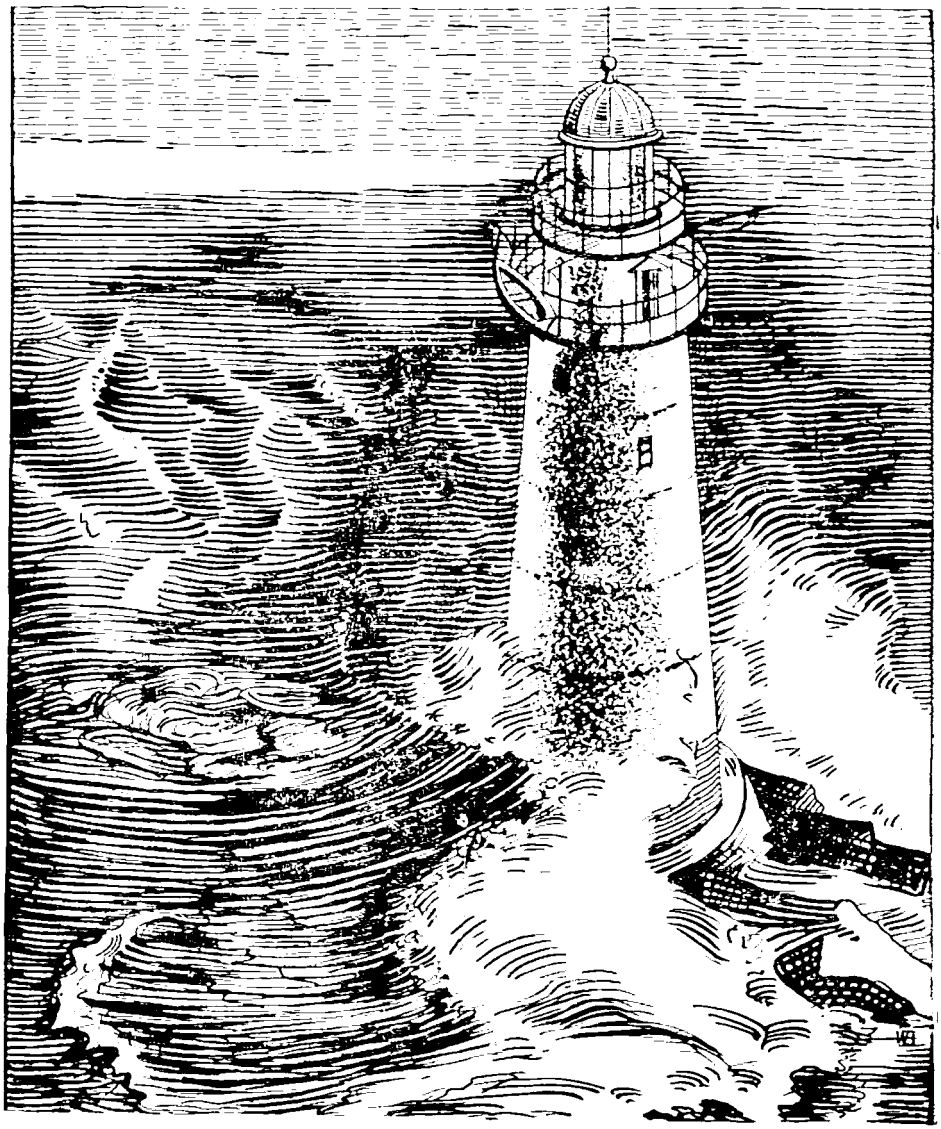
BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME IV. MAY — 1944 NUMBER 8



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CONTESTS

SHORT STORY POETRY ESSAY

Three contests are being sponsored by the Executive Board.

Who is eligible to enter these contests?

Any member of a Protestant Reformed Young People's Society, except Executive Board Members, and all our young men and women in the Service may participate in these contests by sending in an original poem, short story or essay on any topic the author may choose to write. Material should, however, be in keeping with the spirit of our publication.

Material will be judged on the following basis:

Poetry will be judged on meter, rhyme and thought.

Short Stories will be judged on plot, character identifications, form and sequence and interest of subject matter.

Essays will be judged on logical presentation of ideas, clarity, and timeliness and interest of subject matter.

The length of poems will be unlimited but stories and essays are not to exceed 1200 words.

Publication and prizes to be awarded.

The prize winning poem, short story and essay will be published in the Literary Department in our August Issue of Beacon Lights and prizes will be awarded the authors.

Mail your material to Beacon Lights, 706 Franklin S. E. Grand Rapids, Michigan on or before June 30, 1944. All material becomes the property of the Executive Board.

CONTEST CLOSES JUNE 30, 1944

Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

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Japanese Fight Against Christianity

By Miss Marian Vander Werff —

If one would ask a Japanese official in the army whether his race on the average felt any gratitude toward the Christian Missionaries he perhaps would answer by saying that these mission schools give Japanese officials a reliable opportunity to learn mathematics, sciences and foreign history — subjects considered vital in building a future world-conquering army and navy. Many Japanese are ordered to register as Christians so that the financial supporters in America will receive an impressive record of "conversions" and on this basis would keep the colleges open.

Today, Japan is as much at war with christianity as with the U. S. The inhabitants of this nation assert themselves to be the superior race and proclaim their emperor, Hirohito, to be divine, while Christianity denies this claim. You may ask then, "From what authority do they base their claim? They believe that Christ was an Oriental, born in Japan. He was a great prophet and gained knowledge from the Japan god-emperors. Then he went West to the barbarians and spread His beliefs. They crucified Him because they rejected and misunderstood His teachings. After He arose He reappeared in Japan, died and was buried.

A shrine has been erected at the "burial place" of the prophet Christ. People, going home after a visit to this place, form the idea that Christ is dead but the god-emperor is very much alive and is the rightful inheritor of the world.

We may be sure that these things are bringing us nearer to the days of the Antichrist. These are the beginnings of sorrows. Let us look into the future with hope because we look for the eternal Kingdom of Christ. What comfort have these Japanese? Can one depend on an earthly man as Hirohito to save his people? Let us live in the consciousness that the Antichrist comes as God declares. In this world no one ever wins a war except the christian. We gain an everlasting peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Christian Servicemens Problems

By Rev. C. Hanko — Oak Lawn, Ill.

