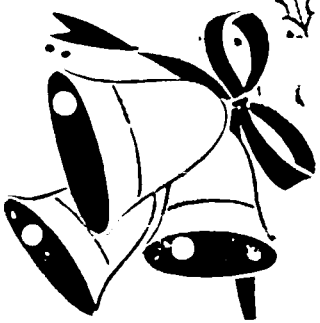
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

BEST *Holiday* WISHES

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



JANUARY - 1949

BEACON LIGHTS

Beacon Lights is published Monthly except July and September.

Entered as Second Class Mail at Grand Rapids, Michigan.

(Subscription Price $1.50 Per Year)

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

All matters relative to contents should be sent to: Miss Alice Reitsma, 706 Franklin St., S.E., Grand Rapids 7, Michigan.

All subscribers outside of Grand Rapids are asked to send their subscription dues to Miss Winifred De Vries, 354 Diamond Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

All subscribers living in Grand Rapids are asked to send their subscription dues to Thelma Jonker, 1210 Wealthy St., S. E., Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

Beacon Lights Staff

Editor-in-chief ..... Homer G. Kuiper
Assistant Editor ..... Alice Reitsma
Business Manager ..... Winifred De Vries
Associate Business Manager ..... Thelma Jonker
Photography Editor ..... Ted Looienga

Contributors

Editorials ..... Homer G. Kuiper
Christian Living ..... Rev. R. Veldman
Bible Outlines ..... Rev. J. Blankespoor
Current Comments ..... Rev. L. Doezema
Truth vs. Error ..... Rev. J. Howerzyl
Nature Study ..... Clarence De Boer
Book Review ..... Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema and Mrs. M. Kroondyke

Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME IX. JANUARY — 1949 NUMBER 4

A Conscientious New Year

HARRY J. BLOEM — GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

Once more we have been brought to the beginning of a new year, and as this time of the year comes nigh we begin to think of: What shall we resolve to do this year? And I ask you this question, dear reader. Let us look and see what the word *Resolve* or *Resolution* means, literally, as we use it in everyday life. Our dictionary tells us that a resolution is an act of deciding or determining upon something that is outstanding.

We can make numerous resolutions which although we mean well with, end up with little value to us, for we take no conscientious effort to uphold them throughout the whole year. For as we sometimes say as students: I am going to resolve to study my lessons every day, or as society members of our young people's society resolve to make better preparation for the lessons discussed and hope to take an active interest in our societies. These resolutions, though they are mighty in boast, usually fade away and we forget our resolutions that were made in all earnestness at the beginning of the year. We must and should at our age realize the importance of these resolutions and should carry them in our minds, making sure we hold fast to the truths and beliefs we think are right, for we are held accountable for them, even when we just set out to do them. Let us make these resolutions in the strength of our covenant God and ask Him for guidance in expediting them in our life.

I quote Exodus 40:2: "On the first day of the first month shalt thou set up the tabernacle." As the new year begins now, also you and I might safely rear our tabernacles in the shape of resolutions, taken in the fear of that same covenant God. Also in II Chronicles 29:17 we read: "Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify". We may also begin our new year in this way. Let us make a self-inspection, remembering our faults and weaknesses and try to live conscientiously in better service to Him. A resolution of this kind lived up to and done in the strength of our God would mean to have a hearty desire at

all times to live closer to our covenant God, to begin the year with determination to abandon whatever appears sinful, for the law of God demands this of us. If the evil course tries to solicit us in its way, let it plead in vain. Our Saviour says: "If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out and cast it from thee: for it is better for thee that one of thy members perish, and not thy whole body be cast into hell."

We might begin the year with a growing concern to be useful. Look at our conditions, our resources, our opportunities in the field of the glorification of our God. How can we glorify God and promote the welfare of our fellow creatures? Are there not missionaries to support? Are there no poor to relieve? No widows and fatherless to visit? Let us deal faithfully with our own hearts, not comparing ourselves with others. It is your and my duty to seek these things, for it is these things that we will do in our hearty consecration to the things of the kingdom.

Let us begin the year with more Christian conduct in the arrangement of our affairs. God has said, let everything be done decently and in order. Much comfort will be derived from regularity in our devotions, and our calling, and our piety will be aided. And more Christian conduct in the fear and respect of the name of our Lord, for in this day of fast living it is rapidly becoming a part of everyday life. Men and women alike have become accustomed to the fast and easy life the world today offers. The stand of a Christian is a difficult one already. We must resolve to live a closer life dedicated to the fear of the Lord, casting off the world; to live in closer communion with our God through prayer and the reading of the Holy Word the Lord has given us.

And let us finally resolve to redeem our time. In this day and age of fast living, time is the all important factor, on it our life depends. It is an all important time, upon every instant eternity depends. It will not allow of our trifling away any of its moments. Gather up the fragments that nothing be lost. Looking at ourselves do we not find that some moments could be spent in more conscientious learning of the things that pertain to the kingdom of God. Do we realize that the time is close at hand and we live with many shortcomings.

Let us also remember that it is not of ourselves that we can strive to do these things. It must be a growing concern of ours that we put our trust in our heavenly Father, for it is through Him that we can do them. Let us prayerfully go to God's throne of grace and ask Him to guide us through this coming year.

The Point Of No Return

This term is an expression that originated during the course of the recent war, and it was used by pilots and navigators of our Air Forces. The planes of this nation, flying many war missions over vast stretches of ocean on various parts of this globe, had to be piloted in such a manner that the gasoline supply had to be conserved and hoarded throughout the flight of the plane. Should a pilot fail to balance his gasoline reserve against the distance his plane must travel before reaching its destination, the consequences were often disastrous. For that reason, a navigator usually assisted the pilot in determining his whereabouts and the maps usually carried a line or mark designated as "the point of no return". In event something happened to the plane, it might return to its point of origin provided that it had not traveled beyond "the point of no return" but once past "the point of no return" there was no choice but to continue on the course to the destination.

In a certain sense that is also true of us as we live our lives in this world. At this time of the year as we enter the new year we can say that in a sense we have crossed "the point of no return". For us there is no alternative. We must move on in life. The past is irretrievably lost to us. It is only a memory of things which we have said and done, a memory of things which we might have done differently or of things we should not have done at all. All these things lie behind us, behind "the point of no return".

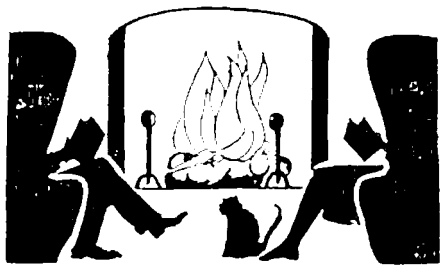
We have passed beyond "the point of no return". We are therefore compelled to go ahead. With no alternative, we must proceed on to the destination.

Is there cause for alarm? Certainly not. As we enter 1949 we are not entering a new year controlled by blind forces and cruel fate. We are entering another "year of our Lord". We see the new year as the unfolding of the plans and counsel of God. The things we shall see are indeed the exact handiwork of God and although the future is characterized by the mounting clouds of the judgments of God upon the sins of the

(cont. on page 7)

Christian Living. . .

REV. R. VELDMAN
Grand Rapids, Mich.



JESUS IS COMING

Another year has come and gone, with amazing swiftness. Really, how brief is life.

Only a few more days, a few more hours, and again it will be New Year's Eve. The clocks and sirens all over the world will broadcast to earth's inhabitants that they are crossing the threshold of another year—1948 gone forever—1949 at the door.

What a solemn occasion! How well that we pause a moment to reflect and to ask ourselves some pertinent questions. What does it all mean? And where are we going?

Can you imagine, Christian friends, how it is possible for the world to spend New Year's Eve as it does? While God's people gather together in God's house of prayer for a moment of quiet devotion and contemplation, the ungodly make their transition from the old to the new in beerhouses and nightclubs and ballrooms. (One difference is, that while churches are often shamefully empty, they have to make their reservations weeks in advance). While God's people pray, confess their sins, sing the songs of Zion and gather around the Word of God, the children of this world drink and dance and indulge in such unbridled carnality and silliness that it takes them days to come back to their senses. Never does the world reveal its folly more strikingly than on New Year's Eve.

