Jews). The latter must mean that he was a member of the ruling body of the Jews, namely of the Sanhedrin. This body was composed of Pharisees and Sadducees. The Pharisees belonging to it were the Scribes, hence also Nicodemus. He, therefore, was one of the rabbis, learned in the Old Testament Scriptures.

From vs. 2 two things are plain. First of all that he had heard Jesus teach but also seen some of His signs. And upon him they certainly made a tremendous impression. He is convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is sent of God and indeed is a teacher, a rabbi. Now the Jews were vitally interested in the subject of the Kingdom, about which Jesus and John the Baptist had been speaking. As Jews they were the citizens of that kingdom. Surely as Pharisees with their strict adherence to the letter of the law. Having heard Jesus on this important subject, Nicodemus needs more light.

To Jesus he goes. He is interested. This is what we like of this famous ruler. The other 69 members are indifferent, having that "I don't care" spirit. The majority is never interested in the truth.
still very small. So it was in the days when Jesus was young. They dispute and despise it, but never ask questions. The ruler goes by night, showing that already at this early stage he would be "branded" if seen by the public.

Notice his approach. Rabbi, etc. etc. Though much older, and himself a rabbi, he acknowledges Jesus, much too young for the Jewish staff, as his superior. He shows at once his respect but also his faith.

QUESTIONS: Who were the Sadducees? How do you explain that such men were the leaders in the Church? Some people doubt Nicodemus' integrity? On what grounds would you refute this? Why is it that the church is always small in number, and even despised and rejected by the "church"? Why is it so foolish to in this light speak of the Church converting the world?

Jesus Sweeping Statement, vs. 3.

Why does Nicodemus come to Jesus? Very likely to hear more about that cherished subject of the Kingdom. But like a thunder-bolt out of a clear sky: Verily, verily, etc. Ye must be born again. Throughout his life this man has considered himself to be in the Kingdom due to his nativity and works of the law. But now? Not a new and superior knowledge is essential; not new and more difficult meritorious works; not a new national or religious party connection that is better than the Pharisaic party, but an entirely new birth is necessary. His Quest for More Light, and Jesus' Reply, vss. 4-8.

We would almost expect Nicodemus to leave Jesus, a young man, coming with such radical statements. But no. It is faith that needs more light. How can these things be? To this ruler of the Jews these things are much too profound. He can think of nothing else but another physical birth.

Jesus makes plain that it must be a spiritual rebirth. In vs. 5 He also speaks of water because that is the sign of the Spirit, used with our baptism, but also then already by the Baptist. Further Christ speaks of a self-evident truth. That which is born of the flesh is always flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is always spirit. A stream never rises higher than its source.

Nicodemus evidently marvels at this. Is this too wonderful? It is marvelous, transcending all human comprehension. Who can understand the wind, its origin and its end? We can feel it, notice its effect, but no more. So is every one that is born of the Spirit. Notice that Christ does not say: so is the work of the Spirit, but so is everyone born of the Spirit. In other words, like the going of the wind can be known only by its effects, so the working of the Spirit is indeed marvelous and incomprehensible, but its effects are noticeable in the regenerated heart.

QUESTIONS: To what do you ascribe Nicodemus' question in vs. 4, to stupidity or what? Where else in Scripture is the wind spoken of as symbolic of the Spirit? What does it mean there? Is the work of the Spirit mediate or immediate?
International Situation.

During the past months the United Nations Assembly has been before our attention as it has to struggle with the problem of international relations—especially the problem of Russia. This has been true ever since the formation of the United Nations and ever since the end of the war.

Rapidly we are moving into a different world. The problems that will become ours because of the international situation will demand a different life altogether than we have even now. World events of today determine our life in the near future. It is because each nation and locality is inter-dependent; but it is also because of the council of God which has been revealed to this extent that all things must develop into one mighty force to oppose the Church.

Several statements from today’s newspaper bring to our attention the problems of the world and also some indication of the kind of change in the world that is in the offing.