Beacon Lights is fighting a two-front war. It is interested in the welfare of our societies on the home front, but it is also interested in the welfare and peculiar problems of our boys in service.

Ted writes from camp: "a few of us have organized a society and are holding regular meetings very similar to those of our young men's societies at home."

John writes from overseas: "As frequently as possible, sometimes every night of the week, a group of fellows get together to discuss a portion of Scripture. We have some very nice meetings. Very often the subject of God's election is brought into the discussion."

Jim informs us from overseas that some of the men have organized a Christian Fellowship Club. He has attended their meetings a few times, but since it is an organization of all kinds of persuasions he wonders whether he should join it.

Others have had similar experiences. What do you know about these meetings and organizations? And what do you think of them? We would like to know.

* * *

Harry tells us, while home on a furlough, that the chapel services in camp are so saturated with modernism that he prefers to spend his time with his Bible in his barracks.

Tom writes that he generally goes to the neighboring town on Sunday, so that he can attend a Baptist or Presbyterian Church.

We realize that the problem is not the same in all localities. But we do appreciate hearing the opinions of others on this subject.

* * *

Joe writes home that the movie is quite a common thing among the armed forces. There are pictures of actual combat which they must see as a part of their training. But there are also movies, often displayed in the open, which are intended to serve as morale builders.

The folks at home wonder wheth-

er the movie craze is not captivating our men in service. And whether the movie problem will not be intensified, especially after our boys return home.

* * *

Dick realizes that they are being impregnated with a spirit of hate and revenge against our enemies, particularly against the "treacheous" Japanese. He has always been taught that we must hate all God's enemies, but certainly not our personal enemies. He feels that a Christian should have a purer motive for doing his duty than merely to seek revenge. He is dealing with a very concrete problem.

These are but a few of the many peculiar problems that are faced by our boys serving in the armed forces. The list can readily be enlarged.

How about it, fellows? Beacon Lights is eager to receive your letters, either acquainting us with some of your problems or airing your views on any problem you have faced. We are just as interested as you are.

If you prefer to have your letters published without your signature, you have it for the asking. But you must sign them.

We are waiting to hear from you.

Christ Is Gone Into Heaven

O Lord, Thou hast ascended
On high in might to reign:
Captivity Thou leadest
A captive in Thy train.

Thus sang the Church of the old dispensation in prophecy concerning her pomised Christ. For her prophets stood on the mountain tops where the light of God's revelation shone in their faces. And coming down to her, these propphets spoke of the promised Christ, His coming in the flesh, His sufferings and the glory that would follow.

Thus sings the Church of the new dispensation, for she stood on the Mount Olivet that day when the apostles were "gazing up into heaven." Through the eyes of the apostles she saw Jesus taken up into heaven. For they saw Him ascend before their very eyes. They saw the cloud that took Him up out of their sight. They saw Him transferred out of the earthly into the heavenly, out of the range of human sight into the great Beyond, out of the world of time into the world of eternity, out of things

present into the things to come.

They had seen Him when He walked among them in the flesh. They had been eye-witnesses of His death and resurrection.

They knew that they would see Him no more. Not until He would come with the clouds in judgment. They knew that He was gone into glory. And they returned to Jerusalem rejoicing.

Christ is gone into heaven.

Years before, Enoch, who walked with God in the evil days before the Flood, had gone into heaven. He was no more, for God took him to heaven. Though they looked for him, he could not be found, for God had translated him bodily from the earthly into the heavenly.

Also Elijah, the lone witness for Jehovah among an apostate Israel, was taken with a whirlwind to heaven without tasting death. God's horses and chariots of fire swept him out of a world of iniquity and transferred him into his awaited reward.

Both Enoch and Elijah, with the souls of all the saints about the throne were waiting for the coming of Christ into His kingdom. They were there on the promise that Christ would open the way for them into heaven.

Stephen saw Christ in His glory, even while the mob stoned him into heaven. Saul saw Him Whom he was persecuting, Who called him as a chosen vessel to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. And the apostle John saw Him in His visions on the island of Patmos.

All of which is given to assure us that Christ is gone into heaven.

The wonder of Ascension Day is no less marvelous than that of Christmas, Good-Friday and Easter. God came into the likeness of our sinful flesh. God shed His blood on the cross for our sins. God arose from the dead. God is into glory. Surely great is the mystery of godliness.

We in Him, for the Son of God did all that in our human nature. He was born in our flesh, suffered in our flesh, died and arose in our flesh, and has taken our flesh into glory.

He is our Forerunner, Who opened the way for us into glory. He is our Advocate Who intercedes for us before the Father. He is our Surety, Who is always with us in His Spirit, Who dwells in us and draws us unto Himself that we may be where He is. He is our Lord Who is coming with the clouds of the heavens to make all things new.

He is gone into heaven.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, the Lord of hosts. He is the King of glory!

Current Events

By Rev. J. A. Heys

Grand Rapids, Mich.

Many are the signs that the invasion of the European continent is imminent. The pattern of Allied boming missions, the increasingly severe measures of censorship, the constantly repeated testimonials of Germany that she is ready for the invasion (which reveals that with her military wisdom she realizes the Allies could be prepared by now and that to delay much longer would be unwise), and the reported concentration of ships in English ports so that there is a greater concentration now than immediately after Dunkirk, all point to a near date for the most daring and stupendous military campaign of all history. By the time this appears in print that invasion may already have begun, or else we may wake up some morning soon to hear that it is taking place.

One thing has now become plain even to the most skeptical, that this war cannot be won from the air alone. We cannot bomb Germany into submission. We have witnessed some of the most devastating and continuous bombing attacks ever carried out. Yet reliable military authorities maintain that it would still take six years of bombing to destroy the remaining 105 German cities containing 38.5% of Germany's population. High army officials are freely admitting that the infantry will have to win this war just as it has won every other war. It all adds up to this there will have to be an invasion by men as well as the bombing from the air.

The recent admission of Germany that the Allies could establish beachheads in various places may be but an attempt to lure us into invading before we are fully prepared. Yet the mastery of the air which the Allies have achieved is not to be overlooked. Germany is not overlooking it, and therefore she admits that beachheads, using the plural, can be established. That mastery of the air also explains our ability and lack of fear to mass shipping in the English ports. We are able to drive off any enemy planes which would attempt to sink them at their moorings.