Why? Are they ignorant of the true facts? Don't they know that the end of all things is at hand? Certainly they do! They know only too well that they are not here to stay. But they don't like the reality that each New Year's Eve anew proclaims. They detest the very thought of the end, death and grave, judgment and eternity. They want to forget, come what may, about these things. Comes New Year's Eve, they seek to drink and dance and laugh and sing these horrid thoughts from their minds. Comes the first day of another year, they seek to make themselves believe that a long life lies ahead

and their houses shall stand for aye.

With God's people it is different. Before they enter upon another year they pause a moment to catch their breath and to reflect. On what? On the year that has gone by, to be sure; the blessings they received; the sins whereof they made themselves guilty; the heart-aches and pains and disappointments that were their portion. However, they do more than that. They also look ahead—ahead to the end of all things, the appearance of the Lord Jesus and the final judgment. They are mindful of the words of the Lord Himself, "Behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be."

* * * *

Jesus is coming, personally, visibly, in great power and majesty, to raise all the dead, to judge all men, and to make all things new. That is what we should be thinking about on New Year's Eve.

He is coming soon,—who knows how soon? Surely the signs of the times are becoming more and more pronounced. Certain things must still happen before the end of this world can come. All the elect must be gathered. The wicked world must fill the measure of her iniquity. The man of sin, the Antichrist, must have his day, brief but terrible. Also, the great tribulation is yet to come. However, who knows how soon all these things can be fulfilled! Who can say how many elect are still to be gathered? The measure of the world's iniquity seems to be filling rapidly. The antichristian world-power appears to be taking shape before our very eyes. The great tribulation for the Church of Jesus Christ can come overnight. As we see things today, it may well be in our own time, young people, that Jesus comes again. Who knows?

Jesus is coming quickly,—very quickly. He Himself tells us so: "Behold, I come quickly." He is not loitering on the way. He, too, is eager for the end of all things. He wants His people with Him in heaven. On the other hand, He is intensely eager for the final and complete destruction of all the powers of darkness. He will not stay away one day, one hour longer than absolutely necessary.

And remember, Jesus is coming to judge! Everyone! Everything! In perfect righteousness! My every thought, word, deed, desire, motive, inclination! My life in the home and on the street, in school or at work! My attitude toward my parents and friends, my brothers and sisters! My attitude and conduct toward the world! Did I love the world or hate it? It's all in God's book in large, bold type. My attitude and conduct toward the church, the preaching of the

Word, catechism and society! Did I attend faithfully and gladly? Did I get out of these things what I should have? Was I interested or indifferent? Don't be deceived, the past is not gone. We often say: gone but not forgotten. This time it will have to be: Forgotten, perhaps,—but not gone. In the last day God will take this book out of His files and we shall see our entire lives as we never saw them before. And He will judge, Who judges righteously and Who is too pure of eyes that He should condone even one solitary sin.

These are the things we should be thinking about on New Year's Eve.

* * * *

What a terrible day that will be for the natural man. God, through Christ as the glorified Mediator, will do the judging, and His judgment will be according to truth.

Then, what will the ungodly have to fall back on? Then let them boast of their common grace and the good that sinners do. God will destroy them forever whose every work is enmity against God. Then they shall cry for the mountains to fall on them and the hills to cover them, but, of course,—they won't. There will be no escape from the face of Him that sitteth upon that throne.

* * * *

However, what about us? Can we stand in that judgment? If God will reward OUR works with HIS reward, what will become of us?

Review your past, also the year 1948! Even the little you can recall. Are you satisfied? Isn't it a mess? Doesn't it fill your soul with a terrible fear just to think of it? Isn't this last year only more than enough to damn you forever? Any one week? Any single moment? Weren't all our days just filled with sin? Even our very best accomplishments, when seen in the light of the truth, what were they? But there is no need of going on. We know! Others may not know about the great majority of our sins. We're happy about that. But God knows them all,—knows them down to their deepest root and motive. Strange that we don't think about these things more than we do. Strange that we worry so much about what men might know and so little about what God knows.

Friends, if God rewards all those works according to merit, how shall we escape? That's exactly it,—we shan't. Not if there is no more to be said. Our best works, Bible study, Scripture reading, preaching, prayers, singing, etc., were polluted with sin. What could be more proper on this occasion therefore, than to humble ourselves before God in dust and ashes, and pray with all our hearts: Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner! Re-

ward according to our works could only mean, that we too shall be cast out with all the rest of the "dogs and sorcerers and whoremongers and murderers and idolaters and those that love the lie."

We thank our God that this is not the end of the story. True, in ourselves there is no hope. However, there is a Saviour Who died for me and rose again and with Whom I am one by a true and living faith. That faith we confess, do we not? That's part of our Christian living. By that faith I know, that His death is my death, so that all MY works are forgiven in Him and therefore gone forever: that His righteousness is my righteousness so that all HIS works have become mine. In other words MY works are gone, which merit only death; HIS works are mine, which merit only life. Thus, and thus alone, all is well. Thus God alone, in Christ, receives all the glory. Thus we can rejoice in the wonderful grace of God that saved us from the frightful judgment to come. In that faith we can say, in all humility and fear, but with blessed confidence and joy: "It is well, it is well with my soul."

In that faith we unite our voices with those of the church of all ages, be it with fear and trembling oftentimes, in that prayer of all the saints:

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

THE POINT OF NO RETURN

(cont. from page 3)

world, rest assured that you and I, if we live by faith, shall be delivered through all those judgments to the perfection of everlasting life.

For us then, as we make our course through this world, passing "the point of no return" there is no cause for anxiety. We are reminded of the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 8:31. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" The promise of God is eternally sure and at this New Year Season we point you to Him as the source of all joy, peace and satisfaction.

May God bless you in the New Year. H. G. K.

— DONATIONS —

BEACON LIGHTS FUND

Gerrit Lubbers (Hudsonville)	$ 3.50
Henry Holstege (Hudsonville)	3.50
Jake L. Schut (Hudsonville)	1.50
Ladies Aid Society (Fuller)	33.00
Priscilla Society (Fuller)	10.00
John Schaap (G. R.)	1.00
F. Sytsma (G. R.)	3.50
Peter Reitsma (G. R.)	3.50
Miss Gertrude Timmer (G. R.)	3.50
Miscellaneous	1.65

All donations are very much appreciated. Mail contributions to Miss Winifred De Vries, 354 Diamond, S. E., Grand Rapids.

About Our Work In Canada

REV. H. DE WOLF — GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

That people are basically all alike and that no matter where one goes, he meets the same kind of people that he meets at home, is a fact which undoubtedly most of us have discovered long ago. That was also our experience when we were in Canada; we met a good many people there and found that no matter where you go you find that "people are people". As far as our work was concerned, it meant that we met with especially two kinds of people; those who were interested in what we had to say and those who were not. And usually it did not take long to find out to which group a certain individual belonged. In respect to the first group there are especially two kinds. On the one hand, there are those who are quite liberal and "broadminded", who do not care to concern themselves with any "fine points" of difference but assume that there are good people in every church, so that it doesn't make much difference to which church one belongs. On the other hand there are those who are very "narrow" and bigoted beyond all hope, who because of personal or ecclesiastical prepossessions would not even dare to consider that their particular church could possibly be wrong in regard to any particular view. It stands to reason that when we came into contact with people like that, although we were cordially received by them, we nevertheless actually stood before a "closed door" as far as our real purpose was concerned. I suppose most of us have met people like that and we know therefore how little can be done with them simply because they permit others to do all their thinking for them and take no real, personal interest in the knowledge of the truth.

