BEACON LIGHTS

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About the Cover:
The beautiful winter scene appearing on our February Cover was done by Mr. Fritz W. Neugass, 25 West 84th St., New York City, and has previously appeared in the magazine, Popular Photography. We thank Mr. Neugass for granting us his permission to use it.
Student Life at Kampen, Netherlands

Goes, Nederland
January 6, 1950

Dear Beacon Lighters,

It has been a long time since we saw each other at the Iowa Convention, hasn’t it? A lot of things have happened in the past four months. I am now 4,000 miles from Iowa. To be more exact, I am writing you from the desk of your author-friend, Rudolf Van Reest (Van Sporsen) in Goes, Zeeland, where I am staying for a few days in my Christmas vacation. (I interrupted my schooling in Grand Rapids this past Fall, and am now taking additional preparatory training at the Theological Seminary in Kampen.) Before coming to Goes I spent five days in historic Utrecht, and a marvelous weekend in Rotterdam with a fellow student, Karel Smouter and his family. Decadent remains of Roman civilization can still be observed in Utrecht. Rotterdam is interesting, too. Huge open spaces mark its centrum, ugly reminders of a beautiful city now left broken in the wake of a ravaging war. I met two Dutch students here, Henry De Raad and Henry De Bolster, who hope to come to Grand Rapids shortly and attend our Seminary—(not to forget Henk Dooranbos from Kampen). They certainly are enthusiastic. You will have to meet them when they come.

But don’t get the idea that it’s all play and no work over here. Far from it! Schooling here is tough and thorough. The Holland student begins school at the age of 6 and from then on is exposed to six grades of general elementary instruction. At the age of twelve specialization begins—practical skills are taught in a two year course in the “Ambacht School”; a four year commercial course in the “M. U. L. O.” (Meer Uitgebreid Lager Onderwijs) is offered to students with business ambitions; and a six year pre-university course or “Gymnasium” is provided for those with professional aims. A graduate of the Gymnasium is ready for the University and has at this point had a stable study diet consisting of five years of Greek, six years of Latin, five years of German, seven years of French and four years of English. Mathematics (Physics, trigonometry, solid and plane geometry) is thrown in for good
measure with Geography, Bible, Biology, and History as desert. Thus the European, at the age of our High School graduate, has qualitatively a much greater background with the exception of Philosophy than our average college graduate. There are no electives. All courses are compulsory.

The Freshman year in a European University is called the “propædeuse” in which the student studies advanced gymnasium subjects, but not the professional subjects as such. Here in Kampen freshmen take advanced Greek, Latin and Hebrew, but Dogmatics, etc. are reserved for the remaining three years. After the freshman year the propædeutisch exam must be passed and if successful the student is then admitted to the Theological classes. Much anxiety accompanies these examinations. Failures, even though not frequent, do occur. After the Sophomore, Junior, and Senior years the average student must continue his study at home for two or three years or until such a time as he should feel himself adequately prepared to take his candidate’s exam.

My professors are Dr. Schilder for Christian Religion, and Philosophy; Prof. Holwerda for Hebrew; Dr. Buwalda for Patristic and New Testament Greek; and Dr. Mulder for Classic Greek. I find their lectures fascinating; they are brilliant scholars.

One of the most interesting things in the school life here is the activity of the Student Corps. This is an organization of all the students, having at its head a five-man Senate elected by the group. The purpose of the Corps is to cultivate social communion between the students providing an outlet for both intellectual extra-curricular activities and recreational “bull-sessions”.

But I must tell you how freshmen were initiated into the Corps. The Freshman is considered “green” when he first arrives at school and therefore must undergo an “ungreening process” during the first three weeks of the semester. This period is begun with a visit to the Senate of the Corps. In solemn silence we, the “novieten” or novices are led before the Senate and entering the chamber are struck dumb by the blinding glare of spotlights mounted upon desks behind which sit the cut-away-coat-clad Senators in dark and gloomy silence, puffing their cigars, eyeing us with careful scrutiny. Silence. . . . “Take that silly grin off your face!” shouts the Praetor in impatient anger. Silence. . . . “Bow six times to each officer!” commands the ab-actis with an air of authority. This goes on for perhaps a half hour until the little freshman is completely rattled, not knowing whether to disobey the Senate and take the consequences of so rash an act, or to continue being made a fool of. Finally we received permission to toddle out of the Senate chamber, but to the humiliating cadence of “Groen bene we groen, als groente-soep zoo groen.” No sooner were we out of the Senate chamber than each was overpowered by four or five upperclassmen and dragged off to some secluded corner of the school or senior’s room where efforts were made
to pump us empty of every intimate or personal thought and emotion.

Another initiation device is the collection of student signatures. Each freshman is given a little book in which he must collect the signatures of each upperclassman. The signature constituting a vote of confidence is given to the novice only after he has made thorough acquaintance with the upperclassman. Some seniors take advantage of this “kennis–makking” demanding of the novice services in exchange for a signature. . . . I remember buying stamps at the post-office for one of my superiors.

If the freshman acquires all the necessary signatures, as most of them do, and puts on a sufficiently convincing attitude of inferiority, he is installed at the Corps opening meeting or “Dies Natalis” meaning “birthday”. For a little freshman, and particularly this one, this first meeting is never to be forgotten. Entering a large room we were faced with a barricade of chairs and tables above which howling upperclassmen bellowed their challenges to cross their “picket line”. We had to cross the line to get to the other side of the room where the Senate was waiting to install us. Over the tables we went. “Charge!” Chairs flew in every direction, tables stood up on end, arms were pulled and legs were yanked,—but we got through. Order once more restored, the Praetor read the Latin installation form, the novieten bowed themselves three times deeply to the Corps emblem, the Praetor’s gavel slammed onto the table with a resounding crack and thirteen new Corps members received their membership certificates. Thirteen fresh, chirping voices sang to the honor of “Fides Quaerit Intellectum”, meaning “Faith Seeks Knowledge”. But naturally, all new babies must be washed and we Corps babies also. Before any of us could move, each was lifted off his feet by six seniors and carried off to the faucet. Under went each head, and at the same time a sound paddling was administered where it does the most good. But there is no more fighting now, no more kicking around, no more compulsory sitting on the floor in the presence of upperclassmen, etc. Congratulations and wine and a complete change of attitude salute the brother corps member who shortly before was treated as dust under the feet of his superiors. “Amicitia! Amicitia! Amicitia!”—a wonderful sensation. The ceremony is completed with the “Amicitia toast”. This amicitia or friendship toast is formed when two persons link their right arms together and each drinking out of his own glass looks the other squarely in the eye. The “Dies” doesn’t stop here however. It’s just begun. First an hour and three-quarter-paper on the theme “De Prediking” followed by a two-hour discussion of the paper, a short skit played by the novieten poking fun of upperclassmen, and finally an “alles en nog wat” period of jokes, dramatic organ playing and not to forget the professional caricatures as expertly done by Karel Deddens.

My space is up. The foregone sounds silly and even out of place to an American, I know. But Europe lives in its traditions and traditions influence also
the scholastic life. Even though perhaps a one-sided emphasis may be noted in my description, a healthy balance of fun and devotion is ever maintained. There is also a good side to initiations if not carried too far. I know that I shall ever cherish my signature book, and the water didn’t hurt me either. Student life in Holland is dynamic. About the rivalry between the three clubs within the Corps, the majestically built Gothic Churches, European class distinction, the week-end trips with my friend Cor Oly, and my resounding tribute to the Veenhof family whose friendship and devotion carried homesickness away, there is very much to tell. Later, maybe!

Your Friend,
Carl Reitsma.