We ought constantly to bear in

mind, however, this fact, that when peace comes it will not be the work of the infantry, nor of the air-force, nor of any combination of any or all the branches of Army, Navy and Marines, nor of any one or group of nations. It will be the work of God and the fulfilling of His counsel and not the successful prosecution of a military campaign engineered by man. It may appear to be too early to talk about peace, but it is not too early for us to be reminded that in that day when we first hear of it, our first reaction must be to give thanks to God and not to boast or rejoice in man's work and give way to carnal, earthly celebration. Let us celebrate in our inner closet in prayer and thanksgiving to God and let us not celebrate with and in the manner of the world.

Likewise when the casualty list which inevitably must come with that invasion, grows and we are informed that our loved ones are counted with those that are missing in action or have lost their lives, we must remember that it is our Covenant God Who has taken away that which He gave. Then we can be comforted, for then we feel confident that His taking them away from us has that more glorious side that He has taken them unto Himself in glory. And for this too we can and may give thanks.

In Russia and the south Pacific the nature of the fighting is still the same as that of last month. Rapid, sometimes daring and breath-taking strides are made to be followed by periods of calm between the storms while preparations are being made for the next campaign. In India things look much more favorable than a few weeks ago. What Japan was able to accomplish should warn us not to expect a quick victory over her —if indeed we may even expect one at all. On the mainland Japan is very strong and her resources are far greater than those of Germany. We ought not be too quick to scoff when Japan maintains that she will fight for 100 years if need be. We will defeat her much more quickly if we only try to understand and recognize the spirit of the enemy we are fighting. Unless we do, we are apt to tire of this war and slacken up our effort before we have won it. Then indeed it may be a long drawn out affair.

* * * *

Of quite a different nature is the recent declaration from Washington that thirty-four united and associated nations have agreed upon a world currency stabilization plan. The thing that makes this move noteworthy is not that it shows an honest attempt, or even a desperate attempt to prevent

world-wide inflation and to maintain the gold standard. But the thing that makes it significant for the believer is that it gives him another indication of the coming union of all the nations of the world under the banner of the Antichrist. Surely this is an indication of the fact that we are moving rapidly in the direction of the fulfillment of the first vision in Rev. 13, if not also the second vision in this chapter. Never before, since the days of the Tower of Babel when contrary to God's command the whole human race was united as one kingdom, has the world been united as closely as it is today. Never before has man talked so freely and hopefully of such an union. When thirty-four nations are even willing to agree on one standard of currency and to seek to prevent world-wide inflation, it shows that man is more and more coming to the conclusion that he can have his dreams realized only by such cooperation. Really what man needs is Christ and forgiveness through His blood. The unbeliever thinks he needs the help of man and of the Antichrist because his dreams are for this world and its corruption.

Christian *Living*

By Rev. H. De Wolf — Manhattan, Montana.

Who Knows?

Every christian will confess that it takes a continual struggle to put his christianity into effect. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the things which are seen always seem to contradict our faith. Moreover we are earthly and natural. It is not so much a lack of knowledge that makes it difficult to walk in the way of the Lord; it is rather a failure on our part to practice and put into effect through the power of faith those things which are necessary to walk in the way of the Lord. Although we may sometimes plead ignorance, we usually do so more for an excuse than for anything else. It is very difficult to know the way of the Lord. After all, the Lord has adequately revealed His way in His Word. He has revealed to us what He requires of us. And we some-

times know that only too well. In fact, if only we didn't know so well what the Lord required of us, it would often times be far easier to do what we please.

What does the Lord require of us?

To live by faith!

That sounds very simple, doesn't it? It surely isn't difficult to understand what this means. Our difficulty is rather to practice that. For to live by faith means that we close our eyes to the things that are seen in as far as they contradict the things which God has revealed in His Word and then blindly follow in the way of the Lord, believing that God will realize unto us His promises. It means that we believe that we have nothing to fear but are always perfectly safe. Moreover, the difficulty arises when the things which are seen contradict that faith and seem to say that the way of faith is all wrong or unnecessary. As long as the way of faith does not lead through any testing ground, as long as things seem to line up in favor of the way of faith or do not require any particular sacrifice on our part, we find but little difficulty in assuring ourselves that we are christians and that we really do trust in the Lord. But let the time of testing come when all things seem to testify against the advisability of doing what the Lord requires in the way of faith and we immediately find it extremely difficult to simply blindly follow the highway signs of faith, believing that the way in which we are required to walk will really lead to a good end.

What's the matter? Don't we dare to trust the Lord? Don't we really believe that He is God and therefore Almighty and All-Wise? No, I don't believe that the trouble is to be sought there. We know all that and we tell ourselves over and over again that we believe that. And I am sure that we would very emphatically defend our faith over against anyone who would dare to contend that we are not safe in the hand of God.

From whence then does this difficulty come?

It comes from our flesh!

We do not like to blindly follow the instructions of the Lord even when we know that we shall always be perfectly safe in doing so. We want to know! We are not satisfied even when we know that the ultimate end of our way will be glory forever. We want to know the end of each mile of that way. We want to see in the things that are seen that the end of that particular mile which we are traveling is desirable. We are always valuating things in the light of earthly profit and loss instead of the heavenly and eternal gain which we shall reap.

It is highly essential that we

realize even in the days of our youth that the way of the Lord in which we walk by faith is not the way of our own choosing according to the flesh. The way of the christian is hardly ever compatible with the way of our earthly and carnal desires. It happens sometimes that it requires no great effort to walk in the way of the Lord for the simple reason that the Lord does not demand anything of us that makes that way difficult. But there are also times in the life of the church or in the life of the individual christian when to walk in the way of faith very definitely requires that we strangle the impulses and desires of the flesh and close our eyes to the things which are seen and simply cast ourselves wholly upon the Lord. There are times in which we say, "It seems all wrong or unnecessary" and nevertheless must comply with the demands of the Lord, even to the extent of arousing the hatred of the world.

And what shall we say then?

There is but one thing to say when we live by faith. We say, "I don't know. But I also need not know. God knows! And that is sufficient!"

Then I can blindly follow.

Then I need not fear for I am forever safe.

"God knows and all is well!"

YOU TELL ON YOURSELF

You tell on yourself by the friends you seek,
By the very manner in which you speak,
By the way you employ your liesure time,
By the use you make of your dollar and dime.

You tell what you are by the things you wear,
By the spirit in which your burdens bear.
By the kind of things at which you laugh,
By the records you play on the phonograph.

