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COVER NOTE: Young people going to Society despite Grand Rapids' 100 inches of snow.
GIDEON'S VENTURE OF FAITH

REV. G. M. OPHOFF
Grand Rapids, Michigan

IN THIS month—February—occurs the annual return of the day of birth of two deceased presidents of this our United States. I have reference to George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. They were men of stature, no doubt, courageous and daring spirits, heroic figures in their day through whose agency God accomplished His work. Numbered among the nation's great, their memories are cherished and even worshipped. For such is the way of the world. It worships its heroes. But we who are God's believing people worship the living God, the Father of Christ. We have no heroes among men before whose shrines we lie prostrated. But we do have our cloud of witnesses compassing us about—witnesses to the willingness and power of God to save His people thru their faith and in response to the expressions of their faith, His gift in them.

The writer to the Hebrews makes mention of several of these witnesses by name. Included in his list is also the name of Gideon. Remarkable was the working and achievement of the faith of this witness and of his band of three hundred.

The people of Israel had again apostatized from the Lord. For their sin they were being oppressed by the Midianites. The rule of the Midianites was terrible. They left no substance for the Hebrews, neither sheep, nor ox, nor ass. They destroyed the increase of the earth. They plundered and devastated every part of the land that they entered, killing or dragging with them every living thing. This sort of thing had now been going on for seven long years, when God called Gideon.

Having heard that the Hebrews were being organized for war, the Midianites had collected in the valley of Jezreel, where now they were poised for battle. And they formed a mighty host. For they had come up in great hordes "as grasshoppers in multitude."

How unspeakably preposterous, apparently, to go forth in the dead of the
night against such a multitude with a band of three hundred men armed with nothing more formidable in the way of weapons of war than trumpets and empty pitchers concealing burning lamps.

But so the Lord had commanded and for a reason that He also had stated. “The people that are with thee,” so He had spoken, “are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel vaunt themselves against me saying, Mine own hand hath saved me.” In a word, it had to become evident that Israel was to be saved not by his own hand but by the arm of the Lord, and that the victory that was to overcome those Midianite hordes, representative of the world-power, was solely Gideon’s faith—faith in the gracious and wonder-working power of the Lord, Israel’s redeemer-God.

And this faith was indeed Gideon’s and his band as a gift of God in them. For take notice of their battle cry: “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” Mark you, there was to be but one sword, and this sword the arm of God once more stretched out to save His people. And in this arm alone Gideon was putting all his confidence. For his cry was also to the effect: “By the sword of Gideon.”

And how marvelously the Lord responded to Gideon’s faith! The pitchers were broken and Gideon and his three hundred stood there, not poised for attack with sword and spear, for they had neither, but simply holding the lamps as freed from their opaque incasements and alternately blowing their trumpets and shouting: “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” All they did, rightly considered, was to proclaim to those pagan hordes the Word of God, which they had made their own and in which they were putting all their trust to which they were now giving utterance under the constraint of their living faith.

And take notice how their faith overcame. “And the Lord—mark you, the Lord—set every man’s sword against his fellow even throughout the host: and the host fled.”

How evident that the victory was solely the Lord’s. For how could those hordes of fierce men have been routed by the sight of a few burning torches, by the sound of the blast of some trumpets, by the shouts of three hundred men, and by the noise of the crashing of some crockery, had the Lord not worked! What folly to end with that victory in those shouts and torches or even in Gideon’s faith as if that faith as such had overcome. Yet certainly the importance of that faith of Gideon, the expression of that faith especially in the battle cry “By the sword of the Lord and of Gideon” must not be minimized. For it was precisely through and in response to these expressions of faith that the Lord gave victory. And therefore it is so very true that faith—mark you faith, our living faith in God through Christ, is the victory that overcometh the world.

Truly. A meaningful cry, that cry “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” God’s believing people continued to utter
that cry through the ages of the past. It is the battle cry of the hosts of God even today, and also will continue to be its cry to the end of time. And the wicked are afraid. For the cry is in their hearts as put there by Christ. And their final terror will come at His sudden appearing in glory when all the wicked shall be smitten by the rod of His mouth and when the firmament shall pass away with a great noise and the elements shall burn and there shall be new heavens and new earth where God's tabernacle shall be with men—the men of His good-pleasure.

"Wherefore," in the words of the writer to the Hebrews, "seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses," of which Gideon was but one—one of many, "let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith . . ."

Jesus the author and finisher of our faith. How true. We cry "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" only because He cries by His Spirit in and through us this very cry. It is His word spoken in our hearts. How true, then, that the victory is solely His.
EDITORIALS

A STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

BEING mindful of the high calling that “Beacon Lights” has—namely, to be a BEACON indeed, shedding spiritual light upon the path of our Protestant Reformed youth; we humbly experience and confess “who is able unto these things”.

God grant us His grace and spirit that we, together with all our contributors, may hold forth the Word of Life in all its sweetness, power and purity, according to His word and our confessions, as we, a Protestant Reformed people, hold them dear.

To this end it is our purpose as editor to endeavor, by His grace and in all meekness and humility, to introduce and discuss such subjects from God’s Word and Christian experience and practice as may be to the edification and strengthening of our young people in the knowledge, fear and admonition of the Lord.

To this end also we sincerely solicit the co-operation of the board, staff, contributors and readers in order that we unitedly and in complete harmony of purpose may seek the spiritual welfare and upbuilding of our Protestant Reformed Zion, to His eternal praise and our eternal salvation.

SDY

Notwithstanding whatever can be said concerning the evidences of divine revelation, the most convincing argument, and most infallible demonstration, that the Scriptures are the word of God, is to feel their enlivening, enlightening, and transforming power in our hearts. And let it ever be remembered that Scripture cannot be understood but only in and by the inward ministration of the Holy Ghost. Were we in a room hung with the finest paintings, and adorned with the most exquisite statues, we could not see one of them if all light were excluded. Now the blessed Spirit’s irradiation is the same to the mind that outward light is to the bodily eyes. The word of God will not avail to salvation without the Spirit of God, any more than a compass can be of use to a mariner unless he has light to see it by.—Toplady.

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Some preachers are constantly pressing men to help forward their own conversion, upon pain of damnation. It is as absurd as if I were to stand in a churchyard and say to the dead bodies there interred, “Why will ye die?” In my idea, it would not be less so, were I to ask a spiritually dead sinner, “Why wilt thou die?” Alas! He is dead already; ask a man who is already fallen in Adam, “Why wilt thou fall in Adam?”—Toplady.
OUR FAITH AND OUR SIN

FROM OUR very own confessions we will take a few statements that express quite clearly what we, living and believing christians, profess concerning ourselves and our sin. These quotations may be found in the Three Forms of Unity in the various articles that speak of this subject. They are all worthy of a very careful study although that is not our purpose here. Concerning sin then, we believe:

"From the fall and disobedience of our first parents proceeds our depravity according to which our nature is so corrupt that we are all conceived and born in sin; wholly incapable of doing any good, and inclined to all wickedness."

"By sin man separated himself from God, who was his true life, having corrupted his whole nature; whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death. And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all his ways, he hath lost all his excellent gifts which he had received from God."

"We believe that, through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind; which is a corruption of the whole nature, and an hereditary disease, wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb, and which produceth in man all sorts of sin."

"Man, revolting from God by the instigation of the devil, abused the freedom of his own will, forfeited his excellent gifts and entailed on himself blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment, became wicked, rebellious, and obdurate in heart and will and impure in his affections."

"Man is neither able nor willing to return to God."

In a word, we believe the TOTAL DEPRAVITY OF MAN! 

Important it is that we maintain with all consistency this very fundamental truth because we are surrounded on every side by myriads of those who unashamedly teach the free will of man and openly deny the truth of our confession. They are as bold as the father of the lie they proclaim and many there are who are misled and deceived by this effrontery. Do not let them fool you! Stand firm on your confession! Free will and total depravity are mutually exclusive. If you choose the former you must deny the latter.

Our confession of the truth concerning sin is also of great importance because of late this truth is tacitly denied by the proponents of the pernicious
theory of “common grace.” Of course, those that believe this theory will not admit this but rather attempt to hide their difficulties under the cloud of “mystery” but those of us who are acquainted with the tenets of the second and third point of 1924 know that it is impossible to believe that “theory” and maintain the truth of the confessions we have quoted above. They, too, are mutually exclusive. And so, once more, be not deceived! Stand firm on your confession!

(Before we then go on to the practical significance of this truth, permit me to ask especially you service-men a question. In your life in the armed forces, how do you observe the truth concerning “sin?” Do your surroundings indicate “a gracious attitude of God toward men in general, restraining sin in them and enabling them to do many things that are good” or do they indicate “blindness of mind, horrible darkness, vanity and perverseness of judgment, obduracy of heart and will and impurity in all affections?” What do you find even apart from what Scripture says on this matter?)

But why then are we so insistent upon a sound and consistent profession of this truth and in what way does the acknowledging of this truth by faith affect our daily living? This is an important question in answer to which very much might be written but we confine ourselves to a few observations.

Firstly, those who consciously live in the faith of this confession will never be able to boast or glory in themselves. This is one of the very fundamentals of true Christian living because the true Christian is adorned with the beautiful robe of humility and never that of pride. Pride is the Christian’s shame. God hates and resists them that are proud and arrogant. Hence, one who is presumptuous and boasts in self cannot be a Christian. And yet, we all by nature do that very thing so that it is indeed important that we are brought to a full realization of our total depravity so that all boasting may cease throughout our life. If we understand that “our minds are enmity against God,” it will be impossible to “glory in the freedom of our will.”