Concerning the Struggle in Asia:

If the European situation can be settled to the extent that the Allied powers have control and Russia withdraws to an extent, our position is strengthened, but the conflict will only have been shoved into another phase and place. This is evident if we look at the following:

‘Niebuhr says the evident radicalism of Christians in Asia and Africa indicates ‘that the greatest triumphs of communism will be achieved in a non-European world’. . . .Tie this statement to the news last week-end from Nanking and Bombay and you have something pretty bitter to chew on. The Nanking news is that the Chiang Kai-shek government has abandoned Changchun, the Manchurian capital, after months of Communist siege. The Bombay news is that Communists have gained control of the All-India Trade Union Congress, the pioneer (and powerful)
Indian labor organization. . . In other words, while the eyes of the Western world are focussed on the conflict in Europe, the great design of Asiatic communism is approaching realization."

It does not mean necessarily, as this editor goes on to reason, that communism will ultimately dominate Asia. We might add that it therefore does not mean that communism will be the type of rule of the world power that is inevitably to be formed out of this sea of troubles. Nevertheless, it does indicate that there is much trouble ahead before there is a final world unity.—Unless, the entire world is thrown into great fear of self-destruction and at the same time into the delusion of attaining great wealth through unity.

Opinions About the Future.

A very popular opinion advanced today is that we need not fear any power with our stock of atomic bombs. The European nations seem to rely upon that too. If war should break out it could be brought to a victorious conclusion in from one to three months is the claim of some Air Force colonels.

However, here is a significant statement, that may even gain in influence and affect our economy. "Gen. H. S. Vandenberg, for the Air Forces, and Gen. Omar N. Bradley for the Army are in agreement that an atomic attack might paralyze the enemy and bring a war to a relatively swift conclusion. But they also agree that in the event of failure it is essential to plan for a war that might last 10 years or even, as Bradley said, 30 years."

"They also know, as does anyone with the slightest imagination or understanding, that a total war in the atomic age must be total—lasting many years, which would utterly transform the American economy and in all probability the American political system. We would almost be forced to accept a totalitarian pattern."

Civilian defense planners in the Pentagon are completing a plan which would mean the regimentation of almost every phase of economic life with the outbreak of war, and that would be the beginning."

Very Significant.

For the believer this is almost assumed. The only question for us is, how soon will the signs of the end definitely appear. If they do not immediately appear we should especially be warned that a time of peace and prosperity also belongs to the coming of the end. Our hope for the future is not on the earthly level. According to faith alone we can contemplate the news with confidence and with all joy.
Truth vs. Error

Rev. J. Howerzyl — Oskaloosa, Iowa

John and Jack were rather good friends even though they did go to different churches. John belonged to the Protestant Reformed Church and Jack to the Christian Reformed Church. And even though they were good friends this quite often led to arguments. In fact, they often continued one argument from one noon-hour to the next. Oh, yes, I forgot to tell you that they worked in the same factory.

During the lunch hour of one particularly pleasant day as they were sitting outside in the sun, Jack suddenly remarked, "We just had a letter from my Uncle Neal who is an elder in the Christian Reformed Church in Geheim and is he ever burned up."

"Why, what's the matter?" asked John immediately.

"Well...I don't really like to say, because you aren't going to like it, but I've been thinking about it ever since his letter came. He writes that one of your Home Missionaries came to their town a month or so ago and began to tell the people there that they should organize a Protestant Reformed Church. That the Christian Reformed Church isn't good enough anymore. That since 1921 she doesn't preach the whole gospel any more and all kinds of that funny stuff. He wrote that if you people feel that you have to do mission work why don't you go to the heathen? After all, there are plenty of churches in Geheim, there is a Christian Reformed, a Baptist, a Lutheran, a Methodist, a Roman Catholic—certainly there are plenty to take care of the people there."

John tried to interrupt, "Well..." but there was no stopping Jack, and he continued. "What especially burned my uncle up was the fact that every Christian Reformed family received a letter from your missionary. Why don't you go to those who have no church connections or to the heathen, why must you always pick on us, aren't we a Christian church? But my uncle says he supposed we can't expect anything different from a church that doesn't believe in foreign missions. But I just can't imagine a church that is always trying to tear down other churches and that doesn't believe in foreign missions. Why Jesus Himself says that we have to preach the gospel to other lands."