However, there were also some who were not merely interested in what we had to say but were willing to talk about the matter, desirous to know more and also deeply concerned about those things that concern the Church and the truth as it is confessed by her. We could be sure, when we contacted people like that, that our literature, which we left with them, would be read and that on our next visit there would be questions to be answered and problems to be discussed. And that meant that a beginning had been made. If only one can get the people to listen to him and to talk about the issues that are involved and to take a personal interest in the matter, he has gained a whole lot. It is a sad fact, but nevertheless true, which we have

discovered in the past and are finding to be true at present, that the members of the church which cast us out simply are not interested. That simply means that we have no field. By a "field" I mean a place where we can settle and work with some definite prospect of positive fruit.

In this respect, we believe that Canada offers us a broad field.

We have been able to contact only comparatively few of the immigrants because we had to limit our efforts to a few localities, both because of the time allotted us and because we believed that the only way to determine whether there was enough interest to warrant continued and permanent labor was to concentrate our attention on a few localities. The results were encouraging. Thus we felt that the Lord had given us an "open door" in more than one place. And I am sure that anyone else in our position would have felt the same about it. How could anyone feel otherwise when people not only expressed their desire to hear our preaching but on their own initiative made the necessary arrangements and willingly opened their homes in order that a service might be held? Not only that, but after they heard the preaching they desired that we would preach for them again.

Of course this does not mean that all these people were in perfect agreement with everything we said. We did not expect that. But the fact remains that they were keenly interested in what we had to say and desired to hear more. And that means that they did find much with which they agreed and that they are willing to be instructed on the basis of the Word of God. Moreover we found that we could discuss those points on which we did not see eye to eye. In this way we had opportunity to defend our views and to maintain them overagainst all contrary opinions. When that is the case it can only mean that there is work to be done.

Just what positive fruit our labors will have in Canada, we can confidently leave with the Lord. We certainly must not expect that we shall be able to organize churches where ever we go. But that the possibility of establishing churches there actually exists, we are confident. And we rejoice in the prospect that our truth will be confessed, maintained and propagated also in Canada. Pray that the Lord will make that possible for us.

Contributions. . . .

NEW YEAR

ALBERTA DE KONING
Oskaloosa, Iowa

The old year is past the new year has started. As we start our journey in this New Year let us take the Bible as our guide-book. For it is the only guide-book for our pilgrim journey here below. Let us remember this as we start this New year in all we do. If we make resolutions let us be sure they do not concern things of the earth. But first of all that it concerns God's Kingdom and its righteousness. For, let us remember the old year is past and we have entered into a new year. So we must remember again we are brought one year closer to the judgment day.

For the earthly things it is a year like unto the one gone before. Again the crops will be sown and harvested. Let us draw to our attention the text in Psalm 119:105: "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path". Let us not refuse this light, for the Word of God is our only light. Some enter this new year with joy and happiness as it seems to man's natural eye all is prosperity, there is nothing that can go wrong. They have plenty of earthly riches. To others the future is not so bright. For them there seems to be no way out. But after all these earthly riches do not profit us if we reject the Word of God. Do we not read that God prospered the wicked for the day of judgment. For if those for whom the future is not so bright have the Word of God as their light and hope, that is after all much better.

For also in Israel when they prospered they forgot God. Then when they were afflicted they turned again to God. So it is also with us, for after all we are still of the flesh. Let us not think that we are better than the Israelites.

So let us at the beginning of this New Year resolve to study the Bible more and also to be more faithful in preparing ourselves for catechism classes, society and church services. These are all means of revealing the light of the Word of God to us. How can we expect to know and have this light if we do not care to study the Word of God. If we from the depths of our heart wish to seek the light of the Word of God. Then we will no more say we did not have any time because of our earthly work. For then our earthly work and pleasure will no more hold first place. So in this New Year let us strive with all our heart to seek God's Kingdom and its righteousness first, trusting that all else shall be added unto us.

Few know what New Year really means. These holidays have gone far aside from their true meaning, they have become days of worldly pleasures. The Christians, the true believers are the only ones who can celebrate the New Year properly. Whether they enter the New year with health or in sickness,

with riches or in poverty, makes no difference, for they know that they are entering the New Year with God who will care for us in whatever circumstances we may find ourselves. For we are not our own, we are the sole property of God. Let us remember as we start this New Year that God is our governor, He rules our whole life whatever it may be. Let us carefully examine ourselves whether God governs our life. And that we dedicate our whole life to God in this New Year and all the rest of our life.

This past year has been prosperity for most of us. But we know not what this New Year has in store for us, for after all do we not read the time shall come when we will not be able to buy or sell without the sign of the beast. How soon these times will be here we do not know. As this New Year lies before us let us not live as though these times will not come. But let us diligently study the Word of God. So that we will be able to stand firm through all trials and temptations. Let us so enter this New Year with a firm desire after God's Kingdom and its righteousness.

THE BROAD AND THE NARROW WAY

HAROLD DE VRIES
Taintor, Iowa

"Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat; because strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it."—Matthew 7:13, 14.

The Narrow Way.

If I speak of the narrow way that already implies that there is more than one way. Yes, there are two ways, as I suppose you know. They are the Broad and the Narrow way. And if you follow the broad way to the end it means destruction, and if you follow the narrow way to the end it means you are on the way of the Cross, for the way of the Cross leads home, which is heaven, that glorious hereafter.

Imagine that on the forenoon of the Lord's Day you saw a man in church, and in the afternoon you say him ploughing, and in the evening he went to a movie, you would probably say to him: I see you haven't found the way, surely not the narrow way? Yes, there are many so-called Christians. It probably would take all of us a life-time to know that if you are a Christian you must walk the narrow way. That means that you can't carry your sin and personal pleasures with you. You can't get thru the narrow way unless you leave all of them behind you, for narrow is the way which leadeth to life. The narrow way requires self-denial, and you will be considered foolish by those who walk on the broad way. Yes, if you travel the narrow way you will see dead bodies who have died for the righteousness of God, or who probably said, God is God and none other. If you are on the narrow way you surely must figure on a

lot of suffering and of being persecuted for righteousness' sake. If you are on the broad way you can all your life enjoy the sins and pleasures of the world; you can stay with the big crowd or with the big construction company who are striving to build a new road which they think will lead to glory. It of course is a much easier highway than we must travel; but as they are traveling their road they don't realize that at the end of their road lies destruction, utter darkness. We must travel the narrow way as Jesus says: I am the Way. No, natural man does not want this way. He can't even find it. It is only by the divine grace of God if you have found the narrow way, and yet there are so few that find it. Eliminate the cross and then you can join the unions of the world, you can sit with them in their lodges. Then you are on the broad way. Your destruction begins in this life and its shame, its conflict, its hardships end in hell. Jesus exhorts: Enter ye in at the strait gate. the narrow way. And to be on the narrow way you must be conscious of your sins.

As we walk this narrow way the cross keeps telling us: I am evil, born in sin: thou desirest truth within. When Christ died on the cross, and sent forth His Spirit into our hearts, then we were changed, but not the world. Then we no longer can walk hand in hand with the world as if we are both going the same direction, for we are on the narrow way; they are not, for the world cannot get through the narrow way, for narrow is the way and they are on the broad way, where the gate is wide, and the way is broad. Few there are that have found this narrow way. Not one would have found it for behind it all is the wonder of infinite grace, we would never have found it by ourselves, neither would any of us ever choose to walk that way. It pleased God that there should be a way leading from the first to the second paradise, for God had chosen a people unto glory. If left to ourselves we would turn a thousand times away from the narrow way. Jesus says: Enter ye in, and He also reminds us to pray for strength to continue therein. Are you among the few who have found this narrow way, or would you rather be with the many who are on the broad way. Sometimes we sing: Dare to be a Daniel, dare to stand alone; but woe to us if we once would have to stand alone. we would lose the narrow way and join the big crowds of the broad way. We must become terrified or afraid if we are walking on the broad way, we must repent in deep humility, and cry out for mercy. It is the ever abiding grace of God that we are among the few, and great joy have they that walk the narrow way. Beyond the mountains lies eternal life but we cannot see it for we are in a valley. So we must press on. At the end we can see the entire Elect race entering into eternal life. So great a multitude no man can count. Then we would say: When came they, for there are few that find it. Yet they all came by the narrow way. And now in heaven they are singing the song: "Saved by Grace".