Next, a full understanding of this truth will bring us penitently upon our knees before the throne of grace where we will seek the grace of deliverance from sin. One who does not know sin or does not see its horribleness and devastating power will not seek deliverance from it. And, without deliverance there is no ‘Christian living’ possible. The real essence of Christian living is a seeking after God and that means a fervent desire for complete redemption from the power of sin unto which we know we are so awfully enslaved.

And so, if we realize our own wretchedness and know too, that salvation is found in God alone, the understanding of this truth will lead us to adore with deepest thankfulness the unsearchable riches of God and glory in the God of all grace. Our lives will then

(Continued on page 8)
CURRENT COMMENTS

THE NEWS of this day in which I am writing these lines is that Prime Minister Churchill is in Washington visiting President Truman and having rather important conferences with him.

This is also a good point from which to see the events as they are shaping. The important issue to be discussed is England’s participation in the European defense program.

If we think back into history, we recall that it was England’s position in European affairs, as the leader, to play the balance of power as she wished. That is, she always took sides with that group of nations which was the weaker in order to keep down every challenger of her position.

So far Churchill has tried to play the old role of Great Britain and stay aloof from active participation in the defense program in order that she may not have to relinquish any of her remaining prestige. She is certainly on the side of the Allies, but seeks to retain as much bargaining power as possible. The old prime minister is very able to use the few advantages that England still has and his power of persuasion, to gain a better position.

General Eisenhower has insisted that Great Britain must contribute more to the European defense program. The European nations are awaiting these conferences of Churchill and the U. S. to see whether there will be that cooperation of England so necessary to its success.

For a long time it has been a matter of speculation whether the nations of Europe would be able to unite together into one federation on the same sort of principle that we have a United States. It has often been the hope of many, because the cause of the modern wars was this lack of unity. Now because of the common need of preservation there is the beginning of unity.

This unity, however, does not spell peace and security. It is because of the threat of Russian power that it is being formed. And the growing power of Europe and the United States only causes the enemy to determine to maintain a powerful control over the satellite countries and especially to control Asia which is the key to European and American prosperity. This contest of power only increases the fear of war.

Besides, the important question is asked, is this federation of countries of Europe an advantage in other respects. It is a natural phenomenon that when such independent nations which have developed their own culture unite they lose their own freedom and also their
power to produce a culture. Without thinking of their own institutions we consider their freedom of religion, and ask will this suffer? Theoretically it may be expressed that there is freedom of religion, but when the main purpose is to obtain political power in this world we know that religious freedom and especially religious ideals are lost.

We may expect therefore, along with the present day movement to federate for power, that we are approaching the days when there is less tolerance for the true religion.

A further consideration is the question, how successful will these movements at unification be? Viewing the present and the past history of these attempts we may expect it to be a much less cohesive power than the ancient powers of Greece and Rome. Greece and Rome had a culture to make the union more of a real union. We are now living in the days of the clay feet of the image of Nebuchadnezzar.

The more clear our comprehension of God’s love to us, and the firmer our belief in it, the more ardent will be our love to him, and the more active will our hearts be in his service.—Charles.

Our works are all the works of sin,
Our nature’s quite depraved;
Jesus alone can make us clean;
By grace are sinners saved.

CHRISTIAN LIVING
(Continued from page 6)

express thankfulness to Him. That is the life of the christian.
Without HIM we can do nothing for we are dead in sin!
Let him that glorieth then glory in the Lord! To no higher end could the knowledge of the truth lead us than to this. And if you deny or distort the truth concerning “sin” you will not reach this end.

None are made partakers of forgiveness but those whom God hath eternally and graciously designed thereunto.

—Owen.

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MODERNISM—

III. A WOLF DISGUISED IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

IN MAT. 24:24 Christ himself warns us that many false prophets shall arise, and show great signs and wonders insomuch that if it were possible they deceive the very elect. Modernism does this in a very unique way. She puts on a show of the truth in order to win the masses over to her antichristian religion. The World Council of Churches, an international conference of the leading denominations of the world including known Communists, was organized at Amsterdam in 1948. The first article of its newly drawn constitution reads as follows: “The World Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.” This is the only statement of a doctrinal, confessional nature that is in this constitution. Just to read this sounds good and if it means that we as redeemed children of God confess to be the truth; there would be no need of me writing on this subject. It is because that in and behind this statement there are conflicting forces, all of which have agreed to adopt this statement because it is designed to serve their purpose, not at all because they are united as to its meaning. Moreover an official declaration is added to this first article which is as follows:

SEYMOUR BEIBOER
Grand Rapids, Michigan

“That the foundation is not a touchstone, whereby the faith of churches and persons can be judged; that the World Council does not concern itself with the manner in which the churches will interpret the foundation; that it is left to the responsibility of every church to decide whether it will cooperate on this basis.”

This declaration leaves room for an infinite number of variations of answers to the question, “What think ye of Christ?” The World Council’s answer to this pertinent and important question can easily be summarized to read like this, “Think whatever you wish; we are not concerned with your interpretation.” In other words this is an invitation for unbelievers to join with believers. It is entirely opposed to the teaching of Christ and of the Apostle Paul. (Matt. 7:15-23, I Cor. 10:20-22, II Cor. 6:14-18). It is the foundation for the apostate church and of the Antichrist.

Because the modernist believes that man is equal with God, he also thinks that man can do without the Bible and live good religious lives without it. This is the reason why the World Council adopted in the form of a document, “The Message,” the heart of which reads:

“But there is a word of God for our world. It is that the world is in the hands of the living God, Whose will for it is wholly good; that in Christ Jesus, His incarnate Word, Who lived, and
died and rose from the dead, God has broken the power of evil once for all, and opened for every one the gate into freedom and joy in the Holy Spirit; that the final judgment on all human history and on every human deed is the judgment of the merciful Christ; and that the end of history will be the triumph of His Kingdom, where alone we shall understand how much God has loved the world. This is God’s unchanging word to the world. Millions of our fellow men have never heard it.”

This declaration sounds very good in the ears of most nominal Christians and to the world in general, but it takes the inspired Word of the Living God to refute this declaration. First of all notice that the Bible is not mentioned at all—not even as a reference for further study. The Modernist knows very well that the Word of God is living and active, and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit, of both joint’s and marrow, and quick to discern the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight but all things are naked and laid open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do. (Heb. 4:12-13). Therefore he substitutes the word of “man’s higher self” or the god of his own making, in the place of the Word of the Living God. The statement that the “world is in the hands of the Living God, Whose will for it is wholly good” is a statement which any Jew, Mohammedan, Buddhist, or unbeliever could approve. Furthermore Scripture teaches us that the present world lies in the hands of the evil one, in fact he is its god. This present world is under God’s curse and wrath; it is headed for judgment and destruction. In the end He is going to make a new heaven and a new earth only after He has burned up this present one. The statement, “that in Christ Jesus, His incarnate Word, Who lived and died and rose from the dead,” is used by the modernists to cover up a host of sins, although it may sound very pious. There is no mention made of His conception by the Holy Ghost, His virgin birth, His miracles, His suffering on the Cross, His vicarious atonement for the sins of His people; His BODILY resurrection upon the third day, His ascension, and His return upon the clouds of heaven to judge wicked men. The modernists believe that Christ was born out of fornication. Thus they say that Christ is God’s incarnate Word instead of God’s only begotten Son. They do not believe in His bodily resurrection upon the third day, but believe in a symbolic resurrection of Christ’s deeds which continue to live throughout the ages.

Scripture teaches us very plainly that God has NOT “broken the power of evil once for all, and has NOT opened for everyone the gate into joy and freedom in the Holy Spirit,” but He gives the sinner over to his sin and sends him headlong into eternal hell. He has broken the power of evil for His elect only. This “Message” also speaks about the “final judgment on all human history and on every human deed as the
judgment of the merciful Christ. The Bible teaches us that Christ will judge every man according to his deeds, NOT just human deeds and history. Furthermore Christ is only merciful on whom He will have mercy, but whom He will he hardeneth. The Scriptural account of the final judgment declares that whosoever was not found written in the Lamb’s book of Life, written before the foundations of the earth, is cast into the Lake of Fire. Rev. 20:11-15. The statement “that the end of all history will be the triumph of His Kingdom, where alone we shall understand how much God has loved the world,” leaves room for any kind of view or position in this field; that is naturalistic humanistic, or supernaturalistic. Most Modernists believe that Christ will come again to establish an earthly kingdom. The only way in which we shall be able to understand how much God loved the world is that He gave His only begotten Son as a mediator for the sins of His chosen ones. This alone is the triumph of His Kingdom throughout all history.

Modernistic leaders and writers such as Harry Emerson Fosdick, Fulton Oursler, and others add to, subtract from, mutilate and distort the Holy Scriptures wherever they see fit in order to suit their antichristian, atheistic doctrine. What they do to Holy Writ can be illustrated by the following examples: when a man would take his radio set completely apart and then expect to listen to distant stations from it; or if a man would remove the spark plugs, battery, steering wheel, and brakes from his automobile, put water in the gas tank and molasses into the crankcase, and still expect his car to take him places. This is exactly what these modernists do to the inspired Word of God. They pick apart certain texts here and there out of their proper context; twist and distort their original meanings and throw out the parts of Scripture they do not want to hear into the junk pile. Thus they make a sordid mess out of the Holy Scriptures and still expect the masses of people to gather real comfort out of it. Practically all the Bible narratives are thus tampered with in such a way that even our covenant children in the kindergarten classes of our Christian schools could easily detect some of the errors. Yes even the words of that hymn which our little children love to sing:

Jesus loves me, this I know
For the Bible tells me so
Little ones to Him belong
They are weak, but he is strong;

puts the so called wisdom of many modern fools to shame. I like the idea of our Sunday School, Christmas and Easter programs because God is pleased to use little toddlers to put to naught much of the wisdom of this world and of modern preachers. Psalm 8:2, Luke 10:21, Matt. 19:14.