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First meeting of the Student Corp,
“Fides Quaerit Intellectum” — “Faith Seeks Knowledge”
Twenty-five Years Old

In the course of the next few weeks you can expect to hear that the consistories of the Protestant Reformed churches in various areas will hold a formal observance of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of our churches. This is indeed fitting and proper and we look for the interest of the young people of our churches in a matter such as this.

The past twenty-five years really is a significant period for our churches. Known to all of us is the fact that during this period all of our Protestant Reformed churches were called into being. During this period our parents were given the responsibility to support and reaffirm their confession of the Reformed faith.

A vast change has come over the life of our churches during this era. This period started out in a wave of controversy concerning fundamental doctrines of our Reformed faith. Much of the material published at that time was written in the Dutch language and to a certain extent is lost to this generation. The rapid transition of our families from Dutch parents to American citizens of Dutch ancestry and the subsequent abandonment of the Dutch language has its implications for us.

First of all it means that we are in a very unique position. We, the children of our parents who carried the brunt of the struggle in the early years of our churches, find that we have been almost completely cut loose from the culture and religious development of the Netherlands and we find ourselves living in a culture rooted in England and American society.

We feel that it is not amiss to point out that in this situation we must avoid the pitfalls of forgetting the heritage of our fathers. There were generations in Israel during the Old Testament period who did forget the work and teachings of their fathers. During the New Testament era the history of the church often followed the same course. May we take heed to the lessons of history and seek the truth of the Reformed faith with sincere hearts and with clear minds dedicated only to the current teaching of Scripture that God is God and that all His creatures do His bidding and that He loves His own chosen people by saving them through the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

H. G. K.
The OPEN FORUM offers to all our readers the opportunity to express their opinions and thoughts concerning articles and contributions published in Beacon Lights. It also extends to our readers the privilege of space for comment on any other issue or development within our sphere of interest.

If you wish to place a contribution in OPEN FORUM, please feel free to do so. All we ask is that copy be typed (double-space) or at least legibly written.

P. S. — And not too long, please.

God’s Cause! He privileges, He commands, He calls us in His grace to be the representatives of His great and glorious Cause in the world. We are not only the vine of His planting, but also the light of the world, to display God’s truth and righteousness before all men.

Mr. Webster states that progression is the act of moving forward; a proceeding in a course; motion onward. We must move onward in faith. Does anyone who has read Philippians think that we can do without progression—either as individuals or churches—and live?

I like that note. We all have to be ashamed of our passivity, inertia, stagnation.

In the second place, you appeal to the youth for their interest in this matter. Young people are energetic and we ought to persuade them to use their energies in a God-glorifying direction. They must take an active interest in the various labors and endeavors of God’s people for the Kingdom. I hope that all our young people may be interested and take greater interest in all the things related to our Christian calling: our Thological School, our Missons, our Christian Day Schools, our church publications, the Christian Labor Association, our radio programs, and so forth. If only our parents take an active interest in our points of advancement, that well help little. Youth must also be strong in these things. (Even financially the young people in
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our day, many of whom work and earn wages as high as family-supporting men, can be big boosters of these various causes. Their contributions to church, etc., should be more than the so-called tithe.

However, we should not expect youth to do what the church as a whole should do! Building a Theological School Building for our Protestant Reformed Churches is not a project of the young people but of all our churches, of old and young alike in all our churches.

O, I am sure that if our young people in all our churches were granted permission to have a campaign to raise funds for a Theological School Building, they could probably collect enough money for such a purpose in one campaign. I am convinced of that. However, such an undertaking is the task of our churches in her representative bodies, more especially of Synod which has considered the matter and has taken steps toward building facilities for our Seminary. The Acts of Synod of 1949 reveals on page 111 that $8,235.10 have been gathered by assessments for the Theological School Building Fund.

But I know your objection. You have read Article 106 in the same Acts: "Motion is made and supported to suspend the assessment for the Theological School Building Fund for one year." The matter was temporarily stalemated by this decision of last Synod. You object to that. You state, therefore: "We wish to point out that there is an urgent need among the Protestant Reformed Churches which is not being met". This statement is a reflection upon the decision of Synod which I quote above.

I grant you the right to your opinion. I grant the right of individuals or groups to use their influence in bringing about certain actions or reforms or advancements.

However, at the same time we cannot encourage the youth to do the things which Synod failed in your estimation to do. (This certainly is the impression you leave. You evidently reason that since Synod suspended the assessment for a single year, they fail in a task, and so: young people, let us show Synod that it can be done. Moreover, we should consider that Synod used discretion in coming to a decision on this matter. Synod felt that there were other needs more important at the present time. Synod felt that the most important progress to be made in our School set-up is the procurement of another professor (for which two unsuccessful attempts were made) and the broadening of our study courses. The need to expand our Library (for which a small assessment was made) was thought more urgent.

Up to this time I personally have seen no pressing need for such a building. Our student-body has numbered three or four persons the last half dozen years or more. Sixteen to twenty hours a week spent in the large basement room of Fuller Ave.'s church present a lesser health hazard than the forty-eight hours many of our people spent the year round in our factories. The space is adequate
to house our library. The size of our School at present does not require or warrant a separate building. I have felt that it is yet a child which can live at home with its parents for a while.

(As far as a building also for living quarters for the students who come from out of town is considered, I think that it could be at best a weak argument for a building. I doubt whether anyone has ever been hindered from attending our Seminary because of such a lack. I have too much confidence in the kindness and willingness of our Grand Rapids people to quickly cope with such a known emergency.)

However, there has been of late another angle to consider. It is the matter of a normal training school for the instruction of teachers to teach in our expanding Protestant Reformed School system. We feel that such a school is a necessity, and is of such a nature that it could be intimately connected with our Seminary. Every one of the teachers ought to have an extensive course in theology. They must be trained to apply our Reformed conceptions to every phase of life. We know that next to nothing has been done in this field as yet, as leaders in the National Union of Christian Schools will also admit. We must make advances in that direction. For that reason I feel that the Normal Training School (of some form) and the Seminary may be closely related, and placed under one roof.

Then, too, a more urgent need is for students. More students are necessary both to fill the vacant churches and for broader missionary expansion, including labors, for example, amongst the un-church in our land and amongst the Jews. We should appeal to young men to consider seriously whether they are called to this work. Christ guarantees a place for those whom He calls to this task. The farms and factories are crowded...THE FIELDS ARE WHITE ALREADY TO HARVEST!

We appeal to young men and women to take up teaching in our own schools, lower and higher. In this way, present to them the challenge of instructing our children in the sound principles of the Word of God.

Our young men must see visions and our young women must see dreams...visions of the fields white to harvest...of children who must be instructed in Biblical principles.

When we have such visions and dreams, then we are ready for a Theological School building. Then all hands will rise to the task before us. Onward! Forward!

Your friend as ever,
Rev. James Van Weelden.

P.S.—We hope for a lively discussion of this important subject in an open and friendly spirit.

Reply to Rev. J. Van Weelden:

We wish to thank Rev. Van Weelden for his interest in Beacon Lights as indicated by his letter. My first reaction on reading his letter was one of chagrin. However, thoughtful reading of his letter leads me to believe that we are agreed on many points.
The major area of disagreement can be found in the ninth and eleventh paragraphs of his letter. I must point out that the remarks of Rev. Van Weelden in this section of his letter are based only on conjecture. He attempts to read something into our editorial which is simply not found there. We did not advocate that the young people of the Protestant Reformed Churches should do things that the Synod of our churches cannot or will not do. At the time of the writing of our editorial we had in mind the appalling apathy and general indifference toward the idea of institutionalizing our seminary. I advocate that the Synod of our churches receive more active and real tangible support from the young people both as individuals and through their societies and federation organization.