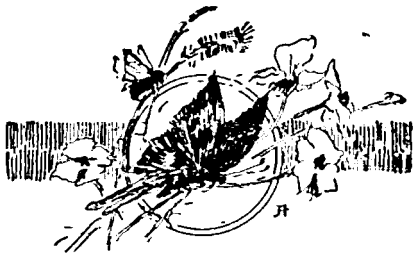
You tell what you are by the way you walk.
By the things of which you delight to talk,
By the manner in which you bear defeat,
By so simple a thing as how you eat.

By the books you choose from the well-filled shelf;
In these ways and more you tell on yourself.
So there's really no particle of sense,
In an effort to keep up a false pretense.

The Waxen City

By Mr. Clarence De Boer

Kalamazoo, Michigan



What is more gentle than a wind
in summer?
What is more soothing than the
pretty hummer,
That stays one moment in an
open flower,
And buzzes cheerily from bower
to bower?

—JOHN KEATS.

As the warm spring breezes waft the sweet scent of the blossoming apple orchard toward us, we hear the rustle of the hive and notice the bees swiftly flying to and fro. A new season of labor has commenced!

Yonder we observe a bee descending into the heart of the flower. It is sipping the sweet exudation called nectar produced by tiny glands in the base of the flower. From it the honey is made. Soon we see the bee arise from the petals of the flower and "take off". For a few moments it circles around the flower getting its bearings and then heads unswervingly in a straight line toward the hive; hence the term "bee-line". Once this insect gets its directions its flight is undeviating; therefore, bee-keepers have little difficulty in locating their swarms.

Suppose we follow one of these insects to its home. At the door of the hive stand several guards armed with stingers, carefully watching for intruders. Just inside of the gateway, the inhabitants have constructed a series of waxen pillars, accurately spaced, enabling them to enter but preventing any of the larger more vicious enemies who might have overpowered the guard from entering. With this entrance protection the dwellers within feel quite secure. Occasionally, snails and mice eat through the outer walls. After they have been stung to death, bees often discover that they are unable to remove the carcass, and so they embalm the body in honey to prevent its decay and build a complete wall around them, thus enclosing them in a vault.

At the time when the decimal system was established, mathematicians were looking for a standard unit on which to base their system. Reaumur suggested the diameter of the hexagonal cell of the bee. Seemingly perfect, though

it appeared, the diameter varied and so it could not be used. However, the very suggestion that it be used for this purpose indicates the precision and uniformity with which the cell is built.

An essential factor in constructing the hive is the production of beeswax. On the lower surface of the abdomen are four pockets which secrete a liquid substance that dries in the form of flakes. These waxen scales are removed by the mandibles (mouth parts) and kneaded in the presence of a special type of saliva into a flexible building material. Then bit by bit with skill and regularity the waxen walls arise. The uneven edges are shaved and smoothed by the mandibles which function as planes, while the antennal instinctively measure the depth and width of the hexagonal (six-sided) cell. Many thousands of cells are built layer upon layer because the hive reaches its completion. This communal edifice is, indeed, a marvelous evidence of precision, cooperation, and architectural design. In awe we consider the works of His hands.

"And thru all creation,
His wonderful Temple,
All things He has fashioned,
His glory declare."

Instinctively the bees build their elongated hexagonal rooms, which in design is the most economical pattern known in conserving building material (wax). in economy of space, and in the solidarity of the structure.

Let us take a glimpse into the lives of the inhabitants of the waxen city. Busy as bees, indeed! The majority of the inmates are sexless bees called workers, whose duties are varied. Altho' they are smallest in size, they are the most active for they must guard the hive, obtain the honey and pollen, nurse the young, construct and ventilate the hive, and maintain order and cleanliness. After the worker has collected pollen on its hairy body, while entering the flower, its back legs which are equipped with bristly hairs comb the surface of its anatomy and gather the pollen dust forming minute balls called pollen pellets which are packed into cavities on the hind legs modified to form hollows or small baskets. When the pollen baskets are filled the bee returns to the hive, and empties the pellets into storage cells for future use.

The male bees are called drones because of their low humming sound. Their sole function is to fertilize the queen. The food is provided by the workers, but when the cold weather comes and the food becomes scarce, the drones are mercilessly put to death. As they are not equipped with stingers, they offer little resistance.

Each hive has a solitary queen whose duty it is to lay eggs which

are produced at the rate of about 3,000 a day. For workers and drones the queen lays a solitary egg in an ordinary cell. However, when a future queen is the goal, the partitions of three cells are broken down, so that there will be more room for development. The royal cells are the favored ones and the larvae within receive a special diet called royal jelly. All the larvae are fed beebread (a combination of honey and pollen) many times a day by the tireless nurses.

One unalterable rule governing the bee colony is the presence of one queen bee. When the young queen bee developes, the original queen escorted by thousands of workers makes her departure to another cite where a new hive is established. In the meantime there is a struggle in the old hive between the new queens for supremacy. The fight is a desperate one and will terminate only after all opposition ceases and one queen alone survives. Should one of the queens endeavor to evade battle, several workers crowd about her with the sole intention of suffocating her. Then, life begins anew in the waxen city!

The Inquisition

Miss Hilda De Zeeuw — Grand Rapids, Mich.

Jesus said "Learn from me, for I am meek and lowly of heart."

We ought always to be disposed to persecution, to suffer for Christ's sake. In the United States, so far, I may say there is yet a comparative peace, for the people of God to worship Him as they themselves believe to be right. But how long this peace will last, we do not know, and therefore, prepare ye for the coming of the Lord, for we know not when He shall come, He shall come as a thief in the night. I think I may safely say He is coming soon, and therefore we should make our whole life only a pilgrimage, wanderers, and preparing for that Heavenly Glory which shall be only for God's chosen people, not longing for the things of this life but striving for something far better. We should not see how far we may go in certain evils, but we must draw a strict line and stay on the right side of it, to be true and living Christians. For we must look for that beautiful city, whose builder and maker is God.

The Inquisition was for the purpose of punishing heretics. Let us

stop here a moment and consider this, be fair and see if there is any real argument which we can give for it. We must remember that during this time people were just beginning to get a touch of civilization, they were a man of the "Iron Age." The only church there had been in that generation was the Catholic Church, no branches, no splits, just the one Church.