In spite of these facts the Modernists have the audacity to say that their word “is God’s unchanging word to the world.” This is nothing more than a very gross violation of the third com-

(Continued on page 14)
The Military Mail Bag

Hi fellas:

I doubt if Rev. R. Veldman needs to be introduced to you but for those of you who don't know him, he is pastor of Fourth Church here in Grand Rapids, and here's his letter.

Dear Fellows:

A FEW days ago the request came my way to write this month's letter to our servicemen in this country and abroad. I do this with all pleasure, of course. Several of you I know; others I've never had the privilege of meeting personally. I hope this opportunity may be given me some day. Meanwhile we all are one, are we not? Members of one denomination; lovers of one and the same truth; followers of one and the same Christ; children of one and the same God. From that point of view we feel close even though we've never met. God bless you all, wherever you are, whatever your way, now or in the future.

Funny business, this letter writing. On the whole, there are few things people dislike more. Many of you will agree at once, I know. Yet, there are few things people like better than receiving letters. In fact, when people receive something that pleases them very much, they are often heard to say: "It's like a letter from home." And then there's the matter of knowing what to write about. Why is it, that in a world chock full of news and topics, we so often say: now what can I write? One reason is, I suppose, that so many things happen in my own little life and my own little part of the world that are not of particular interest to others. I could write about the holidays that are just passed, but what's the use? If you were home, you know all about it; if you weren't, why talk about a world other than your own? I could talk about the weather, those mountains of snow that we saw here in Grand Rapids this year. But again, what's the use? Most of it is gone by this time. There's something about a snowfall, though. So gently they fall to the earth, those millions upon millions of immaculate flakes. In the same way the blessing of the Lord falls gently upon His own—in countless individual blessings for body and soul. Always the benediction of Jehovah is upon His people, it makes no difference where they are and what may be their experience in life. Boys, if only we may see that—see that our Heavenly Father causes all things to come to pass, that He does so in love and grace where His children are concerned, and that this includes the things that are difficult and distasteful for a time.

As I write this letter it's just one week ago that we crossed the threshold of another year. Always such a solemn occasion, I think—one on which the soul is filled with many, even conflicting emotions, and the mind is filled with many thoughts. I know, by the time
this letter reaches you, New Year will be long past, the winter far spent and we'll be looking forward once again to the beautiful Springtime. However, all this will not change the truth one iota.

"Little children," says John, "it is the last hour." Peter says, "The end of all things is at hand." Boys, that's true every day of the year. Let us not be deceived. In fact, it's truer today than it was yesterday. Every moment brings us nearer to the end, and, by God's grace, to our eternal home. From that point of view no song is more constantly up-to-date than the one you know so well:

"One sweetly, solemn thought
Comes to me o'er and o'er;
Nearer my home am I today
Than e'er I've been before."

It's the part of true wisdom never to forget this; always to be mindful of Scriptures' admonitions. Mark the sign of the times! Be spiritually minded and seek the things that are above! Lift up your heads on high and look for the salvation of your Lord! Watch and pray that ye fall not into temptation! Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown! Don't make everything of that which really is nothing!

And how about the future? We're still in this world. We must think of that too, of course, and we do. What lies ahead of us nobody knows—no one but God alone. Oh yes, in a general way we know. Both Scripture and experience tell us that. This new year, too, will yield its usual crop of trouble and misery, heartaches and worries, suffering and pain and death and tears. That applies to all of us, whether in the service or at home. But the details are hidden from us. Before us there is always that impenetrable veil behind which God permits no man to look.

What must we do? Is there no command from God? Often, when beginning or resuming a march, you've heard the bark of the officer: "Forward march!" When, in actual battle, the zero hour strikes to fall upon the enemy, the command is issued in one form or another: "Forward!" That same command comes to all of us. When Israel stood there before the Red Sea, fearful and doubtful, on both sides the desert, behind them the still unconquered might of Egypt, before them the sea, the command of the Lord came to them, through Moses: "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." You men have your Bibles with you. Sit down now and read carefully that 14th Chapter of Exodus. Those Israelites were really in a spot, weren't they? Yet, God tells them to go forward, meaning, of course, that He would be with them and make all things well. That's always God's promise to His people. The same applies to us. We must go on, —mind you, without fear or doubt.

I know, often it seems impossible to go on. There are times when one would seem to have every reason to fear, when things look hopeless, when it appears that there simply is no way out.

I know, often we are inclined to despair, to become discouraged, even to
grumble and complain and cry. We shouldn’t; we know that. Really, we should take God’s hand and say: “If God be for us, who can be against us?” We know right well, that the language of faith is this: “The Lord is my Light and my Salvation whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Strength of my life, of whom shall I be afraid?” Nevertheless, how often we falter and doubt.

Therefore, Christian brethren, I’d like to leave with you this thought. Put your trust in the God of your salvation. The future is entirely and without fail in the hand of your God. His Name is Jehovah, is it not? He is very faithful and true. His promises can never fail. And He loves us with an everlasting love, does He not? He gave His own Son for us. Paul says: “Shall He not with Him freely give us all things?” He has always made all things well, has He not? And all circumstances of past and future are in His hand, are they not? Not one hair of our heads can fall without His good and perfect will. Feilas, believe that and put your confidence in Him. Always say to yourself, whatever betide:

Jehovah’s promises are sure,
His words are true, His words are pure
    As silver from the flame.
The base men walk on every side,
His saints are safe, whate’er betide,
    Protected by His Name.

—R. Veldman

LIFTING THE LID
(Continued from page 11)

mandment. God certainly will not hold them guiltless who take His Name in vain in such a blasphemous way; for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all those who hold the truth in unrighteousness. In Rev. 19:20 we read very plainly that such shall be cast into the Lake of Fire. And these modern wolves in sheep’s clothing do nothing more than to lure the masses of people into the den of Hell and destruction.

“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.” (Ps. XXXIV. 6.) If that poor man did so, and had that blessed issue, why should not we do so also? David makes it a great encouragement unto waiting upon God, that others had done so, and found success. — Owen.

Before the fall, man’s will was free to good, and burned with a pure celestial flame. Original sin has acted as an extinguisher, and leaves the soul in the dark until lighted again by the fire of God’s Spirit. — Toplady.
THE TREASURES OF THE SNOW

IF YOU were in Grand Rapids during the past two weeks you would not have had to look far for an inspiration for a Beacon Lights article in the Nature Study section. Grand Rapids has just experienced a record breaking snow fall and from the weather reports our friends in the West are also having their share of snow. Probably when this article is being written people are just beginning to see the cement of their sidewalks again and are just recovering from “broken backs”. Possibly after this article is published in February most of the snow will have left and the aching backs and tired muscles will have been relieved so that we can look at the snow from the aspect of its “treasures” and not the work it brings.

Job asks us in chapter 38 verse 22, “hast thou entered into the treasures of the snow?” “The treasures of the snow” can be viewed from the aspect of the usefulness and the beauty of the snow. Only we as Christians who see nature through the Word of God can understand the real beauty and usefulness of the snow, for we know that it is sent in God’s Providence and to His Glory.

The snow that caps the mountains which many of us have actually seen and of which others have seen pictures reaches a great depth especially during the winter months. The first layers are packed under the great strain of the layers above them and a sheet of ice called a glacier is formed. These glaciers serve as large reservoirs of water. When the warm sun beats on these fields of snow they melt and the water is carried away by mountain streams. This snow becomes an important factor in the irrigation systems of our western farmers. The snow in a natural system of irrigation also serves our eastern farmers—it melts, evaporates, and finally falls in the form of rain.

The snow of the lowlands is also very beneficial. This snow serves as an insulator in much the same way as the insulation of our houses. The snow keeps the earth warm and protects the plants and animals from the cold of the winter. All of the green grass we enjoy in the summer, the fresh fruits and vegetables, and the flowers which herald Springs depend on the snow. From these uses and others we can plainly see that the snow, from which we probably did not receive much pleasure while we were shoveling, plays an important part in God’s Providence.

The snow is frequently referred to in Scripture as the standard of whiteness
and as the emblem of purity. The snow is beautiful as it covers the fields and lies on the branches of the trees; but there is another aspect of the beauty of the snow and that is the crystals or flakes of snow. The snow crystals are transparent and have many facets which reflects the light and hence cause the snow to have an appearance of whiteness. The crystals vary in size from \( \frac{1}{100} \) to \( \frac{1}{2} \) inch in diameter depending on the weather conditions. If the clouds and air are cold and dry, small and solid crystals will be formed. If the clouds are moist and the weather a bit warmer, large and branchy crystals tend to form. Although the clouds play an important part in snow formation, the snow crystals are not formed from the tiny drops of water in the clouds. The crystals are formed from the invisible molecules of water which travel between the droplets of water in the clouds. This fact is proved by the snow-falls on clear days.

The beauty of the snow crystals has attracted the attention of students of the snow for many years. Many scientists have attempted to draw them and recently a certain type of photography has been invented to catch the beauty of the crystals before they melt. By the use of these photographs scientists have classified snow crystals into two kinds: the tabular, or branching forms; and the columnar, or needle like forms. The tabular crystals are the most beautiful. Their wide variety of design, beautiful outlines, and rich interiors make them the most popular for study.

The variety of the forms of snow flakes is unimaginable. No two snow flakes have been found alike. One man has taken 4,800 photographs of snow crystals and has found no two alike. The outline of the snow or crystals is dependent on the wind movements and weather conditions. The richness of the interior of these crystals is largely due to tiny air tubes which are very orderly distributed in the snow flake. These dark lines through the flake cause some areas to be shaded which adds to the beauty of the crystal.

After we think about the beauties of this creation the thought comes to us of how much more beautiful will be that new creation, which will not be affected by sin and which will not have to be observed by sinful men.