We also must point out that Synod in the past has taken steps in the direction we think we should go. First of all, Synod has levied assessments against the funds for a seminary building. Secondly, according to the Acts of Synod of 1949, Article 31, I, we read that the faculty of the seminary has inquired of the theological school committee as to action on the purchase of a building site. Evidently the faculty also has a dim view of present arrangements.

In response to the inquiry of the faculty, the theological school committee stated that it had done all in its power to obtain a building site but no site was obtained. The reason for not purchasing a site can be explained very simply. Sufficient funds were not available.

It is to this matter that our young people can and should lend a hand. No, I do not advocate lawless usurpation of the delegated powers of Synod, but orderly and positive action of our young people by supporting the Synod to the limit with both our prayers, our energy, our talents and our pocketbooks.

We hope, finally, that our readers will not get the impression that your editor and Rev. Van Weelden are in real conflict with each other.

H. G. Kuiper.

Oskaloosa, Iowa

Dear Editor:

In regard to the remarks of Mrs. Thomas A. Rhoda, I will try to clarify my point. We are called upon to separate ourselves from the world. For that reason we establish our own Christian Schools. Then the Christian High forms a ball team. Well and good if left at that. But this is not the end, for they become part of a league with worldly schools; playing against them to win a title. First we separate, then in recreation we unite. So it is with all amusements and pleasures of the world. First we separate, then we unite.

We must remember that we are living in a pleasure-mad world to which the church is fast succumbing. Too much time is given to bodily exercise. 1 Tim. 4:8: “For bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to come”.

Oh I know we say we do not let it
interfere with spiritual things. But if before Catechism and Society all you hear is talk about sports in which we have or are going to take part, it is interfering with our spiritual growth. God in His Word reveals that we may have only one desire and that is the service of God continually in all things.

The world and all its pleasure shall pass away. They shall profit us nothing. But unto them that desire to serve God, He sends the blessed promise that He will be our God and Father unto all eternity.

Alberta De Koning,

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THE COVENANT QUESTION
for after-recess discussion.

Prepared by Rev. L. Doezema

IV. Principles For Our Discussion: (continued)

5. In our study of the Scriptural doctrine of the covenant are we bound by any other principles than those in the Word of God?

This question serves to bring out that there are no other principles than those of the written Word of God which are binding for us. The Word of God always remains our only infallible guide.

It also serves to point us to an expression of the principles of the Word of God. The Church has absorbed the Word of God by the Holy Spirit and has expressed the teachings of the Word in Confessions which she has written down as her faith which must be believed unto salvation. Our Heidelberg Catechism has expressed itself in answer to its 22nd question, which is, “What is then necessary for a Christian to believe?” with this answer, “All things promised us in the gospel, which the articles of our catholic undoubted Christian faith briefly teach us.” It is evident that it does not tolerate any other faith which is contrary to the Apostolic Confession. We as Reformed churches have further adopted the three forms of unity as an expression of our faith to which we voluntarily bind ourselves as an expression of our personal faith, that which we also believe to be necessary unto salvation.

The confessions have derivative authority. So far these confessions have proven sufficiently clear to unite the true believers to see the heresies, which were contrary to the Bible. It was not our Protestant Reformed churches which saw the necessity of adding to the confessions in 1924, but the Christian Reformed Church felt the need of interpretation which we rejected as clearly contradictory to the confessions themselves as well as the Scriptures.

Moreover, we do not feel that there is ever liberty in our churches to teach private opinions. To say that there is nothing binding beyond our confessions, as if there are large areas of the truth which the confessions do not touch and
in which field we have the "liberty" to teach as we please, is revolutionary. We may only teach what we feel is the teaching of Scripture and as we have bound ourselves in the confessions. In a true reformation we always declare ourselves free from the bondage of men's opinions and decisions and bound only to the Word.

6. Are there Confessions which have much to say in regard to the debates about the covenant?

The Canons of Dort certainly are principles that give us much to determine the direction of our discussion. Our Baptism Form also has something about the covenant. Especially which statements of the form are often topics of debate?

7. Do we need another, a fourth form or statement to settle matters about the debate on the covenant?

There is no need at all for another form, but a real need to understand and be convinced of the present forms we do have. Heretical teaching can be judged in the light of the present confessions. About the differences within the Reformed framework we should be allowed to have full and free discussion until the truth rises in the minds of the people of God and the inadequate and false becomes evident to all.

FREEMASONRY . . . A Hypocritical Organization
Seymour Beiboer
Grand Rapids, Michigan

There are some 800 secret societies or lodges in our country. About half of our adult population, including mostly all of our prominent and influential people such as judges, lawyers, business men, industrialists, politicians, etc. belong to them. Even so-called ministers join these organizations. Men join these lodges for the sake of advancement in politics and business, of prestige, for position in society, and for help in old age and in financial distress. Lodges also try to show the way to eternal life, without Christ, to its members by doing their so-called good works.

Freemasonry is the oldest, largest, most influential and the parent of all the other secret organizations. It has its members in every part of the civilized world. Therefore, I will limit myself to the Masonic lodge. When you talk of Freemasonry you talk of lodges in general.

Freemasonry is composed of 33 degrees. The first three degrees, called the Blue Lodge, is the foundation of Symbolic Masonry. All Masons, whoever

* * * * This is the first in a series of three articles Mr. Beiboer intends to write concerning Freemasonry. The next installment will treat Freemasonry as an anti-christian religion.—Editor.
they be, must pass through these degrees. Next comes a separation. Jews, Gentiles, and Mohammedans follow the Scottish Rite, consisting of the degrees four to thirty-two. There is also the York Rite, consisting of the degrees four to thirteen which Christians(?) follow. After going as far as possible in either Rite, one is eligible for the thirty-third degree, called the Mystic Shrine, which expressed in true terms is, “From the Cross to Mohammed.”

The full name of Masonry is “Ancient and Accepted Free Masonry”. The “Ancient” in this name has reference to the allegation of Masonry that this order had its inception in the very distant past. I will say more about this later on. The term “Accepted”, is a simple statement that the candidate joining the lodge accepts it as it is, although he knows nothing about it at the time. The term “Free”, means that one joins of his own free will, which is true of the first degree only. All succeeding degrees thereafter are mandatory.

The history of Freemasonry dates back from no earlier than 1717 A.D. according to reliable sources. However, Masons try to claim that Noah, Enoch, John the Baptist, the Apostle John, and other saints were members of that lodge. The Blue Lodge is supposed to have been begun with the murder of Hiram Abiff, servant to King Solomon, who was in possession of the plans of the temple building. Highwaymen seek to obtain from him the secret of the building. Upon refusing to give this, he is killed. Thus the building is still incomplete because the laborers have no plans to work from. Anyone who knows the Scriptures will see that this is a big, wicked lie. If there was such a lodge at that time, it surely would have been mentioned in Holy Writ, especially if men like Solomon, Noah, or John the Baptist belonged to it. I will say once more that it is nothing more than a big hoax to deceive the simple. The degree of the Mystic Shrine ((33rd degree) was established at Mecca, Arabia and later received and instituted at Cairo, Egypt, with the purpose of promoting, organizing, and perfecting of the Arabian and Egyptian Inquisition in order to dispense with justice and execute punishment upon criminals. In the early part of the 18th century it was brought to the United States and placed in the hands of the Masons.

Repeatedly one hears about the boasted benevolence of the Masonic Lodge. They do have homes for their aged, orphanages for their parentless children, and they do give financial aid to their distressed members. But who are the recipients of these benefits? Only those Masons who keep their exhorbitant dues paid up well in advance and who are in good standing with the lodge. In other words the benevolence of the lodge is simply returning a part of the great amount paid in dues and fees. It is just like a large insurance company. This is quite a contrast to the teaching of Jesus in Luke 14:12-14, Matt. 18:1-6, Luke 18:9-14.