John was rather flabbergasted and overwhelmed at this outburst which was the farthest from his thoughts at the moment—he had been thinking of the ball-game and was about to ask Jack to go with him that night. All he could do at the moment was to stammer,
"Well, ah. . . , I don't know, but, ah, I guess there must be a reason for it. And I know that we believe in foreign missions because our minister prayed only last week that God would open the way for us in His own time so we can enter into that phase of mission activity,"

"Well," retorted Jack quickly, "why don't you send your missionaries to China or India or Japan or South America instead of to Geheim if you believe in foreign missions?"

Again Jack was stuck but he began, "Well, there must be a reason why they are in Geheim. I remember dad saying they were going there but I don't remember why they were going. He probably would know because he's a member of the consistory that has control over the missionaries. But I don't know why they went there myself."

"Yes." retorted Jack, "they remind me of vultures and birds of prey. As soon as they hear of a little trouble in a Christian Reformed Church they flock over there to help make the trouble worse, support the trouble-makers, and see if they can't break down the Christian Reformed Church. That's what they're doing in Geheim, or so my uncle says."

Again on the defensive John mumbled, "Well, there must be a reason," and then, fortunately, the whistle blew, signalling them back to work. John set out immediately for his bench, not that he was usually so eager to get back to work, but he didn't like to argue with Jack when he felt that he couldn't hold up his end, and he left saying to himself, "Well, I'll ask dad about it tonight and tomorrow I'll tell Jack what the score is."

And he did. In fact, the ball-game was forgotten and John and his dad spent almost the whole evening talking the matter over, looking up and discussing texts and threshing over the entire matter, until John was quite sure he could defend himself.

The next day it was John that brought up the matter again at the noon hour get-together. Jack began by asking him where he had been and why he had missed the ball-game and began describing what seemed to have been a thrilling game. But John brushed all this aside and began, "I've been thinking about what you said yesterday and I believe I can put you straight on it. . . ."

NOTE: Would you like to answer Jack? You may do so by addressing your answer to:

Rev. J. Howerzyl
515 Third Avenue, E.
Oskaloosa, Iowa.

The best answers will be worked into the published answer, and if there are any considered sufficiently complete they will be published as John's answer. Can you defend yourself, your church, the truth?
The Glory of God - And Politics

Albert Heemstra — Grand Rapids, Michigan

We have just reached the end of another political campaign. The votes have been counted; the result is history. Those of us who voted can now sit back and reflect on our action. Our entire nation seems very much concerned about whom is chosen to administer its public affairs. We too are interested.

There is an old saying that a man's politics and his religion are his own business. To the Christian his politics are a part of his religion. For this reason our societies could possibly spend a profitable evening or two on this subject, especially as it is centered in the moot question: Can We Glorify God In Politics?

The discussion outline which follows has been separated into three parts to serve as a medium through which we might find the answer. Here again we must bear in mind the two fundamental truths which were treated last month in the introductory outline:

1. That through the affairs of men and nations God shows His power, His wisdom, His wrath, His mercy, etc.

2. That we as children of God must glorify Him in all things.

PART 1.

Participation in Local Political and Civic Affairs:

Very much of the political life of a nation and its people are the community organizations which seek to change local social and political conditions. In a democracy, they are the heart strings, the grass roots, out of which all other self-rule processes have developed. Today they are, in most instances, directed by worldly interests, seeking an end outside of the glory of God. Consider the following:

a. In what way do the responsibilities of our system of government (that of self-rule) evolve upon the Christian citizen?

b. Would membership in any existing political party offer opportunity for witnessing to the truth.

c. Can you glorify God through your membership in the Chamber of Commerce; the local chapter of the Red Cross; the Community Chest; the Neighborhood
Improvement Association? By contributing funds to these organizations?

d. Can any action which is accomplished by association with the wicked be God-glorifying?

e. Would you advocate the organization of a Chr. Voters League?

PART II.

Voting:

Here we must review not only the process of selecting candidates for office but such issues as prohibition, women's suffrage, and taxation. Also our position regarding other possible revisions in existing Federal, State and Local Statutes.

a. As a Christian is it your duty, your right or your privilege to vote?

b. Do you select a man for public office in the same manner as you would a lawyer or mechanic?

c. When choosing between two worldly candidates, what basis should determine your vote?

d. Can one glorify God by choosing the lesser of two evils?

e. How does God use the wicked men in authority over us to glorify Himself?

f. In what way could your vote be a testimony and a witness for the truth?

PART III.