Where'er His creatures gather
The unseen God is near;
Let rulers fear their ruler,
Their judge let judges fear.
How long, ye earthly judges,
Will ye prevent the right?
How long shall wicked persons
Have favor in your sight.

—Psalter 203: Ps. 82

Thy lovely Source of true delight,
Whom I unseen adore,
Unveil Thy beauties to my sight;
That I may love Thee more.
CORRECTION: Our attention has been called to a serious error we made in the interpretation rendered in Outline 16 of the previous issue. It was too late to make the correction before the material went to press. Hence we wish to call attention to it now.

Under the sub-heading marked "Co-workers with God" which should have been "Co-workers of God" we thoughtlessly made the following statement: "However, it is to be noticed that though the ministers are God's instruments, they are not to be conceived of as a plow, or a harrow, or a tractor, in the cultivation of land. No, they are co-workers WITH God." And under the sub-heading marked "The Church is God's husbandry" we made the following statement: "The Christian ministry is still a distinct office, and Paul does not hesitate to bestow honor upon it. Full of labor though it be, the ministers are God's co-workers who WITH God work in His vineyard to bring to manifestation the grace of Christ in His Church unto His glory."

Our error is that we failed to call attention to the discrepancy in the English translation which read (I Cor. 3:9): "For we are laborers together with God." Rather the text should be translated: "For of God we are co-workers; or, "For of God we are laborers together."

We trust you will, as we did, immediately see the serious difference. In the English translation the laborers work WITH God. In our translation, the laborers are God's and they work together, not with God, but with themselves. The English translation may lead to the false doctrine which teaches that man and God work together in the salvation of souls and in the realization of His Church. This is a doctrine which we as Protestant Reformed hate with all our hearts. We believe, and that is also what Paul says here, that God saves His own souls. Man can never work with God. So that the text teaches that Paul and Apollos labor together in God's husbandry, not with God, but with themselves, and while they so labor together, they are gifts of God to His Church which is His husbandry.

OUTLINE 17

2. CO-WORKERS IN GOD'S HUSBANDRY AND BUILDING (continued) (I Cor. 3:5-17)

b. Builders in God's Building (I Cor. 3:9b-17)

1/ God's Building.

In the preceding the apostle had been speaking of the Church as God's husbandry. Now the figure changes, and of the same Church the apostle speaks in the figure of a building, and in verses 16 and 17 more particularly of a temple of God.

Emphatically the Church is God's building. It is not of man but of God. It does not belong to man but to God. The Church is His workmanship. We are His temple. In us God's Spirit dwells. Also here the Church as a building must be insisted upon. It is not the idea here that the Spirit of God dwells in each of the members, though this is in itself true. When the apostle says in I Cor. 6:19 "Know ye not that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit?" he has in mind some-
thing quite different from that in our text. The view point here is that of the Church as a whole, not that of her individual membership. The Church is a building, a temple, a holy place in which God will tabernacle. She is not an ordinary building, but a house of God in which He will take up His abode. And, of course, by building we do not mean the material building of stone or brick in which the Church meets. It is rather a spiritual house. That Church, that building, has a foundation. Everyone knows that in respect to a natural, physical building as the foundation is, so will be also the building that is set upon it. The foundation determines the shape, the size, and the weight of the building. You cannot put a round house on a square foundation. If you will build wisely you will build a super structure that is commensurate with the shape, size and strength of the foundation. So it must be also in the spiritual sense with respect to the Church of God.

The foundation which is laid is Jesus Christ. In this connection it is interesting to note other Scriptures which speak of the foundation. In II Tim. 2:19 we read “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his, and let everyone that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” Here Paul does not say directly that the foundation is that of the Church, though the context makes it quite clear that it is. Neither does he say what the foundation is. He merely emph-
izes its stability and its two-fold seal. In Eph. 2:19-22, however, Paul speaks more explicitly of what constitutes the foundation when he says: “Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto a holy temple in the Lord...” From this it is quite plain that the foundation is the word of Christ spoken by the apostles and prophets. Christ is the chief corner-stone in that foundation. To Him all the prophets of the Old Testament pointed, of Him all the apostles spoke as they went out from Him. So we must conclude that Jesus Christ, and more particularly the Gospel concerning Jesus Christ, constitute the very foundation upon which God will build His Church. No other foundation can be laid than is laid which is Jesus Christ.

2/ The Builders.

The apostle designates himself as a wise master-builder who has laid the foundation. The word translated ‘master-builder’ comes from the same word from which our word architect is derived. But surely the apostle cannot mean that it was he who, carrying out the blue print conceived in his own mind, erects the building and temple of God. For God alone is the Architect of His Own building. Rather, the apostle means that he as a builder was
set of God to be first, to be as it were the supervisor or superintendent of the laying of the ground-work in God's building. It was given to him of grace not only to see what foundation was to be laid, but also to lay it according to God's plan. The apostle had not constructed the material of the foundation. It was already prepared for him. And according to the measure of the gift of God's grace, as a wise builder, he had laid the foundation in the Church of Corinth.

The foundation being laid, the apostle exhorts the rest of the builders to build according to that foundation. We are not to conclude from this that every believer is a builder. Rather, the apostle has in mind only those who perform some labor in the building of the Church. These need not be exclusively the ministers and other officebearers. There are others who are apt to teach, who prophesy, and who had the gift of tongue, etc.

3/ The Seriousness of Building.

The seriousness of building on this foundation is emphasized by the apostle in several different ways in the text. First of all by direct exhortation. "But let each one see to it how he builds on." It may not be done hap-hazardly and irrespective of the foundation, but his building process must be determined by the foundation. In other words, all his labor must be controlled and regulated by the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Secondly, the builders are warned of the fact of the day of judgment when all their works shall be tested with fire to prove their true value. And in connection with this the apostle warns that all the work that cannot stand the test of fire will be burned up. And the builders are encouraged to build substantially with the promise of reward. And finally the builders must keep in mind what building it is that is to be built. It is the temple of God which is holy. If any one corrupts this temple, God shall destroy him.

That makes the building process a very serious one indeed. All the work of building that is not properly in line with Jesus Christ will be burned up. No, it is even more serious than that. We must say that all that is not of God in Christ shall be burned up. Only that which is His work of grace shall remain. To put it bluntly, all my sermons, no matter how piously they were prepared and delivered, if they are not a work of God's grace, if they are not the Word of God, they shall be burned up. For we must remember that the building is God's. The builders contribute nothing to God's building. All the works of man shall perish. Only God's work of grace shall remain. This is clearly indicated in the figures the apostle uses to describe the material used in building. Noticeably they are of two kinds. They are gold, silver, and precious stones, which signify the imperishable; and wood, hay, stubble, all of which are combustible. That alone is imperishable which is the work of God's grace. And that alone receives the reward of grace.
This surely must keep the builders very humble. For they cannot contribute of their own to God's building. They may labor together by grace in His building program, but both they and the material of which the building shall be erected are all of God. For His must be all the glory. Even the workers shall be saved as by fire.

Woe therefore to those who imagine that they by their own material can add to God's building, and woe to them that corrupt the temple with their own defilements.

Questions for Discussion
1. If Christ is the foundation, how can Jesus say to Peter and the apostle group what He declares in Matt. 16: 16-18?
2. Does the foundation include more than the person and doctrine of Jesus Christ?
3. Does the two-fold seal of II Tim. 2:19 belong also to the foundation, or do election and sanctification merely identify the veracity of the foundation?
4. Does Rom. 8:1 also mean that the works of those who are in Christ Jesus shall have no condemnation?
5. In what sense is the Church holy? Verse 17.

OUTLINE 18

3. THE FOOLISHNESS OF BOASTING IN MAN
   (I Cor. 3:18-23)

a. It Is Self-Deception

Throughout the entire context the apostle has been condemning partisanship and the gloating in worldly wisdom which was apparently the cause of it. He denied the right of individual party leaders. They were mere men given of God in His grace to the Church, and they must work together, not apart. And the Church is exhorted to look upon these leaders as such.

In the verses we now have under consideration, the apostle once more reflects on this evil, and intimates that anyone in the Church who insisted nevertheless in this evil way was simply deceiving himself. He would have them avoid this self-deception.

If there was anyone among them, and thought himself to be wise by the standard of this age (the world from the point of view of her present development and scheme), let such an one become a fool in the estimation of this age, with the purpose that he may become truly wise. Paul had no objection to wisdom or to considering oneself wise. This he had done himself (see verse 10). But the wisdom must not be that which meets the standard of this age, but it must be the true wisdom which is the gift of grace. One who possesses such wisdom is reckoned a fool by the world, but truly wise by God.

Besides, the apostle, quoting from the Scripture again proves that this wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. The quotations are from Job 5:12, 13 and Psalm 94:11 respectively. Surely if the Lord captures the wise in their own craftiness, and He causes the inner reasonings of the wise to be useless, how vain it is then that one should imagine himself wise or appear unto men as wise. This would be the height
of deception. Therefore the apostle exhorts that no one boast in mere men. This should settle the matter of seeking party leaders, and creating party strife in the Church. But there is more.

b. All things belong to the Church

All the more reason why they should not boast in men. Emphatically all things are for the entire Church. All the leaders, such as Paul, Apollos and Cephas. They do not belong to a select group in the Church. No! They belong to all. The Church is not there for her leaders, but the leaders are there for the Church. The world also is there for the Church, not the Church for the world. All the powers in the world must serve the Church. This may not always seem true, but ideally it is true nevertheless. “All things work together for good to them that love God, who are the called according to His purpose.” And therefore the extreme powers of life and death, prosperity and adversity, health and sickness, peace and war, things present and coming, all belong to the Church.

c. All is of God

It is striking that in verse 22 when the apostle enumerates those who before in his Epistle were designated leaders in the Church (see 1:12) that he purposely leaves out the name of Christ. You would expect that he would say: “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or Christ, etc.” The reason for this is evidently two-fold. In the first place, already in 1:13 the apostle asked: “Is Christ divided?” The answer to this question is, of course, emphatically, NO! And again in our passage the apostle asserts: “And ye are Christ’s.” Here again is the thought expressed that Christ is for the entire Church and not for a select group in the Church. This same truth is expressed from the opposite viewpoint, “And ye are Christ’s.” The entire Church belongs to Christ, not a certain party in the Church.