Just who are eligible for membership in the Masonic Lodge? Only those who
have a good income and a sound, healthy body and mind. In other words, the lodge does not receive minors, the aged, the poor, the lame, the blind, the physically handicapped, or the mentally ill. And lodges are supposed to show the way to eternal life! Quite a contrast from the teaching of Christ, who receives us poor, miserable sinners. Not so with Masonry because it only depends on how good you are and what you can do for its members. All members are sworn by the bloodiest of oaths, which I hope to discuss in a future article, to show partiality to fellow members of the order and to favor them above everybody else, even above fellow Christians, in business and politics, and to deliver one another from trouble whether he be right or wrong.

Masonry dotes on bombast and hypocrisy. Often a group of Masons attend some modernistic church as a body. On the Saturday preceding, this church attendance is always broadcasted in the daily papers. At least this is done in the city of Grand Rapids. Also consider the parades of the Masons with all its trumpery; their gawdy uniforms, their plumed hats, scarlet sashes, tin swords and white gloves.—Reminds me of children dressed in Indian or cowboy suits or in Halloween costumes. See a procession of lodge members, many of them strutting about the main street of any metropolis as proud as game cocks in all their finery and expensive jewelry. Certainly it reminds one of the Scribes and Pharisees of which Jesus said, “But all their work they do to be seen of men, for they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments and love the chief place at feasts and the chief seats in the synagogues and the salutations in the marketplaces and to be called of men, Rabbi.” Matt. 23:5-7.

ETERNITY

(1)

H. A. Van Putten

This day again has slipped away,
Into Eternity;
What has it been? What shall I say?
Lord Thou didst care for me!
Thou didst provide my every need
No want I here did know;
This day has passed as Thou decreed;
And thus each day shall go.

Each day, each moment, every hour;
’Tis Thine, we know, O Lord;
Grant that our faith so high may tower
That we Thy work record;
Each fleeting moment Thou art near,
Thy faithfulness is sure;
For what may come, we need not fear,
With Thee we feel secure.

No lack shall we experience, for
Time, and all things are Thine;
Grant us such faith to Thee adore,
To place our hands in Thine;
To trust Thee, knowing, with such peace,
That all is well with Thee;
Wilt Thou each day this faith increase,
To wait alone on Thee.
In answer to the first question as to the time when the angels were created, it must be stated at the outset that Scripture does not give us any definite information as to when the angels were created. The existence of angels is presupposed in the Scriptures, rather than asserted; for although the Word of God abounds with references to the angels, the creation narrative of Genesis 1 does not mention the creation of the angels at all. The Scripture, in its history of creation, does not inform us as to the creation of angels, must be explained from the fact that the viewpoint of Genesis 1 is earthy, not heavenly. It mentions no other works of God than such as are visible to the human eye.

This has lead some to believe that the angels existed prior to creation, and they especially base their contention on Job 38:7: “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” In the context here the Lord is speaking to Job of the creation of the earth, and asks him the question: “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth... when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” However this may be, the fact is that the angels are also creatures, created after the “beginning” of Gen. 1, for Scripture emphasizes that in six days God created the heaven and the earth, and all that they contain. “By the Word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.” Psalm 33:6.

Personally, I am inclined to agree with the Rev. H. Hoeksema, that the angels were created on the sixth day, together with man. His reason for this is that the angels belong to the class of rational-moral creatures, that are adapted to know and serve God consciously. He writes “If we interpret Genesis 1:1 as having reference to the creation of the unformed, dark chaos, we find, that in the rest of the creative acts the Most High gradually brings that created chaos nearer to himself, until in man the world has conscious communion with Him. If we apply this process of a gradually ascending scale also to the formation of heaven, the evidence would be in favor of the view, that like man, the angels were created on the sixth day.” And whereas, unlike man, the entire heavenly hosts were created at one time, the Lord could indeed say unto Job, “Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth... when all the sons of God shouted for joy.”

In answer to the question as to the
time that the evil angels fell, we cannot say with certainty. I am sure, however, that it must have occurred after the first sabbath of creation. In the last verse of Genesis 1 we read that “God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good”. Certain it is that at this time the angels had not yet fallen, for then God could not have beheld all things that He had made, and say that it was very good. It must have occurred soon after, for man’s stay in Paradise must have been of brief duration.

* * * * *

Another questioner asks: “Why did angels never take on appearances of women, but always of men in Bible times?”

Angels are spirits and are therefore invisible. When they appear to men on earth they are given human forms in order to become visible. Sometimes this form was attended with heavenly glory, although this was not always the case. They are even referred to as “men” as in Gen. 18:2, 16, 22; and Gen. 19:5. When they appear, they speak, walk, touch men (1 Kings 19:5), take hold of them by the hand (Gen. 19:16), and also eat with them (Gen. 18:8). Now the question is, why did they never take on the appearances of women, instead of always appearing as men. If we remember that the angels are ministering spirits in the service of God, and that God forbids women from ministering in the Church, which is the house of God, (1 Cor. 14:34, 35), then it must be evident why the angels, when they appear in human form, never appear in the form of women, but always in the form of men.

* * * * *

I am convinced that nothing in Christianity is so rarely attained as a praying heart.—(Charles G. Finney).

* * * * *

Some temptations come to the industrious, but all temptations attack the idle.—(Charles H. Spurgeon).

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—15—
OUR WORSHIP

“If any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. . . .”—John 9:31.

Are you a worshipper of God?
Your answer is unequivocally an affirmative one because you have joined the throng that keeps holyday and are found in the multitude that goes down to the house of God? You have made your confession of faith or have intended to but for some reason your good resolution has not yet materialized? You are a member of the church in good standing and you bear well your portion of the financial burden? You are active in the society and work of the Kingdom? You are also a member of the Christian School Society and thereby display your interest in the generation to come? Besides, you always have something for the solicitors of countless Kingdom causes?

Only, beware, lest you are like those who “make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess”! For the Lord says, “Woe unto them”. They make a beautiful appearance but. . . .

Are YOU a worshipper of God?
You assert that you are and thereupon you proceed to furnish the evidence by pointing to your numerous good works? You abound in charity, you pray, you read, you preach and teach. . . .?

But remember that there will be many who say “Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy name; and in Thy name have cast out devils; and in Thy name done many wonderful works”? Yet, they do not enter the Kingdom of God for they are branded “works of evil”. They lack the requisite of a real worshipper of God.

Our worship, Christian Friends, constitutes the basic element of our Christian Living. It embraces far more than the formal attendance of the House of God on the Lord’s Day for Divine worship although never may it be said that the importance of this Divine service is in any way now minimized. For it is just because one’s attitude toward the church and its service reflects itself in his or her activities in other spheres of life that, we would say our worship of God in the fellowship of saints is the cornerstone of our Christian living. However, the observation we wish to make at this point is that true worship embraces a much broader field than our going to church twice a week.

He that worships God is one that does
the will of God. The will of God is the revelation of His own good pleasure according to which He sovereignly demands of us the service of our whole heart, our whole mind, our whole will, and our entire strength. Further, it demands that we press into the service of our God every moment of our time and every particle of those possessions which we call “ours”. He who does that is indeed a “worshipper of God”.

Let us ask again, “Are you a worshipper of God”? 

No more beautiful and truthful answer can be given to this question than that to which we also fully subscribe as found in our own confession and according to which it is acknowledged “that even the holiest of men have but a small beginning of this obedience, yet, so, that with a sincere resolution they begin to live, not only according to some, but all the commandments of God”.