BIBLE OUTLINES

REV. JOHN BLANKESPOOR

Doon, Iowa

LESSON XIV.

"Jesus and the Samaritan Woman"

(continued)

(John 5:16-24)

Evoking a Confession of Sin: vss. 16-18.

With these words we have the beginning of the second phase of Jesus' conversation with her. Go, call thy husband, etc. But didn't Jesus know about her present, and past conditions? Of course, but this was the sore spot where the heading was to begin; there must first be a confession of sin. Sin there certainly was, for even though her first five marriages were legal, she now was living in adultery, perhaps what in our land is called a "companionship marriage". What surprises us is that she doesn't evade Jesus' question, or that she doesn't "rebuke" Him for such intrusion of her private affairs. No, she confesses. First Jesus presents Himself to her as the one who gives living water. Even though she is interested in her own way, she fails to see Him as the Messiah. Now Jesus elicits this confession. And then comes the gradual manifestation of Jesus as the Messiah. This prophecy of her husband already made a tremendous impression on her, regarding Him as a prophet.

Questions: Why did Jesus in His desire to deal with the Samaritans contact such an adulteress? Why must there always be a consciousness of and confession of sin before one can come to active faith in Christ? What great difference do we notice between this woman and most of the Jews whom Jesus contacted?

The Woman's Question: vss. 19-20.

She immediately perceives that Jesus is more than an ordinary person, for He has spoken the truth concerning her life. But a question she has, very likely one which was of great concern to her for some time. Here is one who perhaps can give answer. Where must men worship, in Jerusalem or in Mt. Gerizim? The latter was a mountain not too far from where Jesus and the woman were conversing. Zerubbabel (who led the Jews from Babylon to Jerusalem) refused the Samaritans permission to join in building the temple at Jerusalem, and Nehemiah had driven out a son of Joiada who had married a daughter of Sanballat (a constant opponent of Nehemiah), Neh. 13:28. Consequently this man with

others instituted the worship in Gerizim in Samaria, built a temple there, etc.

Worshipping in Spirit and in Truth: vss. 21-24.

Jesus gives a beautiful but also rather profound answer. The fact that this "Jewish prophet" should declare that the temple worship in Jerusalem was to be temporary, was even soon to cease, must have astonished this woman greatly. The point in Jesus' answer is that the specifiic place of the worship is a secondary question, whereas the true worship itself is the essential. Only for the time being the place still has its importance, soon it will disappear. This does not mean that worshipping at Gerizim or Jerusalem is identical. Salvation was of the Jews, to them the Lord had given it. There the Lord had also instituted the proper forms of worship in the types. But they, too, would soon fall away. The hour is coming, yea is here already (Jesus already had a small following), when they will worship in spirit and in truth, irrespective of place. And the reason for this kind of worship is found in the fact that God is a Spirit. Our worship of Him must correspond with His being. For the sake of clarification let us take notice of the following: 1) Men must always worship God in the spirit, even in the Old Testament. Worshipping God is something spiritual, it is a matter of the soul. By faith we serve Him, faith is something spiritual. True worship of God does not consist in clinging to some visible, physical forms. It is an invisible, spiritual action of the new man. Even in the Old Testament the saints were conscious of this. Consider the Psalms, the prayers of saints, etc., the many warnings that sacrifices, gifts, lip-prayers, etc. without a broken contrite, believing heart mean nothing. 2) But we do need certain visible forms, which will serve as mediums for our worship. We are earthy, and physical. So we have many forms of worship, rituals, etc., such as the preaching of the Word, prayer, etc. In the Old Testament they had the types, but remember, these were more than mere forms. They were also expressions of the salvation itself, of the blood of Jesus, etc. Without their use no one could possibly be saved. So the saints in the Old Testament worshipped in spirit and in types. However, many (perhaps most of them) considered these types to be mere forms, and considered the use of the types to be religion itself. Think of the Pharisees. The same was true of the Samaritans in re Mt. Gerizim.

And the worship in the spirit was lacking, they failed to come to true worship through the types or shadows. The forms of the Samaritans naturally meant nothing since salvation was of the Jews, only through those types was salvation possible. 3) These Old Testament "forms" will now fall away. The truth of the types has come. Jesus Himself. As the truth He is the fulfillment of all the shadows. The temple, its forms of worship, sacrifices, priests, etc. will all be abolished. And wherever Jesus is with the Jews, or the Samaritans, or any place in the world, there is the truth. But we need both. Omit the spirit, and you have

mere formalism; omit the truth and though the whole soul is thrown into the worship, it becomes an abomination.

Questions: Wherefore do we find Jesus today on earth? Is the danger great today, too, of "worshipping" in the spirit without the truth? How? Also in the truth without the spirit? How? Also especially as Protestant Reformed? Why is it that men are always inclined to do either or?

* * * *

LESSON XV.

"Christ And The Samaritans" (John 4:25-42)

Jesus Identifies Himself: vss. 25-30.

The impression Jesus makes upon the woman is that she automatically thinks of the Messiah. Of the little we know of the Samaritans' ideas of the Messiah to come we do know that in many respects they coincided with those of the Jews. This woman, even though she lived in sin, expected Him with eagerness. He will tell them all things. But we must not fail to see how Jesus affected this very ordinary woman who was not even a Jewess. It was Christ's work in her first of all that gave this wonderful interest and response. First a learned Nicodemus, and then an unlearned, sin-laden, ordinary unnamed woman in the despised Samaria. How contrary to all expectations! To this obscure woman Jesus reveals point-blank what He had reevaled to no one else. This is the climax, the one speaking to her is the Christ.

Thereupon the disciples return with food. They marvel that Jesus is conversing with her, for the Jewish custom forbade that a rabbi should speak in public with a woman, especially on matters of the law. But they respect Jesus so that they refrain from intervening. For why would Jesus talk with her and about what? The woman now quickly leaves. With the presence of the disciples she must have felt out of place. Quick-witted as she showed herself in her answers to Jesus, she now strangely forgets to take her water-pot along. This indicates how deeply the words of Jesus had gripped her heart. And she certainly has news for her fellow-men. A marvelous testimony she gives of Jesus. She believes that He is the Christ because He told her all things (most likely many more than recorded here) that ever she did. And the result? Ridicule? Unbelief? Or an ignoring of this adulteress? No, they went to Him. They will investigate.

Questions: How could this woman have knowledge of the coming Messiah, being a Samaritan? Does II Kings 17:24-28 give the answer? Why did Jesus so plainly identify Himself to this woman whereas the the Jews asked for this very thing time and again but failed to receive such an answer?

The Spiritual Harvest: vss. 31-38.

But Jesus had been hungry and tired when the disciples left. Now they have food for Him. He refuses. The only

possible conclusion the apostles can come to is that perhaps this woman gave Him something to eat, or somebody else. And yet this they did not expect, since according to the original their question is stated in such a way that they expect a negative answer. It's a riddle to them. But Jesus explains it to them, later to be understood fully. This gives us a glimpse of how Jesus put His very soul into His work. Doing the Father's will gave such joy and satisfaction that it acted like food and drink to his body, weary as He was. But more. This work is a necessity for him, something He must have, as we must have food. It is His meat and drink.

Christ is enjoying the spiritual harvest. Seeing these Samaritans coming to Him, perhaps, between the fields of grain which will not be ready for harvest for some time, He speaks of the ripe fields of believers among the Gentiles. The one main idea of vss.36-39 seems to be that first of all Jesus is the Sower, even in the prophets of old. Always it was Christ in them. The disciples are the reapers, they bring in the sheaves, of course strictly speaking also through Christ. But here Christ is beginning to see the harvest of His sowing, Gentiles (the Samaritans coming to Him). Perhaps He here visualizes the multitudes of Gentiles which will follow in the days of the apostles. This is His joy, bringing in God's people; the joy of the sower is always in the harvest. Therefore He rejoices with the reapers, it is simultaneous. Eat and drink? His hunger is gone.