“And Christ is God’s.” The anointed Servant of Jehovah is He, appointed and qualified of God to be the Head of His Church which is given to Christ to be saved by Him.

Thus all is of God. Of this the Church should be deeply conscious. All must serve His glory. Of this the Church should be ever mindful. No glorying in men. They are only given to the Church that the Church may serve Christ, and with Christ, serve our God.

Questions for Discussion

1. Though in controversies in the Church, the differences are generally over doctrine, is it not unavoidably true that the persons of men are also involved?

2. To what attitude should the truth “all things are yours” lead us?

3. In what sense is it true that all things mentioned in vs. 22 are ours?

4. If Christ is God, how can He be said to be God’s?
OUTLINE 19

4. FAITHFUL STEWARDS OF GOD'S MYSTERIES
   (1 Cor. 4:1-5)

a. Idea of Stewards

The apostle in vs. 1 makes the distinction of ministers and stewards, and in vs. 2 carries on the idea of the steward, thus indicating that the latter concept receives the emphasis.

There is, however, a fine distinction here which should be pointed out. The word translated 'ministers' comes from a word which literally means: one who rows under. Evidently it originally referred to one who served in the galley below deck at pulling the oars of the ship. Such an one received along with others below the deck, his orders from the master of the ship who was on deck. When Paul therefore speaks of himself and others who served in the Gospel as ministers of Christ, he meant to show that he was under Christ, and entirely at Christ's disposal, as the slave in the galley.

Moreover, when the apostle adds to this idea also that of 'stewards of the mysteries of God', he heightens the idea of responsibility in this service. A steward is one who in the house is placed in charge of his master's goods, and that too in his master's absence. He is therefore not only to discharge his duties, but also to report to his master the faithful fulfillment of them when the master returns. This idea is impressed upon us when the apostle writes in vs. 2 "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful." This is a statement to be applied to all stewards in general. No one hires a steward to place him in trust who cannot be considered trustworthy. No lord will allow a man to take care of his money of whom he has the slightest doubt as to his integrity. This is true of any steward. But it is especially true of one who, as in this case, is entrusted with the mysteries of God. This steward is not accountable to the members of the household, but solely to the Lord of the house. Concerning the "mysteries of God", we refer you to Chapter 2:7-11.

b. The application.

The apostle applies this figure of the minister and steward to himself and in relation to the congregation. He is under orders of Christ Who is his Master. He has been designated by Christ, not by the congregation, as Christ's assistant and helper. He is responsible therefore to no man. He has been also entrusted by Christ with the mysteries of God, and as a faithful steward he is charged to be the care-taker of these mysteries. At the time of reckoning, he is to give account of his stewardship to the Lord.

O, to be sure, as the apostle clearly indicated in the preceding Chapter the apostles were laborers together in God's vineyard and builders in His building program, and therefore as such were to serve the Church of Christ in its found-
ing and erection. But this could never mean that they are ever to be reckoned with as mere servants of the Church. No, they are Christ’s servants, and accountable only to Him.

This is a truth especially applicable to Corinth with her present partisan-ship. It appeared that the Church had assumed the prerogative of lordship, and of judge. Therefore the apostle says “so let a man (any one, every one) consider (think, reason concerning) us as ministers, etc.” If the congregation would do this, their own particular judgment of the leaders would cease.

You will notice that the apostle assumes that the leaders all were faithful. If there had been unfaithfulness on the part of the leaders, the apostle would have no doubt written quite differently. In other places, where there were false teachers, etc., the apostle does not hesitate to warn and exhort the Church to withdraw from and to discipline.

But the faithful steward must not bother his head about the judgment of man. “For I know nothing by myself, yet am I not hereby justified.” He means to tell us that his conscience was clear, he knew of no unfaithfulness, but even that did not clearly justify him because his conscience could be wrong. Conscience could not be his infallible norm in self-judgment. Neither would the apostle consider himself obliged to pass the judgment of a human court. But He who judges the apostle is the Lord, Alone.

Hence, the Church is exorted to “judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come.” This evidently refers to the time of Christ’s coming as Judge, when He will throw the light of His judgment upon the hidden things of darkness, and reveal the plans and purposes of every heart. This implies, of course, retribution to all who are evil, also unfaithful steward; but also then shall praise befall every one who is worthy in the judgment of the Lord.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Does this passage mean to teach that no Church may judge her minister?
2. Does this passage show that a minister should not receive praise and commendation from his congregation when he is worthy?
3. Should a minister who has been unfaithful refuse to pass before the judgment of the Church on the ground of this passage?
4. If the minister is the steward of God’s mysteries, what effect should this have on the attitude of his congregation?

OUTLINE 20

5. THE BUBBLE OF CARNAL BOASTING PUNCTURED

(I Cor. 4:6-13)

a. Examples of Ministers and Stewards Only for the Church.

When the apostle continues with “and these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes”; it was not his intention to merely analyze the holy office to which he and these leaders were appointed, but it was his purpose by way of illus-
tration to show the Church of Corinth something of what her attitude toward these leaders should be. There were more besides Paul and Apollos to whom the figures of ministers and stewards could apply, but these two would do to serve the apostle’s purpose. He did not need to refer to these examples for his own purpose, perhaps to reassure himself of what his holy office ought to be, but rather he did this on account of the brethren at Corinth. And the purpose is expressed: “that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written;” and the final purpose, “that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.”

The examples to which Paul referred, namely of ministers and stewards, were then to be object lessons to the congregation. The Church is to learn nothing more or less than that which is written. The questions arise here: To what does Paul refer by this latter? Does that which is written refer to something the apostle had written before in his Epistle? Does he refer to other Scriptures, say in the Old Testament? In reply, we could answer: perhaps both. Yet it must be observed that no specific reference is given. We are inclined to believe that the apostle is referring more particularly to that which he is about to say; which is above called the final purpose, namely, “that no one of you be puffed up for one against another.” That is the contents of what is written, and this is written everywhere in the Word of God. Carnal pride is always condemned. Also the carnal boasting in one person in distinction from another. To be puffed up, one against another, is a most vivid picture of self-conceit. Such an one is like a bubble that ought to be pricked.

Surely, from what the apostle had said about ministers and stewards in the preceding, no one could possibly conclude that their’s was a position in which they could possibly subscribe to vain and carnal boasting of men, in which they could be the leaders these partisans at Corinth purported them to be.

b. Carnal Boasting Ironically Blasted.

I say ‘ironically’ because it surely appears that the apostle uses irony here to blast away at the carnal Corinthians. Notice in the first place, how he does this with pointed questions. “For who maketh thee to differ from another?” Self-conceit rests, of course, on the notion of superiority of gifts and graces as if self-besowed. And again, “What hast thou that thou didst not receive?” These questions are very similiar in meaning to those we use today to blast away at proud, arrogant persons. We say: Who do you think you are? You aren’t any better than others, are you? Don’t you think you should get down off from your high horse? And the apostle continuing asks: “now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hast not received it?” He means to say simply: you are no more and have no more than what God has given you. then how can you act as if you are what you are by yourself?
And then, secondly, he rather sarcastically makes certain assertions concerning the Corinthians which magnify their carnal position evidenced in their partisan strife. “Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us.” These expressions make the bubble of self-conceit to be blown up still more. They reveal the self-satisfaction and complacency to which the congregation was addicted, and an autonomous nature that relegated to itself all rule and authority apart from Christ and the apostles. Yes, they had leaders, but they themselves would lead them. They themselves would reign, instead of being ruled over. Hence the apostle adds: “And I would indeed ye reigned in order that also we might reign with you.” O, this spirit of partisanship is a devilish thing when it takes root in a congregation!

But there is more. The apostle continues: “For I think that God has set forth us the apostles last as it were appointed to death, for we are made a spectacle unto the world, and to angels and to men.” The word “for” introduces the reason for the apostle’s wish expressed in the last part of the preceding verse. Namely, that it would be desirable to rule with the Corinthians. But look how far the position is from the fulfillment of that wish. Instead of ruling, they are made a spectacle unto all. That is cold deliberate fact, not a fancy of the apostle. You see, the apostle compares here his actual condition with that apparently assumed by the Corinthians as to themselves. He means to say: Isn’t it strange that God has dealt so differently with us than He has with you, if I consider the lofty position to which you imagine yourselves to have climbed? Should we not be the first? But look at us, we are last. Should we not rule? But look at us, we are doomed, we are made a spectacle.

Yes, there is still more. “We are fools for Christ’s sake, but ye are wise in Christ: we are weak, but ye are strong: ye are honorable, but we are despised.” By Christ’s ordination the apostles are placed as it were on the stage in a theatre, even as Christ Himself was made a spectacle of. And all the world including angels and men are looking at them. And while they are for Christ’s sake being reckoned as fools, the Church at Corinth with its worldly wisdom and because of their connection with the Name of Christ, were being reckoned as intelligent. While the apostles were reckoned to be weak and impotent, the Church was adjudged to be strong, either by themselves or others. While the Church was inventoried as honorable, they, the apostles, were in dishonor. These are actual conditions to which the apostle refers, which he and all faithful stewards of the mysteries of God have suffered.

Even while he writes these things to the Church at Corinth from Ephesus, the apostle is passing through these periods of want and persecution. “Even until this present hour we both hunger and thirst, and are naked, and are buff-

(Continued on page 27)
INSTRUCTION WITH A VIEW TO MARRIAGE

Question: "Is it the duty of God-fearing parents to instruct their adolescent children with a view to their sexual life, and marriage?"