Admitting then that we are not “perfectionists” and that “in all things we fall short of the glory of God”, but nevertheless cleaving to the profession that in principle we are worshippers of Him, let us try to cultivate that principle and improve the practice of our worship. To do this let us begin with the sphere of the church. We attend the services for the purpose of worshipping our God. That means then that we come into the holy sanctuary to do His will. And what, we ask, is the revealed good pleasure of God concerning us during those precious moments that we spend in His house? Surely not at all that we utilize this time to make up for the sleep we failed to get the evening previous. Nor does He delight in our converting our pew into an observation post from which we with critical eye would take note of the latest developments in feminine attire. Neither would it please Jehovah that we assemble among the saints only to seek more fault with the dominee. Again, it is not true worship when we simply take a passive place in the congregation and leave the service as empty as when we came. Doing things such as these, we are not worshipping God.

Rather the Lord delights in meeting His people in His house and dwelling with them there in blessed, conscious communion. There Jesus listens to the beautiful anthems of praise raised by the voices of His holy children; sees the poor widow give all her living in alms; speaks to His own through the mouth of His servant and builds up His Zion through His Spirit and grace. Worshipping God means both preparation and participation in such Divine service. Active participation!

That demands an effort and diligent labor. The worship of God is not performed to His pleasure by assuming indifference. The sermon may have been “deep” and the Word of God may be “profoundly mysterious”. Worship does not mean that we use these “excuses” to evade talking about these things with our children, our parents, and our fellow saints, but that we in the office of all believers and by the unction of the Holy Spirit given to us make a diligent search of the Scriptures and study the matters
in question that we may be wise unto salvation. The more we are busy in the Word, the more realistic our worship will become.

Then, too, the church affords other means by which the saints enrich their worship of God. That is one glorious aim of every society where the Word of God is discussed and the fellowship of the saints is exercised. It is indeed a sad omen when the church discards these means altogether or when they are so corrupted that through them the flesh rather than God is served. Well may we sing together:

“How pleasant and how good it is,
When brethren in the Lord
In one another’s joy delight,
And dwell in sweet accord.”

And you who neglected these means not only deprive yourselves of that blessing and joy but you abstain from the worship of God among the saints and for that He will bring you to judgment.

We have already said that the worship of God embraces all of life. It is not confined to the church. Worship is meeting God every moment of our life in the right disposition of heart and mind. It is the joyful experience we have when we are conscious of His favorable presence as we are busily engaged in the daily routine of our work. It is the happy knowledge of His fellowship at our family altars and in the circle of our friends. It is even that pleasure of feeling assured that even in our pleasures He looks on us with smiling face. Worship necessitates that always and everywhere we stand in a humble and reverential attitude of service toward the living God.

Once more then: “Are you a worshipper of God?”

Christian friends, you who are now young men and young women and who tomorrow will be leading the church of Jesus Christ in the worship of her God, may you consider the matter of your worship seriously. We are living in the latter days and the superficiality of things in the sphere of the religious is apparent to all who have the least vision of the Spirit of Christ. Yet, our God does not change and He still demands the same truth and uprightness of heart as ever and with anything less than this He is displeased. You cannot mock Him. You cannot pull a fast one past Him for “all things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do”. May we therefore, impress upon you the importance of taking the matter of your worship sincerely to the chamber of prayer and cry to God with the Psalmist: “Search me, O God, and know my heart, try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me and lead me in the way everlasting.”

For remember that “he who worships God, him God heareth”. Hearing you, He will abundantly supply you with the corrective power of His grace and Spirit and your worship will be enriched daily and your joy in the service of your God unspeakably magnified.

O worship ye Jehovah God. In the beauty of His temple, worship Him! Now and forever serve Him with undivided heart!
Communist China?

Shall we recognize Communist China is an important matter for our government at this time.

Other governments have done so. Great Britain because of her valuable possessions and capital investment in China has decided to recognize China's Communist government.

This column has repeatedly pointed to the danger of Asia. Now this danger is much closer than we imagined.

The Republican party is considering making an issue of the present administration's failure with this question. Some of the Republican leaders together with military experts, claim that we should prepare to defend Formosa. This implies that we take a stand over against the Communist leaders of China and say no further encroachments or there will be war.

I am not able to give an expert opinion about recognition of a country. But it seems evident that there can be no objections to the recognition of a Communist government if we have taken the course in the past to recognize Soviet Russia. If we take the stand that the present rule in China is not the rightful government we are faced with the problem of the corrupt Nationalist government for one thing, and then we are also faced with the problem of whether it is our business to enter into another nation's internal affairs.

However, it may be that we ought or ought not to recognize the present government, we ought to insist on the promises and pledges made by China to us in the past. Any government ought to be held to the commitments that have been made by its nation, if reasonable.

If we do take a firm stand, it can be observed that in the present situation, in which Russia is influencing the Chinese government, we shall face trouble.

There is more at stake than China. All Asia is at stake.

The Half Century Mark

It probably is a bit late to make such reflections about the half century that is past. At least it will seem that way when you read this some time in February. However, I am writing about this in the first week of January and the half century mark that we are reading about in the papers is worthy of the notice of all of our young people.

I believe it should be worth our effort to try to recall some of the major events that have taken place in the past fifty
years. At least we can consult our parents and leaders who have lived through these years and discuss with them the many changes in every field of endeavor and life. The industrial changes have affected our economic and social life without a question.

Always we should be concerned about the Church. That the Church has been affected by all these changes in our way of living is evident even to the youthful observer. It would be interesting to try to recall the movements that have arisen in the Church and especially our Reformed Churches. Our Reformed Churches are never beyond the influence of the heresies that ruin the Church at large. Some time or other heresies enter in some form into our Church life. Many of these movements are the result of the unrest and fear that fills the masses. There is a search for some "comfort" and false prophets arise with their philosophy of peace of mind and soul. There is the feverish activity of the "haves" to engage in church activity to soothe their conscience. Is there and has there been a return to the Word of God?

In the past half century, at the quarter mark, there was a most interesting and from our point of view deplorable break in the little Reformed group in America which was seeking to be true to the reformation principles of the Afscheidig and the Doleantie of the Netherlands. The Christian Reformed Church suffered its major break in 1924. Now at the half century mark we also are talking of making some kind of celebration of our separation from the Christian Reformed

Church. The date of the signing of the Act of Agreement, March 6, has been suggested as the time to remember this separation.

We should ask ourselves the pointed question, What has God done for us in this separation? What are we joyful about? Is there anything that grieves us about this? Are we convinced in our mind before God that we confess the Reformed faith and the truth of Scripture? Do we realize our calling for the future in the next quarter and half-century in the time in which we live.

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Jesus naturally knew what was astir in their hearts. He will answer them, vss. 20-22. First of all He begins with another amen, amen, denoting authority, but also certainty regarding what He says. In a little while the disciples will sob, with loud, unrestrained weeping. So according to the Greek. Their beloved Master will suffer at the hands of the wicked rulers and die a malefactor’s death. And this deep sorrow will be contrasted by the great joy of the world. This will cut them to the heart. And this will take place in a little while. In fact it was only a matter of hours any more; it was now the night before Good Friday.

But things will take a change, a radical one. They will also have great joy. For a comparison Jesus uses as an example a mother’s attitude and reaction in giving birth to a child. First pain and sorrow, then great joy. Now the point is, not merely that the joy follows the sorrow, but that the very thing that caused that grief shall turn into joy. The one event will plunge them into grief and then lift them into great joy. So it shall be with the disciples, a little while and that great sorrow will fill their hearts, but after that they will experience that blessed joy, in connection with the same thing.