Many Samaritans Believe: vss. 39-42.

And now the Samaritans come! According to the original they repeatedly urged Him to stay with them for a few days. The citizens of Jerusalem never did this; afterward He passed through Jericho, and not a soul asked him to stay. In the next verses we are told what their reaction was, marvelous indeed. To the Jews Jesus had spoken, and will speak, in many forms, parables, etc. And the effect, finally? They crucify Him. Here a few words are sufficient. For the woman a history of her life is sufficient for faith. And He stayed only two days. Notice, too, that Jesus didn't perform one miracle here. Why? It wasn't necessary. Signs always were given to confirm the word, but these people believe the word. The fields indeed were ready for harvest. And yet Jesus soon leaves and again goes into Galilee.

Questions: Give instances where the apostles also found the Gentiles more responsive than the Jews. Can this principle be applied in any way to our home missionary activities? Can we conclude from the expression "Saviour of the World" that the Samaritans actually expected the Messiah's salvation to also be for the Gentiles?

* * * *

LESSON XVI.

"Healing Of The Nobleman's Son"

(John 4:43-54)

Jesus Goes Into Galilee: vss. 43-45.

It may surprise us that Jesus stayed with these people, the Samaritans, only

two days whereas they were so "receptive". But He must first go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel; to Galilee He will therefore go.

Vs. 44, as can be expected, has all kinds of explanations. If a prophet is not esteemed in his homeland, how can that be a reason for his present return to it? And yet this is exactly the reason why He returns to His own country. The difficulties increase when we read in vs. 45 that the Galileans received Him. Also that from Cana Jesus goes directly to Nazareth (Luke 4:16ff) His home town and is utterly rejected. To understand what we consider to be the proper explanation we must consider the following: 1) That in the previous as well as in the subsequent verses we read of the faith of the Gentiles, the nobleman also very likely being one. 2) That the Galileans received Him because of the things they saw Him do in Jerusalem, i.e., as their countryman now made famous by His miraculous deeds. In this sense we must also understand Luke 4:15 where it says that He was glorified by all. In this sense the homeland is always proud of its sons (think, e.g. of presidential candidates and their home states) but their sons must not assume authority and power over them. Jesus' popularity they liked but when He placed Himself above them, with the right to teach and rebuke them it became an entirely different matter. In that sense a prophet is without honor in his own country. 3) In this sense it is also true of Jesus. And He goes into Galilee to make this manifest, as the Messiah they reject Him. His own received Him not. The vineyard will be given to others that will bring forth fruits in due season, namely the Gentiles. 4) Therefore before He goes to Nazareth to be rejected, we read of this nobleman coming to Him and believing.

Questions: Why did the Jews always reject the Christ? What do you think may have been the Divine purpose(s) regarding this? Rom. 11:11. Would there be salvation if they had not done so?

The Nobleman Believes the Word: vss. 46-50.

This nobleman was a certain royal official of the Roman government (perhaps Chuza of Luke 8:3) whose son was at the point of death at Capernaum. Having heard that Jesus was in Galilee he hastens to ask Jesus to come to Capernaum. Notice here that he comes to Jesus, while Jesus often had to go to the Jews. Notice, too, that though he is a ruler with many servants, he goes himself, and acknowledges Jesus. Yet only his desperate need drives him to Jesus, otherwise he most likely would not have been concerned very much about Jesus. But Jesus is not concerned first of all in the health of his son, but in faith in Him as the Saviour. Therefore He performed signs and wonders. But usually their "faith" stopped with the signs, and did not advance to Jesus' word. Now many of them did truly believe in Him, but only by seeing signs and wonders. The nobleman wants Jesus to come to the bedside of his son. But Jesus refuses and merely tells him that

his son lives. The man had never thought of Jesus as heading at a distance by the sole power of His word. But the word he believes, and he goes.

Questions: What was the real purpose of the miracles? Did Jesus ever perform them where there was no faith? Did unbelief ever hinder Him to perform them? Why do you think so many thousands often followed Jesus, to see signs and wonders or because they would hear His words, believing in Him? How do people still do the same thing today, essentially?

The Power of Christ's Word Revealed: vss. 51-54.

Why these last few verses? That the man may learn to know the power of Christ's words, the son having been healed at the very same time Jesus told him that his son would live. And by means of this mighty sign he and his family (as entiles) are brought to faith in Christ. How much different it would soon be at Nazareth with his own "fellow-men"!

* * * *

LESSON XVII.

"The Healing of the Impotent Man"

(John 5:1-16)

The Miracle: vss. 1-9.

The setting of this wonder we find in vs. 1. There was another feast at Jerusalem (perhaps the Passover Feast), which brought thousands to the city. At such a time Jesus performs this miracle, men must learn to know Him.

We know very little about Bethesda (House of Mercy) itself. The five porches were like a hospital filled with a crowd of sufferers, four classes being mentioned. What a picture of suffering and misery as the results of sin. In describing the miracle we must notice that it is performed for the sake of Jesus, not for this man. All serves the Saviour. Therefore He selects what was probably the worst case there, a man that had been lame for 38 years. His was a hopeless case undoubtedly thousands knew him and pitied him. All the rest Jesus leaves in their misery, who undoubtedly looked on with envious eyes when Jesus made this man whole by the mere power of His word.

The point is that Jesus healed him on the Sabbath. But couldn't Jesus have forecome much offense if He had waited with this until the next day? No, it must happen now. It was a beautiful symbol of Christ bringing His own, who are spiritually dead, sick and lame, into the eternal Sabbath of life and peace with God. The Sabbath really was the most suitable day. Intentionally Jesus tells this man to take up his bed and carry it home, while He Himself retreats into the background. Men must see His work, not Him at this time. And what will the effect be upon the people?

Questions: Did faith precede the healing in this case? Why didn't Jesus heal the others there? Can you find anything here that proves the error of Christian Scientists?

The Reaction Of The Jews: vss. 10-16.

Most likely these Jews were of the leaders, (Pharisees, vs. 16, and some of them perhaps Sanhedrists). Are they amazed at the sight of this man walking, who was considered to be in a hopeless condition? Wouldn't it be most natural that they ask who healed him? Nothing of the kind, however. They are totally blind to the marvellous sign, and even stumble over it. Their only concern was whether a thing was lawful. The ceremonial law they will keep at the expense of the fulfillment of the entire law, Jesus Christ.

That this man didn't even know who it was that healed him, not even showing that much interest seems to be a testimony against him. Here again we see that the miracles Jesus performed do not show a particular love of Jesus for certain individuals, but wholly serve His purpose regarding His own testimony to the people. It is probably with a view to the man's ignorance of Jesus that Christ approaches him again, warning him to sin no more lest a worse thing come upon him. It seems as if his illness therefore was the result of certain sins. Therefore this is Jesus word to him personally, and if he sins likewise something much worse than 38 years of infirmity will be his lot, namely eternal hell-fire.

Later the man went to the temple, perhaps to thank God. There he evidently finds these Jews again and tells them that Jesus had made him whole. First they are told that the man who healed him commanded him to take up his bed; now that Jesus was His name. Notice again that the testimony of Christ's healing is put before them. Jesus made him well. But they are still blind, and in their blindness now have what they've been looking for, evidence. And they seek to slay Him, so great the hatred and opposition is already at this time. Questions: Did these Jews really believe the law? The Old Testament? Are there people today, too, who maintain strict external adherence to the laws, rituals, etc., but fail to see and keep the spirit of them? What is the deepest reason for such religion?

* * * *

LESSON XVIII

"The Father Working Through The Son"

(John 5:17-30)

Jesus and the Father are One: vss. 17, 18.