ALTHOUGH I am not in agreement with the particular formulation of this question, my answer is positively in the affirmative. It is indeed the duty and calling of covenant parents to instruct their covenant children in the truths of the sacredness of sex and marriage. The reason I do not agree with the formulation of this question is, because it seems to proceed from the assumption, that this instruction should be some special instruction in this specific field, in distinction from all the rest. With this I cannot agree, and therefore I violently disagree with some modern pedagogues that we should have special courses on this subject. I do not believe that our life can be divided into various categories, but that it is the positive purpose of all covenant instruction to train the entire man of God unto every good work. I realize that in this era of specialization we speak of various fields of endeavor and therefore divide the instruction in different courses. Thus we have courses in Bible, in Reading, in History, in Ethics, in Morals, in Good Citizenship, etc., etc., etc. Perhaps this cannot be avoided, but the danger is that in this type of instruction our life is divided in various categories, while our life is one complete whole. Thus the apostle Paul emphasizes when he says "whether you eat or drink, do it all to the glory of God", and John in the book of Revelation speaks of a holiness unto the Lord, that must characterize our whole life, even unto "the bells of the horses".

Thus also with a view to our sexual life and marriage, the Word of God must be our guide. That Word of God speaks continually of the beautiful significance of marriage, and the sacredness of sex. It repeatedly speaks of sins committed against this beautiful relationship both within and without the bonds of holy matrimony. Time and again it warns against the sin of adultery, fornication, incest, onanism, and sodomy, and speaks to us of the dreadful judgments of God upon these sins. Thus in a Christian home, where the Bible is read daily as a family, together with appropriate remarks, also this subject comes to the fore time and again.

Added to this, the child in a Christian home, with Christian parents, sees the beauty of the marriage relationship in action. It sees the relationship of love and devotion between the parents, and how they bear one another’s burdens.
Indeed, also here at times, sin reveals itself in its ugly and hideous forms, but by the grace of God, and the Spirit of Christ, this beautiful relationship reasserts itself in reconciliation and forgiveness.

Another important feature is the discipline in a Christian home, where the law of God is respected and obeyed, and where the child is taught to deny itself, and crucify its old nature. If the child, according to modern psychology, is continually allowed to assert itself, and have its own way, then this will certainly manifest itself also when the powerful sexual urges come to maturity. But if it has continually been instructed in the law of God, and taught to deny itself for Christ's sake, and to crucify our members which are upon the earth, then by the grace of God, this will also reveal itself in the child's sexual life.

I do believe that there comes a time in the life of each child, when both the father and mother should speak very frankly and openly with their son, or daughter, upon the subject of the sacredness and dangers of their sexual life. It is especially then that parents should not fail their children. And I am convinced that, according to the measure that we have trained our children as I have prescribed above, this should not be very difficult for any God-fearing parent.

BIBLE OUTLINES
(Continued from page 25)

feted, and have no certain dwelling place, and labor, working with our own hands."

And always under these trying circumstances, they were conducting themselves as faithful followers of Christ. "Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted we suffer it; being defamed, we intreat." There is no semblance of carnal pride, of spiteful arrogance here. What a contrast to carnal self-conceit and boasting so characteristic of the Church of Corinth! Yes, the apostles were "made as the filth of the world, and the off-scouring of all things." They were being treated as the refuse and garbage one eagerly sweeps up and throws away. What must those at Corinth think of these leaders now, these leaders they had dared to set over their respective parties? Should they not be thoroughly ashamed of their sinful conduct? The bubble of carnal boasting is herewith completely deflated.

\[ \textbf{Questions for Discussion} \]

1. Which basic doctrines of Scripture are implied in what the apostle says in verse 7?

2. In what sense can the apostle speak of being a spectacle to angels?

3. Is there proof for the apostle's description of the conditions he is said to have suffered?

4. If we do not experience the same difficulties the apostles endured, must we conclude that we are unfaithful?
OPEN FORUM

Dear Mr. Editor—

IT COMES as no surprise to me that the contribution of the Oak Lawn Young Peoples’ Society and my resignation as Editor-in-chief of Beacon Lights has placed Mr. Tony Vanden Berg in a most embarrassing position, and with him, those presently in the Federation Board who were instrumental in making my position as editor an impossible one.

Anyone who read and re-read Mr. Vanden Berg’s article must have certainly reached the conclusion that in all of this there is more than meets the eye. I cannot believe that what was written in Open Forum last month will pull the curtain over the tragic series of events which began with Mr. Vanden Berg’s motion, as a Federation Board member, to prohibit any discussion in Beacon Lights of the controversies our people were engaged in at the time, and which seem about to end now with my efforts to maintain the traditions of the fathers being characterized publicly as “attempted confiscation of the Federation paper”.

Mr. Editor, by slick innuendo and obvious implication, Mr. Vanden Berg, in his article, has led some of your readers to think many things which are not true. I want to deny them vigorously.

It is true that I was never “forbidden” to write on those subjects which touched the sensitivities of those who leaned towards "Schilderism" and which outraged those who were sympathetic to the attempt to weave a pattern of conditionality into the fabric of our interpretation of the Confessions. As editor I was “requested” in the most clear and unequivocal manner to refrain from writing on these things. This attempt by the board — to temper my thrust and censor my content — I believed to be out of harmony with the accepted practices of good journalism and in conflict with the open forum principle which Beacon Lights and our other church papers have always maintained. Further than that, if the board’s request were allowed to go unchallenged, it would have made a puppet of the editorship.

Rather than debate this question with the Oak Lawn Society as they presented it in the November issue, Mr. Vanden Berg chose to publish his own opinions concerning my motives for acting as I did in this entire matter. His personal attack against me diverts the attention of the reader from the point in question. Oak Lawn wishes to discuss issues — not personalities. For the sake of truth and justice, however, please let us see what Mr. Vanden Berg has written, and where it differs from the truth.

In reply to the request of the board I stated I did not want to nor would I dishonor their request and, therefore, I would not be able to continue as editor. I pointed out to them my reasons and told them that if the request were to stand they would, in my opinion, no longer need an editor but just “a good typist with a mirror where his heart
ought to be". As an appointed editor I most certainly did acknowledge the board’s "right" to their action. I questioned, however, the advisability of it and I refused to write under its burden.

Mr. Vanden Berg states that "primarily the request was made because the editor began to place certain individuals in a commonly accepted undesirable class", (whatever that might mean), "without any justifiable reason." "No reason", says Mr. Vanden Berg, when our church history proves the very opposite. Among other developments, the Reverends Veldman and Petter are now without pastorates, having been thrown from their pulpits by those who at the time of my writing called themselves Protestant Reformed.

My resignation — born out of pressure to turn away from controversy — was held under consideration by the board for quite some time while we together discussed these things many, many times. Except in those instances where all the rubrics of Beacon Lights were collectively involved, I abstained from using my right to vote as a board member when my position as editor was involved.

In answer to Mr. Vanden Berg's assertion that the board lost confidence in me, I must appeal to the Federation Board itself for assistance. Their letter to me of October 19, 1951, again expressed their desire that I take up my duties as editor. They stated they had reconsidered the matter of the request to me concerning editorials on controversial subjects and wished to retract it, believing it should never have been made.

Mr. Editor, Oak Lawn's proposal to discuss issues is still awaiting reply. I do hope there can be some discussion on it.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you every success in the Editor's chair.

Your brother in Christ,

Albert Heemstra

Dear Mr. Editor—

IN THE recently published January issue of Beacon Lights an article appeared in "Open Forum" concerning, the now well-known difficulty, incurred while the former editor still held his position. This article in the January issue of course was prompted, as was stated, by the article which appeared in the November issue in "Open Forum" from the Oak Lawn Society.

We as well as Mr. Vanden Berg were prompted to write of course but in an entirely different vein. This means, of course, that we agree whole heartedly with all that the Oak Lawn Society writes.

Even though the Oak Lawn Society may not have been as directly associated and familiar with the dealings of the Federation Board as Mr. Vanden Berg was, nonetheless we are convinced that basically what they state is very authentic and correct.

We do not wish at all, to retract from the present authority of the board but
we do certainly wish to emphasize what that authority is and to what extent it should go. Hence we advocate and also warn the delegate board to be present at the next convention and not to pass anything that would at all hamper or control the extent of the editor’s writing. By this we mean that we do not control the content. It is understood, of course, that the editor very willingly should submit to the advice and wishes of the board in regard to the style and form of his writing, as based on the opinions of the majority of the readers and subscribers to the paper. The committee and the delegate board certainly have the wisdom to see that this is correct.

We cannot conceive of an editor who literally is willing to submit to a policy in which the federation board tells him what he may and may not write on. If this is the case, he becomes a mere puppet in the hands of the board to write what they specify. This situation would certainly kill the art of true expression of one’s convictions and beliefs. We take for granted that when the editor is appointed he is a man who is thoroughly convinced of and acquainted with our Protestant Reformed Doctrine as to its distinctive characteristics. If, however, this should prove to the contrary in his writings the “Open Forum” is available to contradict and correct the editor if possible. If he continues, however, then the board certainly has the given authority to dispose of the editor in an orderly way. This has always been the standard and we are convinced that it should remain as such.

When we say these things we refer only to the editor and the present department editors. We do not infer that this should be a standard for self-contributed material.

Hence as we see the situation now we would urge that the delegate board take a very positive stand over against a change of policy.

Let’s keep our paper truly an “Open Forum”. Also we would urge more of our societies to submit their opinions concerning this matter. It is our paper! Let’s use it!