Politics As a Career:

By definition a politician is one who seeks or holds a public office. For our discussion it would be well to also include in this definition all those who seek to influence legislation favorable to one group or another (lobbyists). Also all those who attempt to influence the opinion of the citizenry relative to some social or moral question (Propagandists for the amending of existing laws regarding alcoholic beverages, labor unions, child labor, and divorce).

a. Do you consider the administration of public affairs as legitimate an occupation as that of any other acceptable field of endeavor?

c. Could you identify yourself with and work for the ideals of any of the national political parties as they exist today without compromising your principles?

b. Could you seek office as an independent candidate?

d. Can you conceive of any instance in which it would be possible for the Christian and the non-Christian to join forces to affect a God-glorifying result?

e. In view of our system of self-rule under the Constitution, would you advocate the organization of a Christian Political Party to place its own candidates in office to rule over us?
Our Federation President Writes Concerning:

Our 1949 Convention

As you already know, it was decided at our last Convention to have our 1949 Convention at Manhattan, Montana. Your Federation Board has received an invitation from our Manhattan society to hold our 1949 Convention in their fair state, providing they have the privilege of setting the date most convenient to them. The date they have set is July 12-18. After considerable discussion at our Board meeting it was decided to place this invitation before our societies for their deliberation and discussion, and take into account the following considerations:

First: That it would indeed be a fine gesture of Christian fellowship if we as a Federation would accept Manhattan's invitation. What an inspiration, and what a joy it would be for this group of Young people, who form an outpost of our Protestant Reformed Churches, to be hosts to our Federation. We realize that a far more limited number than ordinarily attend our Convention would be able to take advantage of this opportunity, but we should also consider that we, who live so close to the center of our Churches, have so many privileges and advantages which those who live at the periphery of our denomination do not have.

Second: The Federation Board feels that each society, and every individual attending the Convention should contribute something of spiritual value, so that all may be spiritually enriched. For only then would we feel justified in undertaking such a great venture. Unto that end daily devotional periods will be planned, both while we are en route, and during our stay in Manhattan.

Third: That the most economical method of transportation would be by Greyhound Bus, leaving early on Thursday, July 7, and returning on Saturday, July 16. This schedule would allow us to spend a Sunday in Manhattan, have two days for Convention, and also give us time to see the beauties of Montana's mountains, and Yellowstone National Park.

Fourth: The approximate cost for the round trip will be $50.00; this does not include the cost of meals en route and other incidentals.

Fifth: There must be a minimum of 80 delegates and visitors from Michigan and the Illinois area to make a Convention in Manhattan possible. The delegates will (cont. on page 32)
ROOT OUT OF DRY GROUND.

by Argye M. Briggs.

Published by Eerdmans Publishing Co.,
Grand Rapids, Michigan. — Price $3.00.

This novel won first place in the
$5,000 Christian Fiction Contest
sponsored by Eerdmans Publishing Company.

The story tells of Jansie Sanders,
hunch-backed, crippled, and ugly,
who lives with a shiftless mother
and step-father and two half-brothers in a crude shanty at the outskirts of Collin's Texas. When
Chris is left, orphaned, at the Sanders' home, Jansie cares for her. She sees to it that Chris goes to
school. even though she often does
not have money for a tablet or pencil. During the flu epidemic
after the first World War Jansie's
mother dies, and she has the full responsibility of the family. Her
half-brother, Joe, who has gotten in with a rowdy gang, worries her,
but she feels incapable of dragging him out of his troubles.

Chris meanwhile goes to high school and graduates as valedic-
torian. Chris has a scholarship to
Holden College and by leasing their
property to oil prospectors, Jansie helps pay her expenses, and Chris
goes to college. Jansie is troubled
because she can't read, and thus
won't be able to read Chris' letters
while she is at college. But the
preacher, Charles Robertson, offers to tutor her, and at thirty-five
she learns to read.

Chris' year at college is a hard one for her, mixed with poverty,
hard work, and falling in love. She
comes back to Jansie for the summer, and finally finds a place to
teach in the fall. She learns to like
teaching, and learns many lessons
herself as she is teaching the children.