The Jews had accused Jesus of breaking the Sabbath, failing to see the wonder of healing. Now Jesus answers them in crystal-clear words. This is God's work. Couldn't they see this, for who else can perform such wonders? And it is unthinkable that the Father should ever break the law, and therefore neither the Son, for they are one. There must be something radically wrong with the charge of the Jews. But is not Jesus under the law? Of course, but He was also the fulfillment of the law, and therefore with doings of this nature showed them the very spirit and purpose of the law. By means of His power He

will bring men (His own) into the true Sabbath, delivering them from misery and death which are the results of the law. But the Jews refuse to believe even these plain words, and find more excuses. Now they accuse Him of not only breaking the Sabbath but of destroying it, and therefore the more seek to kill Him.

How the Son is One With the Father: vss. 19, 20.

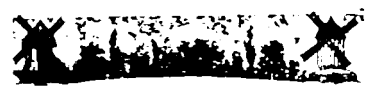
Jesus gives an elaborate explanation of Their unity. The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do. Never does He do anything on His own initiative. Always the eyes of the Son are upon the Father. He seeks not His own will, vs. 30. The Father's will is His will, nothing else He desires to do. There is perfect and constant contact between the Father and Himself. Therefore the Father loves Him, and shows all things unto Him. The works of the Son are the works of the Father. Whatever Jesus, therefore, does before these Jews or says to them, is also of the Father. That they must realize. He is the Word become flesh. Notice again how John emphasizes his theme.

Questions: Do these words of Jesus refer to the Son of God in His human or His Divine nature? Did these Jews fail to believe because they misunderstood Him? Show that Jesus in no way made His word appealing to the flesh, or came with an invitation of salvation?

What the Father Works Through the Son: vss. 21-30.

Even greater works than these the Father will work through the Son, vs. 20. Prophets, too, had wrought miracles, but they were only men. Jesus as the Son will do much greater works, greater even than physical resurrection of the dead, such as that of Lazarus, etc. In vss. 24 to 30 Jesus speaks in particular of the works mentioned in general in vss. 21, 22. First of all, vs. 24, through His word He gives everlasting life, and freedom from condemnation. This means that He gives them heavenly life, now. And He gives that to whom He will, through the way of faith, etc. In vs. 25, 26 He speaks of the Spiritual resurrection which takes place in time, which we call regeneration. In vss. 28, 29 He even tells them that the final resurrection will take place through Him as the Son. And in vs. 30 He will be the judge of all men. All this will take place through the Son, in order that all men will honour the Son even as they honour the Father, vs. 23. And this Son, Jesus means to say to these Jews, is standing before you. What will you do with Him?

Questions: What according to vs. 21 is the deepest reason for the unbelief of these Jews? Why then did Jesus preach the Gospel to them? Considering that Jesus (who speaks such words) looked like any other man, can we from a natural viewpoint understand the unbelief of these Jews, and others?



Current Comments

REV. L. DOEZEMA

Bellflower, California

"All the World".

"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed". (Luke 2:1). These words concern the time of Christ's birth about the year one, and give us to realize that the world was under the rule of one government and one ruler.

In 1948, Christmas season, we again see that there is a movement to have the world under one government. It will mean then, as in the days of Jesus' birth, that our personal lives will be indirectly and directly ruled by the decrees of the ruler.

This came to my mind as I read an item in the newspaper about the lecture tour of Raymond Swing. Swing is vice-president of United World Federalists, Inc., and recently spoke in Los Angeles.

According to the paper these were some of his statements:

"World peace can be attained only if nations surrender part of their sovereignty and form a world government."

"Characterizing the United Nations as a "debating society", Swing asserted that the idea of world government has been growing. He cited these encouraging signs:

1. The governments of Britain and China have expressed their desire to join ultimately in a world government.

2. The new constitutions of France and Italy provide that those nations may join one.

3. The new constitution of Japan expressly forbids that nation from waging war.

4. General Eisenhower indicates in his book that he believes a world government is possible.

5. Fifteen state legislatures have approved the Humber resolution which calls for the United States to take the lead in forming such a government.

6. Three U. S. Supreme Court justices — Douglas, Jackson, and Rutledge — favor it."

Church and State.

The relation between the two has been a matter of debate and study since the Pharisees tempted Jesus with the question, "What thinkest thou, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?" and Jesus gave His pointed answer, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."

I just want to quote from *Time* an item which relates to this problem as it is discussed in our U. S.

"To the U. S. Supreme Court, the first Amendment means that there is a "wall of separation between Church and State." In the Vashti McCollum case last spring, the court told an Illinois school board not to allow the teaching of religion in the public schools. Last week, meeting in Washington, D. C., the Roman Catholic bishops of the U. S., denounced the court for this entirely novel and ominously extensive interpretation."

"As the bishops see it, the First Amendment makes only two things unconstitutional: 1) "the setting up by law of an official church"; and 2) "discrimination between religious bodies." The founding fathers, said the bishops, were God-fearing men who knew that "national morality cannot prevail in the absence of religious principle." They never intended to prevent "free cooperation" between government and organized religion. Any contrary interpretation is "an utter distortion of American history and law".

Concluded the bishops: "On this basically religious (U. S.) tradition. . . . secularism has (increasingly) exercised a corrosive influence. . . . If this secularist influence is to prevail. . . . such a result should. . . . be achieved by legislation. . . . and not by the judicial procedure of an ideological interpretation of our Constitution. We therefore hope and pray that the (present interpretation) will in due process be revised."

The Roman catholic bishops are correct in pointing out that separation of Church and State does not mean that either State or education may be irreligious. When, however, the State and education have been for so long a time irreligious it is almost inconceivable to expect that the majority of the people will change their interpretation of the constitution through their courts. Furthermore, if it should be that the American people and educators should suddenly change and desire a "religious education" that education may be more objectionable for a Christian.

The Stately Shagbark

MR. C. DE BOER — KALAMAZOO, MICH.

Do you recall those enjoyable Saturday mornings after the first autumn frosts when you searched the roadside and forest for the shagbark? Do you remember how eagerly you collected its cherry-sized, brownish-white fruit? An accomplishment indeed, to gather a half bushel of those nuts? How they were appreciated when we gathered around a warm stove on a cold winter evening and removed their tasty morsels.

To the pioneer the shagbark was a symbol of strength and resilence. No other tree filled as many of his needs. He used it for ax handles, wagon hubs (on the old covered wagon), ramrod for his rifle, spindles for chairs, barrel-hoops, firewood, rail-fences, and last but not least for curing his meat. The yellow dye found beneath the outer bark was used by the pioneer housewife in tinting her homespun. Today it is still unsurpassed in the manufacture of skiis and in the treating of smoked meat.

Even in terms of our modern day where steel is considered the measure of strength we find that the wood of this tree surpasses it in strength on the weight basis. In addition it is more elastic, less brittle, and lower in heat conductivity than steel. It is readily understandable why the early pioneer preferred it for fuel in his drafty cabin because tests have shown that a single cord of it produces nearly the equivalent heat of a ton of anthracite coal. To many the shagbark is an emblem of the early pioneer with its tall straight trunk covered with shaggy bark.

It can easily be distinguished from other members of the forest by its smoky grey bark which continually peels in large plates (3 to 6 inches in width and 10 to 15 inches in length). By this time you undoubtedly have surmised that we are describing none other than the shagbark hickory tree.

Near Nashville, Tennessee is a monument marking the grave of a distinguished American president, nicknamed "Old Hickory". A half dozen trees (hickories) stand by as natural guardians. According to history Jackson was given this nickname during the War of 1812 when his callous orders from the Secretary of War were to dismiss his men at Natchez, some 500 miles from home. This he refused to do and chose to endure their hardships and assume responsibility for their safe return; hence, his men saw that he was wiry and tough, so they called him "Old Hickory". This nickname is supposed to have carried him to the "White House".