—Creston Young People’s Society,
Agatha Lubbers

Dear Mr. Editor—

MR. VANDEN BERG’S article in the January issue of Beacon Lights certainly disappointed me. As long as the question was one of editorial freedom, the discussion was worthwhile reading. But when a member of the Federation Board deems fit to drag in the personality of the former editor of Beacon Lights, and paint it a bit dark, as if the cause of the friction between the editor and the board was the editor’s desire for power—well, it looks unfair, to say the least. Besides, isn’t it rather ungrateful to treat thus someone who has devoted so many hours of his time to Beacon Lights in the past?
How about hearing the other side of the story?

Sincerely,
Lois Kregel

Dear Mr. Editor:—

AFTER READING the article of Mr. Anthony VandenBerge in last month's Open Forum, I could not refrain from receiving the impression that the article left upon the minds of its readers a rather dark and shady picture of certain individuals who have, in and through the past years, given much of their time and talents to the cause and betterment of Beacon Lights. It is regrettable that these shadows were cast and it is in all fairness to the persons concerned that I would like to ask a few questions and perhaps add a few facts, which, for the sake of clarity, should be mentioned.

In Tony's article there are sentences which seem to be a little vague so that at times the question arises, "What does he mean?" I ask this question when he writes the following: "It is shocking that ministers will permit a blow to be made against the respect they hold by refusing to write for Beacon Lights and associate the cause with the dismissal of one of their personal supporters who has failed to satisfy the Board responsible for their mutual appointment."

"No other intelligible reason is evident. Certainly they have the wisdom to understand that an appointing body can dismiss those whom it appoints."

Surely, Tony can not, and does not mean to hold that some of our ministers refused to write for our magazine because a personal friend of theirs was dismissed from the staff of Beacon Lights, for he knows, and we all know, that none of our ministers would ever do that! Also, our ministers do not deny that the Executive Board has the power to dismiss persons from our Beacon Lights staff if the persons appointed have failed to satisfy the responsible Board. It is interesting, and, perhaps our readers should also know, that although the Board has this power to dismiss it has never found it necessary to use it. It is my hope that friend Tony will confirm that which I have written concerning our ministers so that any possibility of a mis-understanding of his writing in regard to some of our ministers will be removed.

Against our past editor we read that "the Board has proved itself diligent enough and capable of preventing an aggressive editor from usurping control of the Federation paper. This attempted confiscation is proved by the contents of his extensive argumentation at Board meetings. Further by the motion made on the floor of the convention contrary to the sense of the preceding action of the Delegate Board." With these words bold charges are launched against Mr. Heemstra which, in order to stand, certainly call for good clear-cut proof rather than the vague reasoning or personal opinion which is offered. Because I also was present at each Board meeting and never received such an impres-
sica of our past editor, I would like Tony to show just how Mr. Heemstra’s arguments prove that the charges made are true. Also I would like Tony to show how Mr. Heemstra’s motion at the convention was contrary to the sense of the preceding action of the Delegate Board.

As was mentioned before, it is regrettable that these charges were made but now that they are made, it is necessary that either they be proven or retracted immediately.

Fran Dykstra

Mr. Editor:

AS A member and a former member of Beacon Lights Staff and Executive Board we feel constrained to contribute an article to Open Forum.

We certainly appreciated Oaklawn’s interest in coming forward with the issues involved in the publishing of B. L. However, in reply to that article comes a very personal and unfair article written by Anthony VandenBerge avoiding issues, bringing to the foreground personalities. We feel that many of the claims made against our former editor are without basis, and certainly hope that there are still some Board members who are interested in seeing that justice is done.

What is an editor? It is one who edits, writes editorials and sets editorial policy. And to edit is to revise and prepare for publication, and direct editorial policy. This right certainly has been denied our former editor. Although in the strict sense of the word he was not prohibited from writing on certain controversial subjects, he was requested not to do so after the Board was fully aware that it was impossible for him to conscientiously abide by their request, as this would necessitate his refraining from writing on the burning issues which he felt as editor was his duty to bring before the reading public.

In the past the Executive Board has NEVER interfered with the contents of editorials! never dictated terms as to content! never tried to hamstring an editor! never tried to put an editor in a straight-jacket! It smacks of Russian dictatorialism!

Beacon Lights editors have always been given the freedom (and rightly so) to write as they see fit in the best interest of Beacon Lights and our young subscribers and their spiritual good and up-building.

Certainly our former editor, Albert Heemstra, has never tried to develop a pessimistic view toward the strength of our churches in the minds of B. L. readers. He has, on the other hand, proven himself to be a capable, ambitious, industrious and progressive editor. He has faithfully performed his duties and given of his best in behalf of B. L. And it is disgraceful that the Board can give but two short sentences of appreciation (?) for the many hours of faithful and unselfish labor our former editor has given.

(Continued on page 36)
There is this question:

It is true that Genesis chapter 1 limits us to the view that the word "day" in this section of Scripture means a period of twenty-four hours.

Answer—

THE SECTION of Scripture involved in Gen. 1—2:3. In this section the word "day" occurs seventeen times, once in each of the six limiting formulas "And the evening and the morning were the first, second, third day" etc., thrice in Gen. 1—2:3, and four times in the verses 14-18 (of chapter 1) a passage that reads: "And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years: and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good." The last three verses of this section (Gen. 2:1-3) read: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the hosts of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he rested from all his work which God created and made."

To my mind it is indeed true that if in interpreting this section we work with correct exegetical rules the only view that this section will yield is the one according to which the word "day" in all the places where it occurs in this section means a period of twenty-four hours.

Allow me to state the exegetical rule that here applies. It is this: The meaning of a word in a given scripture-passage is the same in all the places where it occurs unless there is clear evidence in the text of the passage to the contrary.

It may be well for me to illustrate this rule. You say to me: A man came to my door yesterday. The man was poorly clad. The man was tired. The man was hungry. The man was old. In this collection of sentences the word man occurs four times. And certainly in each of these sentences the word must be taken to mean the same individual. For there is nothing within the compass of the total of these four sentences—no word or clause—revealing that the man of which you speak in sentence two or three is a different individual than the one of which you
not intend to contradict himself. Yet in ver. 14 (of chap. 1) he (the author of Genesis) says that definite periods of time began with the appearance of the heavenly bodies and are measured by them . . . how then can we suppose him, (the author of Genesis) to have meant that the first three days were of such measurements?"

Let us examine this reasoning. Certainly it is true that the author of Genesis (the Holy Spirit) did not mean to contradict himself. Nor does he contradict Himself. For let us take notice. He does not state in ver. 14 that definite periods of time began—mark you, began —with the appearance of the sun. What he, the author of Genesis actually says is this: “Let there be lights (sun and moon etc.) . . . and let them be for seasons, days and years, and (ver. 15) for rule over the day and for rule over the night, and (ver. 18) for dividing the light from the darkness.” Hence, so far as what the author (of Genesis) actually says in verse 14 is concerned, we may indeed suppose Him to have meant that the first three days were periods of twenty-four hours duration.

2. Another argument runs like this: the first three days could not have been periods of twenty-four hours, for there was not the sun to divide the light from the darkness. How then could the author of Genesis mean to be telling us that the remaining four days were periods of such length? Impossible. Either all or none were periods of such length.

But let us take notice that though
there was not as yet the sun, the Lord was still dividing the light from the darkness already then. This is literally stated, is it not? "And the evening and the morning were the first, second etc. day." Now certainly it does not follow from the fact that this division was not being made by the sun (instrumentally) that the first three days were not periods of twenty-four hours. Hence, the argument does not hold. What is more, it reacts to the establishing of the contrary view. For let us take notice. Since after the third day the sun was there to divide the light from the darkness, the remaining four days and therefore likewise the first three days were periods of twenty-four hours.

3. Still a third argument goes like this and I quote: "If we turn to the seventh day, we discover that the limiting formula (the evening and the morning were the first, second etc. day) is absent. Since the creation is finished and not resumed on the eighth day, we get the impression that the seventh day continues until the present time. Still it is called day."

This is a strange reasoning (yet a favored one with this class of interpreters). For since the work of creation was finished, how can the fact that God did not resume creating have any weight as an argument in support of the view that the seventh day continued even to the present time, and accordingly was not a period of twenty-four hours? Besides, the argument reacts to the overthrowing of itself. For let us consider this. Never surely will God resume the work of the first creation, so that on the basis of this argument the conclusion is inescapable that the seventh day—the rest of creation—is without end, in a word, everlasting. But in this case it can as little be a period of indefinite length as a period of twenty-four hours. For a period of time has beginning and end. And fact is that the seventh day did end. For man fell and the Gospel of Christ was brought in and God began His new work of recreating all things in Christ.

4. Then there is the argument that the days of God were intended. And since with God a thousand years are but one day and vice versa the seven days of Gen. 1:1—2:3 were periods of a thousand years or more.

But this reasoning won’t do either, will it? For certainly the last of the seven days, being a sabbath, was man’s day indeed and for man. For it was a day on which he rested in the sense of his entering with His God into God’s finished work. And God blessed the seventh day implying that the light of His countenance was upon man and upon all creatures.

5. Finally there is the argument that if the days of creation are periods of twenty-four hours, the Genesis narrative of creation cannot possibly be harmonized with the findings of science. Actually however the conflict is between the Genesis narrative and the speculations that science bases on its finding and not between the Genesis narrative and these findings as such. If so, why should we allow ourselves to be disturb-
ed even to the extent that we can no longer hear the Scriptures? The spec-
culations of science is not the voice of God, is it? the voice of God contradict-
ing the revelations of God in the Scriptures.

That the days of creation were pe-
riods of thousands and more thousands
and even millions of years duration is
just a theory that to day is not as pop-
ular among the men of science as it
used to be. During the last fifty years
a number of books have been written
which expose the fundamental faults in
the teaching that the earth is millions
of years old and that it has gone
through a series of geologic ages.