I am, however, not favoring the Inquisition, but on the contrary, I feel deeply that this was very much of an error on the part of the Roman Catholic Magistrates, but we must remember God's plan, that this all had to work together for the coming and furthering of God's true Church, so God creates all these ways, which are oft' times hard for the people of God to bear.

The Roman Pontiff's chief aim was to crush every form of heresy before it spread. Naturally, that would be logical, I think the Magistrates knew that the Church had departed from the true religion and that is the reason they made the punishments so severe. So as the years flew by, they departed from the true teachings of the Church. The chief reason for this was, that the people were not allowed to read the Scripture and see how evil the Church had become.

We ought to suffer grievances, not cause them, it is in this manner that Jesus was nailed to the cross, He was crucified, He died for us, He did not crucify others. This must have been a comfort for the people who were persecuted. Most people could not read the words of Jesus where He said, Ye will be persecuted for my Name's sake.

Jesus said, "Many testify in my Name yet err from the truth," yet He speaks of the good that does come out of it, if it is done in His Name. Yes, we ought to fight heretics, not to throw down those who are upright, but to raise up those who are fallen, for that war is inevitable, and by this war we must, through His Word, give life to the dead. We ought not to seek to injure heretics in person, but to seek to remove the error of misunderstanding, and the evil of the heart. Hence, it was that the laws enacted against heretics, subjecting them to fire, imprisonment, and oft' times taking the lives of the people.

The Inquisition punishments were done in an Order. On one district the Judges, aided by the local bishops and the state authorities, would announce thirty days grace for all heretics to come in and confess their crime. When that period was over a trial of the accused person began. The names of those who reported or witnessed were never let outside of the Inquisition Courts. Following the trial, methods of torture were used to persuade the accused to confess.

Great ceremonies were held after a certain amount of time was given for the accused to confess. At these ceremonies the names of guilty were announced, the punishments inflicted, ranging from fines, imprisonment, torture, and many times death.

The common law of the church forbade any part of the Church or clergyman to make punishments, or to take any part in them. This too, shows the Church knew that they were doing a great evil by punishing the so-called heretics in this way. This is the reason why they hid under the cloak of the State.

The Inquisition reached its height in Spain during the days of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella when Fray Thomas was made Inquisition General for the Kingdom. Here the King had almost complete control.

The Inquisition was very active in Southern Europe, but was practiced not quite as much as in Spain. It did take place in just about all of Europe, however, but not in such a horrible sense as in Spain and in the Southern parts of Europe.

There were many different methods of torture, all of which I will not go into detail, but will mention some of the outstanding ones:

Not so common was the Head-Band torture, causing the victim to become violently insane. This was followed by death.

Another method of torture was the Dropping Water torture. This also caused the victim to become insane.

The methods of torture were divided into three parts, as follows: At the first torturing, if the prisoner refused to comply with the inquisitors by confessing all the crimes, they thought proper to charge with sore torture. The victim entered a room where there was no light but from a few candles. The room was lined with a thick quilting so that the other prisoners could not hear the horrible cries from the torture. As the prisoner entered he was horrified by the sight of six wretches who prepared the torture and stripped him naked to his drawers. He was then fastened tight and the ropes with which he was tied were all drawn at the same time. The ropes cut through his flesh to the bone, making the blood gush out at all different places at a time. This was done four times until the victim fainted dead away.

After six weeks if confession was not made, they tried to introduce something much worse than the former. About two months after the second torture they were subjected to more torture, making their limbs all dislocated. The victim was allowed to live but he lived a terrible life, most of his limbs were disjointed, he was bruised

and exhausted, and was unable for weeks to move his hands to his mouth. Long after he would have thrilling pains to which he had never before been subject.

Blessed are they who endure persecution for Christ's sake. How many in this day would go thru the suffering that the people of the Middle Ages went thru? To be able to suffer as the Saints of old?

Will we be able to stand in that day when persecution will again come? Will we be able to leave all, and die for Christ's sake? Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it." But we have one comfort in life and death, and that is that we belong to our faithful Saviour, Jesus Christ. We should be able to leave all for Him. The victory belongs to Christ and His Bride.

Ah, in this age of shallow thinking, let every one of us stop and think a moment of the saints of old, who suffered for Christ's sake. Yes, they lost their lives, their earthly bodies, but what does an earthly body mean when some day we shall be with Him in Glory? For His sake they also found life, life eternal.

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye may have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.—John 16:33.

TIME

A moment is a little thing
But moments make the day.
So crowd it with a worthy task
Before it slips away.

A minute is not with us long,
But oh, the joy or pain
That can be crowded into it,
With loss, or priceless gain.

An hour of precious time, a day
Will soon be slipping by,
A month, a year, the span of life—
Work, plan it well, and try.

Book Review

Western Star —

Stephen Vincent Benét.

This is a narrative poem about the "Spirit and the beginnings of America", as the short write-up on the paper jacket of the book puts it. The first line of the poem is: "Americans are always moving on". And after a thirteen page prelude, the author tells the story of the first beginnings and settling of the New World, beginning with the tragic history of that first settlement in Jamestown, which slowly dwindled down to almost nothing. The author's poetry and beautiful command of words seems especially adapted to the history he chooses for the subject of his poem. Most of the poem relates the story of the Puritans' journey — of their sojourn in the Netherlands and the subsequent trip to America. Two lines of people are traced through: the family of Dickie Herron, a London servant boy who came to America with his master in search of wealth, and the family of Humility Lanyard which journeyed to the New World with the Puritans in search of religious freedom. The author well brings out the contrast between the motives and lives of the different people who settled here. When he begins to tell about the Lanyard family leaving ing Holland, he writes:

"Now listen to another, graver tune,
Wrung from the oaken hearts of humble men,
O God, the refuge of our fears,
Our buckler and our stay,
Within whose sight the rolling years
Are but a single day,
Behold us now like Israel's band,
Cast forth upon the wave,
And may Thy strong and awful hand
Be still outstretched to save!"

More often the author breaks out in what we almost would call a hymn when he writes about the bravely trusting Puritans.

Benét has his own subtle philosophy which comes out in his poem —the false idealism of a worldly view. And yet, one cannot help wondering what the author himself actually believes, for his poem is full of the Puritans' trust in God and their earnest endeavor to establish a godly environment for themselves and their families in a new country. He often mentions the fact that the Puritans feel they are elect, and as I reread those parts it does not seem as if he is mocking them, although sometimes one gets the impression that they are considered quite naive.