AFTER RECESS PROGRAMS

THE GLORY OF GOD - *In The Home*

MRS. T. DE BOER — KALAMAZOO, MICH.

I. Introduction.

A. Blessed, indeed, is a Christian home.

1. Children are a heritage of the Lord.
   a. "And blest the man whose age is cheered,
   By stalwart sons and daughters fair;
   No enemies by him are feared,
   No lack of love, no want of care."
   b. See Psalm 127:3-5.

2. Every member in the family contributes to the atmosphere within the home.
   a. What is our respective place in our family?
      1) What is our attitude toward our parents and authority. Eph. 6:1-3; Prov. 13:1; Lord's Day 39.
      2) What is the type of companionship existing between brothers, sisters, and ourselves?
   b. Do we strive to manifest ourselves as a "heritage of the Lord"?
      1) Are we confidential with family members? Do we discuss our problems, our ideals, and goals with one another?
      2) Are we happy, helpful, generous, cooperative, and sympathetic?
      3) Are we an inspiration for "good" in our family circle?
      4) Are we active and gay in public, and passive and sullen at home?
   c. Make an objective analysis of yourself.
      1) Just what is my calling in the particular family in which God has placed me?
         a) Am I fulfilling that station in life to the best of my ability and to God's honor and glory?

II. Various Phases of Family Life.

A. The Family Altar: Is it a mere tradition or a living reality?

1. Prayer.
   a. Table worship.
      1) Is it merely lip service or sincere expression of devotions.
      2) Do we as young people ever lead in prayer?
   b. Personal prayer life.
      1) Are we conscious of His presence that we ever call upon His name. Ps. 55:17; Acts 10:2; Ps. 5:3.
      2) Do we feel strengthened and comforted after this communion with God?

3) Do our prayers rise above the carnal seeking of self and our own ambitions.
4) Do we glorify God in our prayers.

2. Scripture Reading.
   a. What is our attitude during the reading at the table? Do we concentrate on Scripture, or are we eager to finish to be able to leave for sports, etc.?
   b. Do we ever ask for explanations and contribute to others questioning?
   c. On the Sabbath it might be well to read and discuss Beacon Lights lesson for following week.
   d. Do we study the Scriptures daily to grow in the knowledge of God?
3. Reverence.
   a. Do all sacred things make us stand in awe of Him and His glory? Ps. 4:4; Deut. 10:12; Is. 8:13.
   b. Does a spirit of reverence pervade our home? Ps. 89:7.

B. Activities Within The Home.
1. Recreation.
   a. How do we spend our "leisure" time? Are we "lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God"?
   b. Games—can entire family participate as one unit?
   c. Do we bring our friends home?
   "Happiness grows at our own fireside and is not to be plucked in strangers' gardens".—Douglas Gerald.
2. Music.
   a. Are the songs we sing distinctive? Eph. 5:19. Do we sing around the piano as family and friends?
   b. Is the radio and piano playing attuned to the glory of God..
3. Literature.
   a. Do we peruse and study church papers.
   b. Are the stories, novels, articles, etc., we read, edifying and instructive?

III. Influences Which Tend to Corrupt and Undermine Our Home Life.

A. Spirit of amalgamation with the world.
1. Are we ashamed of the "faith of our fathers" and resulting old-fashioned practices.
2. Do we pattern ourselves after the world in dress, actions, speech?
   a. Is our speech distinctive? What about slang, catching phrases, unkind remarks, sarcasm?
   "Discretion in speech is more than eloquence."—Bacon.
   "You cannot recall the spoken word."—Emerson.
   "Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips and a deceitful tongue."
   James 3:3.

B. Our Modern "busy" Life.
1. Do we take time to be holy; speak oft with our God?

a. Are we "too busy" to enrich our spiritual life and reflect it in our home life to God's glory?

2. With what are we busy?
   a. Do sports interfere with family worship.

C. Disintegration of "family unit".
   1. Family members becoming increasingly active in an independent sphere. Less time spent at home.
   2. Youth seeking excitement outside of home.
   3. Family hearth merely traditional.

IV. Application For Society Programs.

A. Debate.
   1. Resolved: The radio is more detrimental than beneficial to realizing Glory of God in the Home.

B. Essays.
   1. How can we be distinctive in our homes?
   2. How young people can most profitably spend the Sabbath Day.
   3. What we can do as young people to make our family altar a living reality.

C. Panel Discussions.
   1. How we are preparing in our youth the rudiments for our own future family life.
   2. How our speech in the home can be a manifestation of the consciousness of God's glory.

D. Impromptu Topics.
   1. Why I like to entertain my friends at home.
   2. What we can do to stimulate proper relationship among members in our families.
   3. How we can use our leisure time to the best advantage.

This all ages shall record
For the glory of the Lord;
Thou dost hear the humble prayer,
Thou eternal art, and great,
Heaven and earth Thou didst create.
Heaven and earth shall pass away,
Changeless Thou shalt live for aye.

Truth vs. Error

Rev. J. Howerzyl — Oskaloosa, Iowa

As you no doubt recall, John, a member of the Protestant Reformed Church, and Jack, of the Christian Reformed Church, had been discussing the correctness of the Protestant Reformed Churches doing mission work among the members of the Christian Reformed Church at Geheim.

John had developed the idea that Jerusalem in the Missionary Commission of our Lord to His church referred to the church which had become corrupt and false and that therefore our mission work also should begin there and reach out in ever-widening circles along this same line—the apostate church—until it finally embraces the world.

In answer to this position Jack had said, "That surely reveals a hateful attitude just the same," to which John replied, just as the whistle announcing the return to work was blowing, "You know, I was just going to add, that this whole thing can also be shown to be correct if you look at it from the viewpoint of true Christian love."

The next day, a warm sunshiny day, the two young men went for a walk toward the park near the factory. Already on the way to the park they had been discussing the talk of the day before but it was not until they were comfortably sitting on one of the park benches that the discussion really began.

And it was Jack who began by saying, "I'm still thinking and mulling over what you said yesterday, and even though I can't show that you are wrong about Jerusalem, it still doesn't sound just right to me. But I am more certain than ever that it can never be love that causes any church to break down another, to tear apart families, to disrupt the peace and quiet of a whole community, to break that denominational loyalty that has held members in the church and out of the world for generations. To me that can never be anything but hatred and I can see no other possible motive. You mean that it's love when you accuse us of all kinds of things?, when you say mean and wicked things about our church?, when you tell people that we preach falsehoods?, when your missionaries go around and slyly try to steal our members? Well, frankly, I have not much use for that kind of love!"

"Hold on a minute, will you," answered John, "Boy, you take my breath away, you don't let me get a word in edgeways. To begin with, I didn't say that all our activities were necessarily out of love,

although personally I believe this to be the case and you and I would have to review all the individual actions of our missionaries if we were to pass judgment on all of them. But that was not my point, I meant to say that it can easily be proven also from the viewpoint of Christian love that Mission work must begin in Jerusalem, that is, the church which walks in error.

"Probably we should begin by asking what really is Christian love?"

"Oh, I know you," retorted Jack, "here comes one of your catechism book answers again. I don't care much for your definitions."

"No, we won't go into my catechism book this time," returned John, remembering how some of his previous attempts in that direction had raised the scorn of his friend, "but I believe even without a formal definition we can say a few things about Christian love. It certainly is plain from I John that all true love is of God, and therefore it is holy and in itself a seeking of God and of all things for his sake."

"I don't know if I'd go along with you on that John," replied Jack. "Do you mean to say that all love is love of God? How about the love of those who have never known God—the heathen? I can think of many possible expressions of love which are not love of God. Take for example a heathen who loses his life in trying to help his friend; or a heathen mother who loves her child? Do you mean to say that all such emotions are not love?"