This truly is a fine story. Although modern, it is not vulgar. It
is packed with interest from start
to finish. The characters become
alive, especially Jansie, in her struggle with poverty and her own
ugliness. The story, too, is expertly written, both as to style and
vocabulary.
As was said, it won the Christian fiction contest prize. But it seems to me the judges were looking more for a good story than for a good Christian story. True, it is tinged with religion, for Jansie’s aim was to “bring up Chris right” and they both “got religion”. Later, when Chris was disappointed in her love affair, Jansie comforted her by saying that her Saviour could help: “He’s already done all there is to do, on the cross’, Jansie said simply. ‘All you can do is to accept what He’s done. He took the punishment Himself.”

Written in that vein throughout, the book certainly is not Calvinistic, but Arminian. Even the Christianity of the two girls is not strongly emphasized and it seems a weak religion that helps in time of trouble. The book deals more with social problems, such as intense poverty, class distinction, etc.

If we read the book with all this in mind, we can enjoy it as an excellent story.

Perhaps some day someone should give us a good definition of Christian fiction.

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Music
Jeanette Stellinga — Doon, Iowa

Music, I think, has a place in almost all of our lives although not often discussed. Music brings joy to many.

We, as Christian youth, should not have the same music as the world. We should show that we are a different people by our music as well as in other ways, such as refraining from attending worldly places of entertainment.

We have good music and bad music as well as other things. Good music, such as the Dutch psalms for the older people brings joy and comfort to many. One evening as I went to a dressmaker who was taking care of her aged parents I was filled with astonishment. The old father was sitting in his chair, large spectacles on so that he might yet see those beautiful words of the psalm and sing them to the praise and glory of God. His voice shook as he reverently sang and the old mother listened with misty eyes as father sang. It made me realize how close these two old faithful servants of God were and the peace they had with their Lord through this music.

Of course, we as young people,
do not often sing Dutch psalms, but we can glorify our Maker by singing our Psalter numbers.

Not only singing but playing instruments as well is a beautiful way of expressing reverence thru music. If one hears a pipe organ with its swelling notes sound forth a beautiful hymn, it makes one listen in awe. We may use our pianos, violins, and other instruments in the same way.

Music has a place in the home. In some homes music may be part of the family worship. What could be nicer than father, mother, sons and daughters gathering around the piano in the evening and lifting their voices in communion with the Lord? Also on Sunday instead of making ourselves guilty of gossip and worldliness it would be better to have a family music hour.

Music has a place in the school. Especially in our christian schools after the morning prayer, the children all unite in singing praises to God.

Music has a place in the church. It adds much to the services. Here the congregation as the body of Christ unites to sing a new song to Jehovah for the wonders He has wrought.

Music is also in the world. It is our duty, as a Christian, to flee from the temptations of worldliness. The radio and also the "Juke Box" help to promote ungodly music. The "Juke Box" is most popular and is found in all eating places. If we find it necessary to eat in one of these places we certainly should refrain from using our money for such wicked devices. The radio cannot be condemned, but we should listen only to the music that a child of God should hear.

To promote music, a plan we could adopt in our churches, would be to have hymn-sings. This shows true christian fellowship. In our congregation we have been having an evening of singing psalter numbers once a month, going from one home to another. This provides a time for those who like to sing, and an opportunity to do so.

Let us all use our talent and

Praise God from Whom all blessings flow
Praise Him ye creatures here below:
Praise Him above ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
in music as well as in speech.

"I always loved music: who has skill in this art is of a good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools. A schoolmaster ought to have skill in music, or I would not regard him: neither should we ordain young men as preachers, unless they have been well exercised in music."

—MARTIN LUTHER.
Semi-Formal

The following letter came to the undersigned:

Dear Schuiler:

A question presented itself as a result of our last society meeting. At this meeting the Young Ladies' Society was asked by our Young Men's Society if we would like our annual banquet to be semi-formal.

The question is: — Would the enacting of such a request be advisable or would it be a stepping-stone towards modernism and towards emphasis on external beauty?

It is the purpose of the banquet to commemorate the spiritual blessings which we as young people have enjoyed during the past society year.

We will be eagerly awaiting your answer in "Beacon Lights".

Sincerely yours,
J. D. & F. D.