The question arises what Jesus has in
mind when He speaks of seeing Him again after that second little while. Does it refer to the days after the resurrection, or to the Pentecost, or to the final return of Christ? The latter is definitely out of consideration since this is definitely more than a little while. Neither can it be the resurrection since then the disciples didn’t see Jesus yet as He really was. They still didn’t understand. Neither was their true joy yet at this time. Notice their request for the restoration of the kingdom with His ascension. Therefore it must refer to Pentecost, when He will return to them in the Spirit. This interpretation is also corroborated by the context and the subsequent words which speak of the Comforter. Hence, in the Spirit they shall see Him as He is, and being filled with Him they shall understand the cross, and be filled with joy on account of it.

Questions: Why did the disciples fail to understand the cross at that time? How does the world understand the cross?

**How they will receive that joy, vss. 23-24:**

How? Through Christ, of course, but in the way of prayer.

But how must we understand vs. 23? Does it mean that the disciples won’t pray? Of course not. It means that regarding the knowledge of the truth they will have special need, as was the case up to this time. The Spirit of truth will guide them into all truth. They will not enquire as Peter and John did in 13:24; as Peter alone did in 13:26; as Thomas did in 14:5, etc. This does not mean that now the disciples became omniscient; no, in re the significance of the Christ they no longer lacked understanding. But there would still be many other things dark to them, and they would still have multiple needs from day to day.

For these they must keep on praying, in Jesus’ name. Up till now they had failed to do this. They had prayed as all true Jews prayed, in connection with the name of God as it was known to them from the Old Testament. Their prayers had been typically Old Testament prayers, in connection with the promises, etc. But now the fulfillment is come, Jesus Christ. In His name they must now pray. This they must continue to do and their joy shall be fulfilled.

To understand these words we must notice two things: 1. That they must pray to receive the gifts of the Spirit and this joy. This shows the tremendous importance of prayer. Therefore Scripture also speaks of it time and again. 2. That they must pray in the name of Jesus. This means first of all that we pray only in connection with His entire revelation of the Father. We must pray only on the basis of His work. We must pray in the consciousness that all is in Jesus and He is our only hope and salvation. Such prayers the Father will answer in His name, which means that He will do so by virtue of His name, and by its power due to the work of Christ on earth.

**Questions:** Do we pray enough? What is often wrong with our prayers? Can we say that the Lord blesses us because we pray? Can we receive the Holy Spirit if we do not pray? Isn’t this a
condition? Do we experience the joy of which Jesus here speaks?

* * * *

LESSON LIII.

"In Anticipation Of The Day Of Victory"

(John 16:25-33)

Prayer in that Day, vss. 25-28:

The expression “these things” refers to all that Jesus has said and done. It refers to all that pertains to the Father, His entire mission, His return to the Father, and what He will do then. All these things Jesus spoke in proverbs, i.e., in veiled utterances or forms of speech, the opposite of plain language. All that Jesus said, even when He spoke as literally as possible, was veiled, even though the disciples thought it was so clear. But later, in that day, the day of Pentecost, then He will make it very plain to them. Then they will understand all these things. Such will be the work of the Spirit. In other words, then they will fully understand the Saviour, as the one in whom is all our salvation. Consequently they will believe in Him, and in all their prayers seek it only in Him, in His name.

Therefore Jesus says that He will no longer pray for them, in their stead, as He has done in the past. Cf. ch. 14:16, for an example. The disciples, and all the believers, will now themselves ask the Father, through Christ the complete Saviour. Through Christ they will be united to the Father, love Him and seek their all in Him. The result will be that through the finished work of the Saviour the Father will indeed answer their prayers for He loves them that pray in the name of Jesus. To state the matter in simple language we can say:

1. Christ becomes the complete Saviour, through His death, resurrection and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. 2. By this Spirit the believers will out of love seek the throne of God, in the name of this Jesus. 3. The Father will answer such prayers because such prayers (in Christ) are pleasing to Him. The conclusion of the matter is this: In that day (Pentecost) He will be the full and complete Saviour of His people. Notice how Jesus time and again emphasizes the significance of that Day.

The Reaction of the Disciples, vss. 29-32:

Notice first of all what their reaction is at this time. To the above words they all (formerly individuals spoke) respond by saying that now Jesus speaks plainly. On three things they are unanimous: the way in which Jesus now speaks, the wonder of His knowledge, and the support this gives their faith on the vital point regarding Jesus. They feel that already now He is using the openness of speech He has promised for the future day. And yet they do not realize the full
measure of what Jesus had in mind in vs. 25. This they will not realize until that day has come.

However, in the very near future there will be a different reaction. Therefore Jesus speaks as He does in vss. 31, 32. The horror of that hour will far surpass their darkest forebodings of it. They believe, yes, but in that hour faith will be shaken to its foundations. That hour has already come for the powers of darkness were working feverishly at this very moment. Judas has already left them, and the multitude soon to appear in Gethsemane is now being gathered together. And the disciples will all be scattered. Not merely will each one flee to his own place but they will all seek their own things again, pursue their own interests, as they had done before Jesus had called them. Jesus will be left alone, and yet He will not be alone. The Father will be with Him.

Questions: Why did the disciples so leave Jesus? Were they cowards? Must we conclude from this that they as yet had no faith in Jesus, vs. 31?

Purpose of all these words of Jesus, vs. 33:

Why does Jesus speak all these words? In order that they may have peace, peace with God. We have peace with Him when all is well between Him and us. It is the peace of the saint, the peace of heaven. The opposite of peace in the soul is strife, unrest, anguish and fear. But these must not be found with them; they must be courageous, untroubled and unafraid. Also when they must endure tribulations and afflictions which will surely come. But always must they look at Jesus, believe in Him, cling to Him, for He has overcome the world. Be afraid of a foe who already has been crushed and conquered? Faith in Him says: Never. Notice how Jesus here always speaks as the victor.

Questions: Is the expression “in the world ye shall have tribulation” meant only for the disciples or for all believers? If the latter is true, how is it experienced today? Are the saints very often “of good cheer” in the midst of such tribulations? In which way only is this possible?

* * * *

LESSON LIV.

“Jesus’ High-Priestly Prayer”

(John 17:1-20)

His Prayer concerning Himself, vss. 1-5:

The parting discourses to the disciples are finished, and that with the words, giving assurance of victory: I have overcome the world. But now before Jesus goes forth into this dark night, as He sees before Him His disciples who will soon leave Him, and the whole future of His work, His communion with the Father impels Him to pray. And He prays aloud; it is also a long prayer. “Its serenity, majesty and its authority befitt only the heart and lips of Him who is the Son of God. Before this prayer all our prayers fade like tapers in the sun”. (Lenski).

First of all we must note that Jesus is preparing Himself for threatening
sacrifice, as God's appointed priest. In that light we must view this entire chapter. Therefore it is called Jesus' high-priestly prayer.

The goal of His work is the glory of God, vs. 1. He wants to be glorified, through the way of the cross, death, ascension, etc., in order that through this exaltation He may glorify the Father. But the Son can and shall be glorified only through His saved church. Therefore the Father has given Him power over all flesh, hence also over the devil, in our flesh in order that He might give eternal life unto them. Christ in this way will conquer the devil, the world and our sinful flesh and translate us into the kingdom of God, in which we shall forever know God through Him. So Christ shall be glorified and God through Christ. The work on earth necessary for this glory has been completed (Jesus speaks as if it now already is finished); therefore He again prays for this glory in vs. 5. One important question arises here: what does Jesus mean with the glory which He had before the world was? Different explanations are given, but we believe that it refers to the glory which God gave Christ in His counsel, as the firstborn of all creatures, and the Lord of lords.