If you like poetry I am quite sure you will enjoy this narrative poem. And even if you are not too fond of reading poems, this one you may like.

By Mrs. L. Doezema.

To Our Boys In Service

Grand Rapids, May 2, 1944

Dear Fellows:

Spring is in the land.

And springtime is beautiful. Trees and shrubs are swelling and bursting out with new life. A delicate green, like a pretty lace, fringes the woods. Birds are calling and preparing to build their nests. In garden plot and on the farm man is planting and sowing the seed in the hope of an abundant harvest. A new hope seems to fill the breast of all the groaning creation.

There is, no doubt, a special meaning in springtime. Does not Scripture tell us that the seed that falls in the earth and dies to live again in a new form is a sign of the resurrection?

And may we not be reminded, then, when the earth renews its appearance in spring, of the promise of God to His people: "Behold, I make all things new?"

I preached on those words last Sunday. They are taken, as you know, from Rev. 21:5. The entire chapter is beautiful, and its contents are always appealing to the hope of the believer, for it speaks of the realization, the final fulfillment of the promise of God, the new creation, the new Jerusalem, and the tabernacle of God that will then be with men. But in vss. 5, 6 the emphasis falls on the certainty of these things. God shall make all things new! There will be a new heavens and a new earth, new creatures, new relations, new life and joy, the center and head of which will be Christ, and the idea of which will be the perfect fellowship with God. And there will be no more sin, death, sorrow, crying, war, bloodshed and destruction. All will be peace! And righteousness shall dwell for ever in that new creation!

Does it not look a far cry from our present world to that new creation? And is it not difficult often, as we are in this world, to lay hold on this promise of God and rejoice in it even now? And yet, this is what we need. In the midst of the battle, the spiritual battle, which we are called to fight in this world, we must look forward in hope to the final realization of the promise of God: "Behold, I make all things new."

Well, that is the reason why John is instructed to write: "These words are faithful and true." God's promise is real. It is dependable. Even though to us, in the midst of this terrible world, it may seem as if that new world of God's promise is very unreal and remote, God's word is faithful and true. It will surely be realized. It cannot fail. For God sitteth on the throne. He rules. He is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. Of Him and unto Him, but also through Him are all things.

May your trust be in that God, and your hope, in the midst of troubles and temptations, be fixed on His sure promise!

Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Letters From Our Boys

Banana River, Florida.

Dear Friends:

I have been receiving your "Beacon Lights" regularly and enjoy reading it. I have been hopping around the country quite a bit of late and they have been following me right along.

I wish to thank you one and all for sending it, and hoping the rest of the fellows get as much enjoyment and benefit out of it as I do.

Your friend,
Henry Wiersma.

* * * * *

San Francisco, Calif.

Dear Friends:

I will take the opportunity at this time, to write the letter which I have so long neglected to do. Hoping you will understand the circumstances which confront the man in service, especially when over-sea's.

I have been in this one particular part of the South Pacific for quite sometime, and have been kept busy from the very first day upon arrival, working seven day's a week and ten hours per day, giving us very little time to ourselves to keep up with our correspondence.

However I always manage to find time to read God's Word, as well as my Beacon Lights and Standard Bearer. I am indeed grateful to our God for all these things.

I am still receiving my Beacon Lights very promptly, and at this time wish to thank all those who make it possible, for me to get this booklet. I certainly enjoy reading it.

I would like to tell you more about myself as to what I am doing, but I am certain it would never go by the censor, so I find it necessary to close at this time.

Remaining as ever your friend and brother in Christ,

W. B. Bruinsma S1/c

* * * * *

Camp Gruber, Oklahoma.

Dear "Beacon Lights" friends:

I have been like an ink blotter — soaking up every Beacon Lights issue and not contributing anything. Needless to say we enjoy every issue. I say "we" for my wife is here at my side — that is now and then. We have however been able to spend most of our week-ends together — truly a blessed privilege. The sin and corruption are truly appalling! To get away for a few hours and to worship on the Sabbath together is truly a great blessing. How vain and empty is man apart from God's grace. One would think that men preparing for battle where death is a very real possibility would be somewhat sobered. The very reverse seems to be true. In fact they very plainly show

that they want to forget the spiritual things. After a week-end on pass they vie with one another to see who can recount the vilest experiences! In the midst of all this it is truly a burden for a child of God to walk.

But it is often in these very situations that God's Word shines forth the brightest and tastes the sweetest. Truly the men in the service need the prayers of all the saints — for the temptations and pit-falls are many. The monthly arrival of Beacon Lights is a bright spot in these surroundings and strengthens the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love.

We wish you the Lord's blessing in your work — it fills a definite need in these dark and troublesome days.

With Christian greetings,

Pvt. A. Voss.

* * * * *

Aleutian Islands

Dear Friends:

I really am ashamed of myself for not writing sooner and letting you know how much I enjoy receiving and reading Beacon Lights. The lighthouse on the cover reminds me of the times we have seen its powerful beacon shining out to us on this boat to guide it safely on it's way. I feel the same when I receive the Beacon Lights. It gladdens my heart to read a Christian paper and learn more about God's Word.

Church-going for us aboard is rather a tough situation. We are on the go most of the time and do not always get a chance to attend divine services. I have gone to some and although it is a feeling of joy and gladness to be in a Christian atmosphere, the preachings are a far cry from our own. Most of the chaplains are just young ministers just out of Seminary and they give a discussion instead of a sermon. How I long for a real sermon once again.

I have been fortunate in having a buddy from nearby Kalamazoo a member of the Reformed Church. Being Christians it is readily seen we have a lot in common. We have our own Bible reading when we cannot get to church.

Well I shall close for now because being the cook I have a meal to prepare. May one pray that God be with all who are separated from their homes and loved ones.

Cpl. Fred Schaafsma.

* * * * *

San Marcos, Texas.
April 10, 1944

Dear Friends:

I've been getting the Beacon Lights for some time now but never have helped the cause along.

I do enjoy reading Beacon Lights, in the little spare time I get. So keep up the good work.

I'm enclosing $2.00 to show my appreciation.

Sincerely,
John De Vries

Editor's Desk

This is the last regular issue of Beacon Lights for this season. However, the Board has again decided to publish two summer issues which will appear on June 20 and August 20.