"We have to be careful of course," replied John, "especially is this true in our choice of terms. Certainly there is a love which is given with our creation, a natural, earthly human tie, a natural affection which is seen as attraction even among the heathen, but even this natural love from the viewpoint of God and the Bible is not love but is hatred essentially. Love is always of God and is the bond of perfectness. There is no love in the darkness of sin. It always perfects him that loves and would perfect him that is loved. It desires the happiness, the true bliss of its object, that true and pure state of blessedness which is possible only in the light of the sphere of truth, of righteousness, of holiness, of perfection, hence of God. And therefore all that is not an attempt to lead, direct, guide and steer in that direction of God but away from Him is always sin and hatred essentially."

"You mean to tell me that a mother hates her child if she is a heathen?" asked Jack in amazement. "Why that's absurd."

"I know," said John, "hatred can appear very sweet and affectionate, and yet with all its sweetness it destroys the one who is

caught in the throes of such natural, sinful "love". It can maintain the appearance of love and affection and yet lure its objects in the way of sin. Perhaps an example or two may make clear what I mean. A natural, unregenerate mother may be filled with a strong affection, a mother's love for her child, yet when she teaches that child to love sin and the world, as far as God is concerned, she hates that child. A young man who says he loves his girl-friend and yet entices her to commit the sin of adultery at the same time shows that as far as God is concerned he is drawing her away from God and therefore as far as her eternal welfare is concerned hates her.

"But I'm afraid we have gotten off the track a little way and there goes the first whistle: we'll have to run if we're going to be on time, so I guess it'll have to wait until tomorrow."

Schuiler Writes!

We invite all our readers to send in your questions and problems to: SCHUILER, c/o Doorn Printing Co., 705 Eastern Ave., Grand Rapids.

SHOULD WE GIVE TITHES

Every once in a while the matter of tithing is brought up in our circles. In this connection the undersigned received the following:

"Is it my duty as a Christian to tithe? I realize that the New Testament does not tell us in so many words that we should give one-tenth of our income to the Lord, but rather that all we have belongs to the Lord and we should give as He has prospered us. However, if I am not taught to tithe there is the danger that I will give even less than a tenth. May we ever give less than a tenth?"

My correspondent states that the New Testament does not tell us in so many words that we should give one tenth of our income to the Lord. I would make this even stronger, the New Testament does not tell us *at all* that we should give one-tenth of our income to the Lord. Tithing as an institution belonged definitely to the Old Testament. Does it mean therefore that it is wrong to tithe? Not necessarily so. I know we have people in our circles who tithe. Tithing is a form of systematic giving. If someone thinks that he or she, should give a tenth for Kingdom causes, that might be a good system of giving for him or her. However, this should never become something legalistic. Neither should it be used as an excuse to never give any more. Much less should tithing be done because it

"pays", as I read in a church paper a few years ago. That particular person had been tithing for a number of years and he had observed that it certainly was a paying proposition, the Lord had "richly blessed and rewarded" him, as he put it. If that should be our motive for giving we certainly are extremely self-centered and make a "business" of it. Perhaps from the point of view of being a paying proposition the man I have in mind might have found out that it was still better "business" to give one-twentieth.

But let me add in this connection that men who ought to know have often told me that if our people would tithe we would have much more money on hand for Kingdom causes than we have today. That sounds rather reasonable to me. Hence, the opposition against tithing as though we must have nothing of it because it is an Old Testament, legalistic institution, by no means always expresses the whole truth as far as the opponents are concerned. The element of saving dollars may very well enter into the picture.

No tithing? No, we are not under the obligation of the Old Testament law. No systematic giving? By all means! How much? The exact amount is to be decided by the individual himself.

Isn't there a certain danger connected with this New Testament freedom? Indeed there is, because we are earthly-minded and oft-times we forget (perhaps conveniently) that all we are and all we possess we owe to the Lord. There is great need to remind ourselves constantly of the fact that we are *stewards*. Of course I believe that if a person is indeed spiritually-minded, he does not have much trouble with the question of giving for the Kingdom. When he is able he is always ready to give for kingdom causes. You prove to him the need and he'll open his pocketbook. You never have any difficulty to speak of with people that are really spiritually-minded. Also as far as *giving* is concerned, you can bank on them.

May we ever give less than a tenth? I would think at times, yes. Depending upon our income, depending upon specific needs. But by all means give systematically. Systematic givers are the best givers. Also as young people we must learn to give for Kingdom causes. I am afraid that some young people know how to "throw away" money, but they don't know how to give for Kingdom causes. And don't be afraid to give special gifts for special Kingdom causes. If the latter were done more in our circles we would have further progressed with various causes in our midst.

SCHUILER.

Book Reviews

IN HIS STEPS.
by Charles M. Sheldon.

(The Judson Press, Publishers)

This story was written in 1896 and was first published in the *Chicago Advance*, a religious weekly, as a serial. The publisher did not know the condition of the copyright laws and hence the copyright became defective. As a result, sixteen different publishers in America and fifty in Europe and Australia put out the book in various editions. The book has been translated into twenty-one languages, including a Russian publication which has been barred by the Soviet. In 1935, the *Publishers' Weekly* informed the author that this book had had more circulation than any other book except the Bible.

It is the story of a group of people who volunteered to do nothing for a whole year without first asking the question, "What would Jesus do?", and of the spectacular results of their consequent actions. Their actions throughout this year were to be in full accord with their own interpretation of what Jesus would do in their own particular and individual circumstances and were to be carried out in such a manner without thought of what the results might be.

The story tells of Henry Maxwell, the minister of a large and wealthy congregation who took personal pride in delivering a dramatic and pleasing sermon to his fashionable audience until a crisis came into his life in the form of a miserable, dying tramp. The following Sunday he asked for volunteers from his fashionable church to join him in a pledge to do nothing for a year without first asking, "What would Jesus do?"

The results were beyond his expectations. Some of the most prominent members of his church made the promise to live their life as Jesus would. There was Edward Norman, editor of the *Daily News*, who refused to print details of scandal, crime and prize fights, or questionable advertisements in his paper and printed editorials containing messages that offended

many of his subscribers. As a result of his promise he lost his fortune. There was Alexander Powers, an employee of a railroad company, who lost his position and his social status by giving evidence of his company's violation of the Interstate Commerce Laws. There was Virginia Page, the heiress, who gave her fortune to Edward Norman's Christian daily paper and to the work of reform in the slum district known as the Rectangle. There was Rachel Winslow, talented singer, who gave up opportunities to win fame and fortune as a concert singer to devote her talent to volunteer work among the girls and women in the city's most neglected areas.

Not only did the town in which this movement started feel its affects, but even in Chicago the movement made itself felt. There Rev. Bruce, after learning of the events in Rev. Maxwell's congregation, took upon himself the pledge to do as Jesus would, gave up his fashionable congregation and, accompanied by his friend the Bishop who also resigned from his diocese and the life of luxury that went with it, went to live in the slum district of Chicago to labor among the unfortunates who lived there.

This book cannot be recommended to our young people without reservation. The underlying principle running throughout the story is the belief that "faith in the Christ helped to save men because of the pattern or character he displayed for their imitation." (page 2). This principle is not easily detected unless the reader is on his guard against this modern error. The author mentions the presence of the Spirit at the meetings of these disciples of Christ, but if the reader is alert, he will notice that the feeling of the Divine Presence was only a strengthening and comforting influence to these people who by their own will had chosen to follow in Jesus steps and in their own knowledge determined the method of that imitation for their own particular circumstances. Conversion is not brought out as being that time in a person's life when he is made conscious of his sinfulness and unworthiness and of deliverance in Jesus' blood, but rather it is portrayed as that time in one's life when he begins to imitate Christ without thought for selfish gain or personal loss.

However, the rule of conduct portrayed in this book should give our young people reason for serious thought. Do we, who are called Christians and who have been brought up in the Covenant and Church of Christ, ever give answer to the question, "What would Jesus do?" Are we willing to suffer ridicule and loss to be in conformity with our Master's will?

Mrs. M. H. Kroondyk.

Mr. John Zandstra, Jr.
132nd St.
South Holland, Ill.