We never know so much of heaven in
our own souls, nor stand so high upon
the mount of communion with God, as
when His Spirit, breathing on our hearts,
makes us lie low at the footstool of
sovereign grace, and inspires us with
this cry, "O God, be mine the comfort
of salvation, but thine the entire praise
of it." —Toplady.

Jehovah is my light,
And my salvation near;
Who shall my soul avert,
Or cause my heart to fear?
While God my strength,
My life sustains,
Secure from fear my soul remains.
—Psalter 71: Ps. 27

OPEN FORUM
(Continued from page 32)

For all Mr. Heemstra’s hard work and
sincere effort for the good of B. L. he
receives a slap in the face from a past
Board member. It is a pity that one of
our own young people and a past Board
member has the audacity to write such
an article. Even our ministers are at-
tacked.

What is worse, the Executive Board is
not satisfied to let an editor which they
appointed and re-appointed be governed
by the Word of God as interpreted by
the three forms of unity. The Board
has done and is doing its utmost even
now to ruin the rightful freedom of an
editor. Even the original Schuler has
resigned because he refused to become
a stooge of the Board. If the Board in-
sists on continuing as they have been
doing they are apt to lose more of their
capable writers.

Our ministers are bound by the Word
of God and the three Forms of Unity
only. Must our editor be bound by
more?

Yours for Editorial freedom,

Tillie Eerdman
Jane Schipper

’Tis not for works which we have done,
Or shall hereafter do;
But He, of His electing love,
Salvation doth bestow
Concerning: Pelagianism (2)

IN OUR former essay we attempted to point out what Pelagianism is. We quoted rather extensively from Shedd's "History of Doctrine" to give a factual account of the erroneous teaching of Pelagius. So evil is this teaching that our fathers dare to call it the teaching, that has come forth from hell. We are certain that such it indeed is; our fathers do not use too strong language when thus speaking.

In this essay we hope to point out briefly that very erroneousness of this teaching of Pelagius by contrasting it in its salient points with the Biblical teaching of the Augustianian—Reformed faith.

The first point to call for attention is: the erroneousness of the Pelagian teaching in regard to the original state and condition of the soul of man by virtue of creation. According to the Pelagian teaching the soul of man, that is, his mind and will were neither holy nor sinful. The mind and will of man were neither sinful nor holy, they were morally indifferent. They could become either of these two by the choice of man's free-will, but as yet they were neither the one nor the other. Now this is a very grave and serious error having far-reaching consequences in the wrong direction; it really makes it impossible from here on to teach anything that even resembles sound doctrine according to godliness. It is the leaven of error, that leaveneth the entire lump of Christian truth. But we are anticipating. We merely wish to point out here that the teaching concerning the original state and condition of man as taught by Pelagianism is wrong. What is the truth of the matter? It is this: man was created good and upright, rightly knowing His Creator; he was created in the image of God, in true knowledge, righteousness and holiness. Adam stood most positively in the fear of God. He was not morally indifferent but he was most positively holy. Man has once upon a time been able to keep the whole law! Such is the teaching of all of Scripture.

The second point of error is that which concerns the nature of the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise.

What does Pelagius teach concerning the fall that is so erroneous? Hearken! Pelagius teaches the pestilent doctrinal error that Adam’s fall was not the fall of the entire human race represented by him. The fall of Adam did not effect a change in the soul, the mind and will of his posterity. Every man when born stands exactly where Adam stood when he was created. At birth every man’s soul especially his voluntary faculty
(faculty of the will) is like that of the will of Adam at his creation. It is morally indifferent. The will of every child is not by nature refractory due to Adam’s sin and fall, but it is neither good nor evil; it can become either the one or the other depending on what a man makes of himself. The child is to be considered characterless, without a will that decides either for the good or for the evil. Each individual man after birth begins his own life of willing either good or evil, originates his own character, and decides his own destiny by the choice of either right or wrong.

Now what is wrong with this teaching?

We believe that this heresy is a denial of the Fall in Adam and of the total depravity of man as he is by nature; it is a denial that our children are born and conceived in sin; an attempted mortal blow it is at the very heart of the Christian religion. For the truth of the matter is, that we have all become so depraved through the fall of Adam and Eve in Paradise, that we hate God and our neighbor. We can not do good before God, cannot will to do the good except we are born again by the Holy Spirit of Christ. This error is the necessary error following from the first error stating that man was created indifferent. And certainly these two errors lead to a multitude of other teachings which stand diametrically opposed to the blessed tidings of good things in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

As might be expected Pelagius also teaches the error concerning man’s in-

ability to ever save himself and again return to the favor of God. According to Pelagius it is entirely possible for man to live a perfectly sinless and holy life; there have been men who have lived such a life, even among the heathen. The grace of the Holy Spirit is not absolutely necessary for man unto a life of holiness; the grace of God only makes the life of holiness more easily attainable; however apart from the grace of the Holy Spirit one can very well live a perfect life. Of course, grace is not really grace in the mouth of Pelagius. Grace is simply the help and stimulation and warming of the law to break with wrong habits of the sinful use of a “free-will.” Grace is not an efficacious power whereby we are inwardly renewed in our will and powerfully and efficaciously enlightened in our mind to see the Kingdom of heaven. Grace is no longer grace; it is simply diluted and denatured into works.

The real error of Pelagianism is that it stumbles at the Word of the Cross in Jesus Christ. It is simply the wisdom of man dashing itself to pieces on the Word of the Cross.

How vast the benefits divine,
Which we in Christ possess!
We’re saved from guilt, and ev’ry sin,
And called to holiness.

THINE IS the Kingdom, is a wonderful novel written by a well-experienced novelist, Dr. James H. Hunter. The story centers on the conflict between the forces of *freedom* and the forces of Communist slavery.

Our story begins in Moscow. James Tresham, a product of England, educated at Oxford, and now a member of the Communist party, walks rapidly from Red Square past the Kremlin to Petrovsky Park. Here he meets Peter Yasnalov, a policeman, and reveals how far he has fallen into the evil clutches of Communism. To Peter he says, "You have to learn that there is no room for sentiment with the proletariat. The state is everything; you and I are nothing," and, "I would kill my brother for the cause as I would a fly and with as little compunction." Little does he realize at the time that soon he will be assigned to do that very thing.

Dr. Malcolm Tresham, a twin brother of James, is reported to have produced an atom bomb of tremendous power at a fraction of the cost of other bombs. Also, he has announced the discovery of a biological product, seven ounces of which is enough to kill every living person.

The brothers are almost exact images of each other; so much so that their best friends would find it difficult to tell them apart.

The Reds desire the secrets of the discoveries of Malcolm. James fits perfectly into their scheme. He, with other Red agents, is to go to Canada with the sole purpose of taking his brother's place and obtaining as many of the secret plans as possible. Malcolm is to be liquidated in whatever manner seems fit to James.

Through the clever workmanship of an English detective news of James' coming proceeds him to Canada and all is in readiness when he arrives.

It soon becomes evident that the Reds are planning a mass liquidation of United States and Canadian citizens. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police, in conjunction with the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation, sets to work to keep ahead of the Communists. The most useful man for the R.C.M.P. in the battle of wits is Detective-Inspector Colin MacKellar. He is among the first on the Reds' liquidation list since he is most dangerous to them. Several attempts are made on his life.
New complications set in as the story progresses. Romance is combined with mystery. The case at times seems hopeless for the Americans.

The manner in which Malcolm and Mac Kelar walk and act is wonderful to notice. They are heroic, intelligent men with a true trust and faith in God. They enter into dangerous situations trusting that God will cause the end of the matter to be unto His honor and glory. They are fighting not only to save the United States and Canada. Theirs is a much higher calling—they must defend the religious freedom which is theirs and defeat the ungodly Communism which is threatening to take that freedom away.

Mention should be made of the Glen Rock Rangers. The group consists of five boys who did much to help attain the final results.

In contrast to the noble characters just mentioned we see others who, like James Tresham, have fallen under the evils of Communism. There are Serge Vasiloff, the man who gave James his special assignment and accompanied him to Canada to see his evil plan carried out, and Ivan Borovitch, called the hatchet man of the Politburo. These men, though intelligent schemers, have stooped to the lowest imaginable depths. They will murder millions in order to achieve a position in the Communist regime which they hope to establish in America.

The sharp contrast between James and Malcolm is interesting. Both have had the same boyhood training, coming in close contact with Christianity. Malcolm has clung to his religious beliefs, realizing his dependence on God. James has left Christianity to seek a place for himself on this earth. He thinks of Malcolm’s convictions as absurd beliefs, other-worldly ideas of our boyhood, and nonsense.

The fact that all Communists are not happy Communists and that some so-called Communists in Russia still seek the God they heard of in their childhood is also brought out in the book. The policeman, Peter Yasnals, and his sister, Olga, are two of this type.

The story moves rapidly with unexpected events taking place frequently. Adventure, mystery, tragedy, romance—all these enter in to make it interesting reading for almost any reader. The novel deserves its place as prize-winner of Zondervan’s Christian Fiction Contest.

I might add that the book may prove a little difficult for our young readers.

The glory, Lord, from first to last,
Is due to Thee alone:
Aught to ourselves we dare not take,
Or rob Thee of Thy crown.

Our glorious Surety undertook
Redemption’s wondrous plan;
And grace was given us in Him,
Before the world began.
ATTENTION SERVICEMEN!

Beacon Lights needs more mail for “Military Mailbag”. You readers who are in service, are the only ones who can fill this need.

We’ve heard all the excuses, “I don’t know what to say”, “my spelling is bad”, “my English is poor”, etc. But don’t let such trifling bother you: we have editors and proofreaders to worry about such things.

You servicemen are seeing places and are having experiences most of us have never seen nor experienced. Why not send a letter and tell us about them.

Send your letters to:

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