The Bible Outlines by Rev. G. Lubbers will be discontinued during the summer months, but we hope to continue the study of The Acts of the Apostles, in the fall when most of our Young People's Societies resume their meetings.

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An added feature in our Summer Issues is a "Literary Department" — a short story; — a page of poetry! And in our August Issue we hope to publish the prize winning poem, short story and essay of the writers participating in the contests sponsored by the Executive Board. Be sure to read the contest rules on page ?? of this issue. Are you eligible to take part? If you are, we hope you will! Try your hand at writing a poem or a story or an essay on any subject that might suit your fancy. All material should, of course, be in keeping with the spirit of our publication. The deadline is June 30. You've plenty of time, but don't put it off! Get busy right away! We extend a special invitation to our young men and women in the service, to take part in these contests.

Is your 1943-1944 subscription to Beacon Lights paid? If not, bring your subscription up-to-date *today*, by mailing $1.25 to Beacon Lights, 706 Franklin S. E. Grand Rapids, Michigan.

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Yes! We are having a Convention this year!

The Executive Board of our Young People's Federation is very happy to announce that the Talitha Girl's Society and the Young Men's Society of the Fuller Ave. Church Grand Rapids, Michigan, will be our Hosts at this year's Convention, which will be held August 30 and 31. Last month's Open Forum was the voice of our Societies — an enthusiastic, encouraging voice which makes us confident that our Fourth Convention will be a success. Best wishes to our Host Societies!

Any Young People's Society not now member of our Federation and interested in becoming a member society may send in a request for information or an application for membership to the secretary of our Federation, Miss Helen Ezinga, 1050 Dunham S. E., Grand Rapids. Michigan.

Also, all member Societies wishing to submit proposals to the Delegate Board at this year's Convention should mail them in as soon as possible to the Federation Sec'y.

A Reformation In Roosevelt Park

We are all quite well acquainted
Why the Prot. Reformed Church did begin.
Why it was necessary to organize,
It was the result of sin.

There were certain of the church's leaders
From whom the whole truth was not heard,
They brought from the pulpit strange doctrine
That cannot be found in God's Word.

God's spirit restrains the godless,
He loves man, one and all
All men do good through common grace
Man is not totally depraved by the fall.

God offers salvation to the sinner
But the sinner, God's offer must receive:
Before God can convert the sinner,
The sinner must first believe.

Man fell, this is true, they admit it,
And that was a terrible sin, too,
But he's not so wicked through this fall
That he no more good can do.

Why even the wicked, good deeds do perform
Apart from the grace of our Lord
Sometimes these works exceed the works of the saints
And this they try to prove from God's Word.

To these statements some could not agree,
And their reasons, "God's Word" nothing new
Which they might not use, might not even try
To prove that these statements are not true.

They soon were put out of that company then
And were told their office would cease
If you ever agree to the teaching above,
Come back, and then we'll have peace.

To these statements a reformed man can never agree,
Therefore, a group soon together came,
They agree to organize as a church,
Choosing Protestant Reformed as its name.

This group did meet in the East end of town
And there were in this group, a few
Who felt the need to organize
A group in the south end, too.

Soon here was another organized group
Of fifteen families strong
Who heard God's grace must save complete
All teaching contrary is wrong.

At first we met where best we could
But we were surely glad
When the way was opened up for us
And we, a regular meeting place had.

This group soon grew and in due time
They thought it best to call
A shepherd that would labor there
And this was agreed by all.

Rev. B. Kok received the first call
And he answered, "I am coming to you."
Now the congregation began to grow
In grace and number too.

But God had other fields for Rev. Kok
And so to this work was called
As missionary to work at large
For which he was then installed.

Then Roosevelt Park Rev. R. Veldman called
And soon received word from him,
"I'm coming over to Roosevelt Park"
And we were provided again.

But after a very short stay of two years
Fuller Ave. asked Rev. Veldman, "Will you
Come over to Fuller to labor in our midst?"
And this he agreed to do.

It was then Roosevelt Park Rev. Schipper invited
And in due time this answer we had
"I'll accept your call, your pastor I will be."
Thus Roosevelt Park once again was made glad.

About sixty families are enrolled in our church
And many small children have we
Seventeen of our boys are serving our country now
Serving in the air, on land, or sea.

—MR. HENRY LOTTERMAN

Society News

SOCIETY NEWS FROM KALAMAZOO:

Our Young People's Society has now become a girls society. We haven't actually changed our name to conform with this change—we still want to be called a Young People's Society—as we are looking forward to the day when our young men will again return home and we will be able to have our same form of society meeting. All of our young men are either now in the Service, or are working on the "night shift" in our local factories.

As a result we now only number about 12 members, and if one could attend some of our meetings they would surely have to ask "where are the twelve". For it seems, especially of late, that the girls just don't get around to making our society meetings. In fact this past week only half of our membership was there. And even the fact that we serve refreshments the last Tuesday of the month doesn't seem to draw them—there were only six there the last time.

We still meet on Tuesday evening at 7:45 in a room in the basement of the Free Reformed Church. This room has been rented for most of our week-day meetings as we have no church building of our own, and the one we use for our Sunday worship does not offer proper facilities for these week-day meetings.

Our after-recess programs are taken care of by a committee of three members. The last Tuesday of the month "we eat", and one week out of the month we discuss "The History of our Protestant Reformed Churches". All the remaining weeks are left to the committee. One of the programs we find quite interesting is a "Professor Quiz" program. Usually one member of the committee makes up the questions and also asks them so that all the other members can participate. We keep score, but get no prizes. Sometimes this can also be worked out lke a "spell down" and we choose sides and alternate questions. A few of our programs have been devoted to impromptu speeches, which have proven interesting for everyone except those who are called upon to give them. One week we had a miscellaneous program, in which everyone was asked to secure and give her own number, that is, they could get together with one or more and together give a number if they wanted. The main purpose was to get everyone to take part in the program. It worked out quite nicely. We have been promised an essay in two weeks and hope to be able to work out a debate in the near future.

Bible Study Outlines

REV. GEO. LUBBERS

RANDOLPH, WISCONSIN

Outline XXVIII

PETER AT THE HOUSE OF CORNELIUS

Acts 10:17-48

I. His Journey Thither. Vss. 17-23.

A. In whose fellowship he travelled. 1. There were the three men sent by Cornelius from Ceasarea to Joppa. a. Two were household servants. vs. 7. b. The one is a Roman soldier who feared God. 2. There were also six brethren from Joppa who accompanied Peter to Cornelius and even to Jerusalem. a. These men were "believers out of the circumcision". vs. 45. b. That there were "six" we read in 11:12.