Questions: Can we say that John 17:3 is a definition of eternal life? Can we according to vs. 4 conclude that Jesus had much more work on earth than dying on the cross?

Jesus prays for His disciples, vss. 6-19:

Jesus now prays for them. And what a marvelous prayer it is. It is an utterance of profound love, showing how He is really also wrapped up in the work of the disciples. But having given them His Word He now places them in the hand of His heavenly Father. His concern and care show His amazing love and mercy for them. In the vss. 6-10 He motivates His prayer for them.

And what is that motive? First of all that they have kept the Word of God which He has given them. They even know that He is of the Father. They believe that all He has given them is of the Father. From the very beginning they already believed in Him, but the longer they sojourned with Him the more they realized that everything about Him was from the Father. Notice how the Church must know. She must know Him in all His blessedness and glory. 3. Unto that Jesus is the servant of the Lord. He makes unto her all that is in the Father, through His work. 4. For the realization of all this, i.e., knowing the Father through the keeping of His Word, Jesus here appears as the praying High-Priest. May God keep them (Jesus' sheep) for His own glory through the glory of the Son.

Questions: To what does the word "them" in verse 9 refer? Can it also refer to all the believers? May we in the light of these words pray for the world? For America? For any wicked men? What comfort can the disciples derive from this prayer for them?

* * * *
LESSON LV.

"Jesus’ High-Priestly Prayer"

continued

(John 17:20-26)

Jesus prays for all His people.

The previous verses refer directly to the eleven, yet in the nature of the case they must also reach farther. The eleven sent into the world as the apostles, will not be sent in vain. Whatever opposition they encounter, their work will succeed. Sanctified and enabled by God, they will bring thousands to faith. Hence the prayer expands: Not concerning these alone, etc., vs. 20. Jesus therefore now prays for all the believers who become such through the Word brought by the apostles. This naturally includes the believers of our day.

But what does He pray for? That all the believing ones, including the apostles, may be one, one in love, faith, aim, etc. They must be one body exercising the communion of the saints. This unity must be correspondent as to its original type to the reciprocal fellowship between the Father and the Son. By Father and Son are not meant the two persons of the Trinity, but the Triune God as Father and Christ the Mediator, being God and man. Between Christ and the Father there is intimate fellowship. The Father is in Christ and Christ is in the Father. Of that unity our unity must be an analogy. This certainly shows the tremendous calling of the church of Christ in the midst of the world. What a comparison! It also goes to show the tremendous importance of the unity of the church, loving one another. However, Jesus also teaches how this can be done. "I in them" is the answer. In other words the church experiences and exercises that communion only when she is in Christ and Christ in her. So the church is one through Christ in the Father. Or, to invert the order, it is from God, through Christ, in His people.

Vs. 22 tells us how this is possible, namely through partaking of the glory of Christ. By this glory is meant His inheritance, the Spirit of God, and the life that He receives of God. These He gives unto His people whereby they are enabled and made willing to be one, in word and deed.

And the purpose of this unity is that the world may know that God did send Jesus. Here we have the highest goal of Jesus’ work on earth, namely, that all men may know (the wicked and the righteous each in their own way) that Jesus was sent of the Father. Again John ends in His theme—The Word made flesh.

The question is how the world can see this in the church? The idea is that in the unity of the church (people who by nature are haters of God and man) the world must see the power of the almighty love of God working in the hearts of men through Jesus Christ. This surely shows what effect such communion can have upon the world, but also what the world thinks when the opposite is true. Also what the world thinks of Jesus and of His Father when men do not manifest
this unity. Then God is humiliated in the eyes of men. And this is terrible.

This intimate union with Christ and the Father will be perfectly realized after while in the Parousia, the second coming of Christ. Therefore Christ wills this, praying that they may be with Him in heaven, beholding His glory.

In the last two verses, which are the conclusion of the entire prayer, Jesus appeals to the righteousness of the Father. In that righteousness His request will certainly be granted. Why? Because He has completed His mission of first of all making known to them the Father, who He knew perfectly Himself. Through this declaration of the Father unto them they receive this love of God in their hearts. And the result is that this love of one another in Christ Jesus will be realized. This is Christ's work. Therefore, "O righteous Father, hear me," says Jesus.

This prayer is being answered every day, and will be answered fully in the day of days when all the saints will be one in Christ unto the glory of the Father.

Questions: Does the world see much of this oneness in the church? Is the world to be justified in its criticism of this lack of unity? Often the world gives this as an excuse for not joining the church. Is this right? What is the cause of such little unity and love among the brethren, according to these words of Jesus?

MY INFLUENCE

A careful person I ought to be;
A little fellow follows me.
I dare not to go astray,
For fear he'll go the selfsame way.

Not once can I escape his eyes;
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries.
Like me he says he's going to be —
That little chap who follows me.

He thinks that I am good and fine;
Believes in every word of mine.
The base in me he must not see,
The little chap who follows me.

I must remember as I go,
Through summer sun and winter snow;
I'm building for the years to be,
That little chap who follows me.

—Author Unknown.

* * * * *

Choose me well when you are starting;
Seldom is it an easy parting;
I'm an enemy or I'm a friend,
What am I? I'm a habit!

—Christian Cynosure.
Protective Simulation

Some of you may recall a previous article entitled “Protective Coloration” in which we endeavored to show how the Creator provided many members of the animal kingdom with external cloaks to match their natural surroundings so as to protect them from their enemies. The intent of this article is to illustrate how the Great Designer has provided other animals with an unusual means of self-protection—the ability to feign death.

The most familiar example of counterfeiting death is that of the opossum, which, when in danger, becomes immobile, drops its jaw, draws back its lips, exposes its teeth in an agonizing expression, and assumes a glassy open-eyed appearance of death which completely baffles its enemies.

In South America the cunning pampas fox is a master at the art of deception. At first, he will fight savagely. Gradually he eases up and finally drops as though dead from exhaustion. The foe admires such apparent courage, but after the one attacking has withdrawn, the feigning fox cautiously slips away. A behaviour very similar to the pampas fox pattern characterizes the Australian dingo (wild dog). One author, Mr. Hudson, has said, “The poor brute will keep up the pretense even when its head has been broken. Some cases are known in which such an animal has been left for dead, with its head half cut through; but during the night it has managed to crawl away into its native haunts without having given one sign of life during the whole time it was being beaten to death.”

The reptiles are also adept in this pretense of death. For example, a Congo lizard rolls on its back, places one of its paws in its mouth and lies perfectly still in this uncomfortable position. The giant African toad is completely relaxed and supine, assuming any position in which it is placed as though it were a lifeless mass. Possibly, you have immobilized a frog by placing it on its back, or a chicken by laying its head next to a line drawn on the ground.

A leaf-like locust of Nicaragua ‘freezes’ when a horde of driver ants appears. These ants consume every living thing in their path and the locusts instinctively use their effective form of protection—apparent death. The ants can walk all over them without their giving any indication of life. The value to thus protect themselves is even more evident when one observes the other insects in their endeavor to escape by flying or jumping away. Their attempt is futile as they are immediately caught by birds which purposely fly above the ant army to obtain their food supply by capturing the disturbed insects.
Another excellent example is the walking stick which will ‘freeze’ in the position of a broken twig for hours after the approach of an enemy. The water strider, an aquatic insect, may be immobilized with a light tap on the thorax. Touch an infested potato leaf and watch the beetles roll off as pebbles and remain lifeless in form and helpless as clods of dirt.