We might begin by stating that there are occasions when formal dress is fitting and appropriate. Although as far as the undersigned is concerned, I confess that I am no great lover of formality. And I am also afraid that we copy the world but all too often, also in our outward dress and appearance. I am not taking the position now that it is sin to make the annual banquet semi-formal. After all, sin is not just in a dress or outward appearance. However, the very fact that we would make such an occasion semi-formal would impress me as manifesting a certain leaning and tendency. A tendency which definitely purposes to emphasize that which is outward. And naturally, it detracts from the real purpose as circumscribed in the above letter. Hence, my advice is: "Don't start with such an innovation." Is it necessary for us to copy the world? How much nicer, it seems to me, if we keep such occasions as informal as is in harmony with propriety.

Of course, we all like to come to a banquet neatly dressed. A banquet is a feast and we don't dress for a feast as though we were going to an auction-sale on a farm. For the rest, let us be as informal as possible. Informality at such occasions lends to more intimacy and closer fellowship. And if it is our purpose to commemorate the spiritual blessings which we as young people have enjoyed during the past Society year, let us by all means emphasize this. And we can't do that by semi-formals, by trying to out-dress each other, or by emphasizing outward beauty. The idea of making our banquet semi-formal makes it more stiff
and stilted, has a tendency to make it a dress parade. We don’t want anything like that, do we? What we want is a nice, informal, social gathering of spiritual fellowship with one another. Such a gathering with such a purpose in mind does not need semi-formality, in fact. that would do more harm than good. Before we start with such an innovation we better read over carefully and ponder about what Peter has to say about the wives and their adorning. A word which also our young ladies might well take into consideration. Says Peter: “Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold. or of putting on of apparel: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.” (I Peter 3:1-4).

And let our young men by all means remember what Solomon, what the Holy Spirit, has to say about an excellent woman. “Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.” (Proverbs 31:30).

Schuiler.

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**OUR 1949 CONVENTION**

(cont. from page 27)

also be expected to pay for their own transportation with a possible discount of 10 or 20 percent.

May we hear from our Societies in re this matter as soon as possible. Your Board must act upon your reactions to this invitation of Manhattan. Send your opinions and comments to Beacon Lights, 706 Franklin St., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

P.S. Our members in the West could best arrange for their own transportation in case our convention is held in Montana.

Rev. Bernard Kok.
President.

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**DONATIONS**

Singspiration (4th Church) $41.52
Singspiration (Creston Church) 26.80
Holland Convention Committee 50.00
South Holland Ladies Society 10.00
Oak Lawn Priscilla Society 5.00
Oak Lawn Y. P. Society 8.00
N. Yonker (Grand Haven) 2.00
H. Timmer 3.50
H. Hoogewind 3.50
Seymour Beiboer 2.00
Mrs. F. Blaauw 1.00
Wm. Kooienga 3.50
Miss Jean Dertien 3.50
B. Woudenber 2.00
Miscellaneous 3.50
An Old Time Riddle

Adam, God made out of dust. 
But thought it best to make me first; 
So I was made before the man, 
To answer God's most holy plan.

My body God did make complete, 
But without arms or legs or feet; 
My ways and acts He did control, 
But to my body gave no soul.

A living being I became, 
And Adam gave to me my name; 
I from his presence then withdrew, 
And more of Adam never knew.

I did my Maker's law obey, 
Nor from it ever went astray; 
Thousands of miles I go in fear, 
But seldom on the earth appear.

For purpose wise which God did see, 
He put a living soul in me; 
A soul from me my God did claim, 
And took from me that soul again.

And when from me the soul had fled, 
I was the same as when first made; 
And without hands or feet or soul 
I travel on from pole to pole.

I labor hard by day and night; 
To fallen man I give great light; 
Thousands of people young and old, 
Will by my death great light behold.

Nor right nor wrong can I conceive, 
The Scriptures I cannot believe: 
Although my name therein is found, 
They are to me an empty sound.

No fear of death doth trouble me 
Real happiness I ne'er shall see: 
To heaven I shall never go, 
Or to the grave or hell below.

Now when these lines you slowly read, 
Go search your Bible with all speed; 
For my name's recorded there. 
I honestly to you declare.

(If you think you know the answer to this riddle, send it in to Beacon Lights, 706 Franklin St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan. If you guess right, your name and also the correct answer will be published in the next issue.)
Mr. John Zandstra, Jr.
182nd St.
South Holland, Ill.