Explanations of these feigning acts are many and varied. Some attempt to explain it on an evolutionary basis—animals imitate death to escape it; the survivors are those that reproduce, and, consequently, by natural selection feigning death is perpetuated. Other naturalists ascribe these forms of catalepsy to fright, but this explanation is inadequate because animals as the frog, chicken, guinea pig, may be immobilized without any sign of fright. The response is instantaneous. A third theory is that of the mechanists who endeavor to explain the reaction as a physical cause and effect phenomenon. For example, a bright light causes a running rabbit to “freeze.” They explain that the bright beam of light strikes the brain causing it to stimulate the secretion of activating hormones in the body as a cap explodes a bullet. This chemical hormone paralyzes the nerves completely at first, but, gradually, diffuses and releases the body from this stimulus.

There are elements of truth in all the explanations which we may combine and view in the light of creative design. In His infinite wisdom God designed this “death feigning” reaction to show forth His greatness and glory. Certainly, it is not the product of the animal’s own mind or ingenuity as the Darwinian evolutionists would have us believe. The act is instinctive—instilled in the very being of the animal by God. In many cases fear or an emotional disturbance may be the stimulus and, undoubtedly, the feigning reaction is centered in the physical make-up of the organism as the secretion of a chemical sets up an automatic nerve-muscle reaction of a protective nature and the result in these instances is a death feigning simulation.

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**F.P.R.Y.P.S.**

Convention Theme for 1950

“THE POWER OF GODLINESNESS” (2 Tim. 3:5)

Subdivisions:

1. The essence of the Power of Godliness — or, the meaning of it.
2. The manifestation thereof — or, how revealed in the world.
3. The possibility — through Christ in us by means of the Word, instruction, etc.
TITLE:—The God Seeker.
AUTH:.—Sinclair Lewis.
PUBL:.—Random House, New York.

The God-Seeker is the latest novel by this famous author. The list of “Best Sellers” written by Sinclair Lewis is quite lengthy. Perhaps one of his best known works is the book called, “Cass Timberlane”, published in 1945. The author’s name quite often is a fairly accurate criterion by which you would judge a book. The name Sinclair Lewis suggests to many of us, I am sure, a novel of interest. I am convinced that many of our so-called “best sellers” reach that status only because of the reputation of the author. It is for that reason that I have chosen to report on “The God-Seeker.”

To my knowledge this book is the first attempt by the author to write what we would call a religious book. At least, the title suggests that we have here a novel in which the characters are seeking some divine being or some god whose attributes and qualifications they are not thoroughly acquainted with. I say, the title suggests that. Actually this is not so. To understand this let us examine the book. Many of the characters in this book are historical. However the personalities around which the book is written are fictional. The story deals primarily with Aaron Gadd, a young man from New England who leaves his home to go to the Minnesota Frontier to learn there the business of being a missionary. The story opens with Aaron as a very small lad who rides in his father’s sleigh as the people of that neighborhood busy themselves helping runaway slaves from the South escape to Canada. Aaron’s father, Uriel, is presented as a strict Congregationalist, a man who presents himself to his family as being righteous before God. It is this exhibition that motivates a desire in Aaron to understand people and to achieve this righteousness that his father was always flourishing and always obscuring. Uriel Gadd derived much satisfaction in speaking of the darkies reprobation to eternal fiery torment. His reason for helping the darkies escape to Canada was that he thereby would save his own soul. That we have here a contradiction is evident. It is not possible to believe in election and reprobation and still speak of works as the means of saving our soul.

As soon as Aaron reaches young manhood he leaves his father’s house and takes a job in a neighboring town as an apprentice carpenter. It is while he is away from home that he hears the Rev. Mr. Harge, founder of a mission in the
Western frontier land called Minnesota. Mr. Harge convinces Aaron that he must be converted and that the only way to make his conversion authentic, he, too, must go to Minnesota and do missionary work amongst the Indians. This does not appeal too much to Aaron who likes his work as carpenter and has no desire to lose his scalp so that some Indian can exercise a little more discretion in the consumption of fire water. After some time has passed and a few meetings with Mr. Harge, Aaron decides he must be an ambassador of God to the Red man.

It is during this period of time when Aaron is making his decision that he meets Selene Lanark, half-breed daughter of Aasar Lanark, fur trader from Minnesota. Mr. Harge and Selene are acquainted, having met on the frontier. Lanark is unscrupulous in his dealings with the Red man and has nought but contempt for Mr. Harge and his mission. Nor does Mr. Harge on his part suffer from an over-abundance of love for the fur trader. True to form, Aaron promptly falls in love with the young lady from the frontier. She is about to sail for Europe and the fact that she will return to Minnesota is the only thing that causes Aaron to stick to his decision and be a missionary.

As soon as Aaron arrives in Minnesota he is assigned to the task of digging potatoes in the mission garden. This task is followed by many more and soon a year has gone by and he still has not received any instruction in the art of being a missionary. He does find some time to make a hasty study of the Indian and manages to go on some hunting trips with them. He is rapidly becoming dissatisfied with his lot when Selene returns to her home. She promptly has a row with her father and is forced to leave his house. She seeks refuge in the mission and all is well until her father repents of his actions and entreats her to return home. She refuses, causing him to attempt force in having her returned to her home. She and Aaron then flee the mission and get lost in a snow-storm. They are found and rescued by Huldah, a young lady who has been staying at the mission and who also has more than a passing interest in Aaron. However Aaron and Selene make good their second elopement and go to St. Paul. They are married there and Aaron sets himself up in the construction business.

It is here that it becomes evident that Aaron Gadd’s seeking for a god is merely a seeking for the fortunes of this world. As long as his firm can build better homes with less expense than his rivals he is happy. The sum and substance of his god-seeking was the security of wealth and possessions that so many in our day also seek. With complete accuracy Mr. Lewis might have titled his story “The Education of Aaron Gadd.”

The book is well written and the reader does not become bored or disinterested. However interesting reading is not always the best. If you desire to read the book, I would say by all means do so. From a historical viewpoint, much can be learned. Other than that, from the Christian point of view, the book is certainly not a “best seller”.

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THE ALCOVE

The government has not the power . . . . .

An extract from chapter 4
The Amazing Cross, by
Rev. H. Hoeksema.

There are certain unchangeable, inalienable principles, to which the higher powers, the government, even in a republic, is subject, which it may not violate, and that cannot even be submitted to the vote of the people, or the will of the majority, principles which any government can only disregard and violate to its own destruction. Higher than the highest powers in this world, is the eternal and unchangeable objective law of God, and beyond the reach of the power of the state is the Word of God as contained in the Holy Scriptures. To maintain the law of God in its own domain, and to leave room for the free course of the Word of God, is certainly the obligation and calling of the higher powers. The government has not the power to determine whether or not the parents shall exercise proper authority in the home, nor whether or not they shall educate their children in the fear of the Lord. The government has not the authority to determine whether or not the citizens shall have the right to kill and murder, to steal and rob and deceive and blaspheme. The government has no power to violate the unchangeable law of God concerning the marriage relation, to make laws provide equal opportunity for legal divorce and re-marriage on the flimsiest grounds rather than on the ground of adultery alone. I realize, of course, that these evils are committed, and that also the higher powers in our own land trample the eternal law of God under foot, till marriage is made a mockery. But I protest that no government can have the authority to make laws contrary to the law of God, and insist that by doing so, nevertheless, it destroys the very foundations of society and of the State. No government can have the authority to determine whether or not the Church shall worship according to the Word of God, and whether or not it shall confess in all its implications that Jesus is the Christ, that He died for His people, that He rose on the third day, and that He shall come again to judge the quick and the dead. The government does not make the truth, but is subject to the truth. The State does not create principles of righteousness and justice, but it must ask for the will of God.