B. Under whose direction? 1. Peter does nothing of his own initiative. a. He was most reluctant in regards to the content of the vision. vss. 13-16. b. He is told by the Spirit to go to Joppa with these men without hesitancy. c. Not Cornelius, but I the Lord Jesus have sent them. 2. The knowledge of this vision and divine direction to Peter must have been sufficient reason for these "six men" to also go to Joppa.

C. The duration of this journey. 1. Of the three men from Ceasarea to Joppa. a. The distance about 30 miles. b. They travelled from the afternoon of the previous day till midday of the next, e.g. from Monday afternoon till Tuesday midday. 2. Of Peter and the nine men with him. a. Left in the morning, e.g. Wednesday. b. Arrived sometime the next day, e.g. Thursday. Compare vss. 3, 9, 23, 24, and also vs. 30 where Cornelius speaks of "four days".

II. Peter and Cornelius "Compare notes" vss. 24-33.

A. Their acquaintance at the latter's house. 1. Cornelius' conduct. vs. 25. a. Bows at Peter's feet to worship (him). b. Peter tells him to rise; he is "also a man". Compare Rev. 19:10 and Acts 14:15. 2. Cornelius' friends and relatives also present. a. This man is a centurian. A man of influence and authority. As a Roman hated by the Jews and accounted unclean. Compare John 18:28. b. Yet he is anxiously waiting for the Word of God to be spoken by Peter. In Peter he sees Christ's ambassador. vss. 29-33. 3. Peter is very conscious of the "uncleanness of the house of a Gentile." vs. 28. a. But the "cross is not of none

effect". Gal. 5:11. 12. b. God has shown it to him in the "vision".

B. They "compare notes". 1. Here was the directing hand of Christ—the Lord of heaven and earth. a. He had sent an angel to Cornelius. b. Had given revelation to Peter. 2. Was it not clearly to be seen. a. All the pieces fit one pattern. b. Sure this is what the Lord has wrought. 3. The lesson? a. God is not a respecter of persons, of nationality, social standing, education etc. b. He loves those who fear him, whosoever he may be! vss. 34, 35.

III. Peter's Sermon. vss. 34-48.

A. Its Theme: 1. Christ is Lord of all! Judge of the living and the dead. vs. 36. 2. As the crucified one and the resurrected Lord He must be preached, the Prince of Peace! 3. Of this "peace" Peter is an eye-witness, having seen the resurrected Lord. vss. 38-43.

B. Its Infallible Confirmation.

1. The Holy Spirit descends upon this gentile audience and makes it His dwelling place. vs. 44. a. While Peter was yet speaking. b. And that in the same way that He descended upon the church at Pentecost in Jerusalem. Compare 11:15. Think of it: A recurrance of the outpouring of the Spirit here in Cornelius' house! c. They were baptized with the Holy Spirit and spoke with tongues, yea, the wonderful works of God. vs. 46.

2. Its impelling force for Peter? And those with him from Joppa? a. They marvel, stand amazed. b. But Peter grasps the full implication: 1. He remembers the Word of Jesus. Acts 1:4. 2. These who have been baptized out of heaven with the Holy Spirit shall water be denied them? They are baptized! vs. 48.

Questions: What was Cornelius praying for when the angel appeared to him? Do the following passages cast any light on this? Acts 10:33. 11:14. Is Cornelius' praying a proof that all heathendom is thus praying? Did Common Grace prepare the heart of Cornelius for the gospel? Would John the Baptist have been satisfied with Cornelius' baptism? Luke 3:14.

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Outline XXIX

PETER'S APOLOGY BEFORE THE BRETHREN IN JERUSALEM

Acts 11:1-8

I. The Occasion. vss. 1-3.

A. Word of the Gentile reception of the Gospel reached the Jewish believers. vs. 1.

1. This must imply: a. Not merely that the Word had been proclaimed there. b. But that it had been received by faith. This came into their ears.

2. It is not stated, but the subsequent apology of Peter shows, that they must also have heard of Peter's tarrying with Cornelius. a. They were not aware of all the facts. b. Hence their O. T. ceremonial prejudice has full play.

B. Peter is called to give account of his conduct in Ceasarea.

1. The bone of contention is. a. Entering into the house of uncircumcized men. Notice this characterization and read

Eph. 2:11. b. And ate with them. This is far more than filling the stomach. It meant fellowship, the standing on each other's level.

2. Peter evidently anticipated this. a. How could he help but do so. Had not their prejudice against the gentiles been his? b. And the Lord had provided all the necessary evidence and a sufficient number of eye-witnesses. There were six men with Peter!

II. His "Apology" Proper. vss. 4-16.

A. Testifies, witnesses of the "facts" in the case. vs. 4-14. 1. Of the vision of the clean and unclean beast in Joppa. a. He tells it in great detail and very accurately and exact. b. Tells that this happened three times. He had not been "seeing things".

2. Relates of the subsequent direction of the Holy Spirit. He is directed to go with these three men.

3. Also tells the men in Jerusalem of the appearance of the angel to Cornelius while he was praying. And how Cornelius had related this to him, and how all the parts had thus been shown to be of divine origin.

4. Indeed he had preached here in this home: Jesus is Lord of all.

B. Relates the infallible confirmation. vs. 15.

1. While he was speaking the Holy Spirit fell upon Peter's house. a. This was indeed something extraordinary. Could it be ignored? b. And it was just like the mighty rushing wind of Pentacost. Peter says: "Even as also upon us at the beginning."

2. Hence: a. Man may still make a distinction between "clean" and "unclean". b. With God this distinction is not held. And who is it that decides?!

III. Its Decisiveness. vss. 17, 18.

A. For Peter. vs. 17. (Peter thus relates it).

1. Peter had been led step by step into the significance of the "vision". a. It was the Word and will of the Lord expressed by all the prophets. b. It had brought to mind the word of Jesus recorded in Acts 1:4. 1- Christ baptizes with the Holy Spirit. 2- They should do so with water.

2. He could therefore: a. Only be obedient to God. God who had revealed His will to Moses, now speaks through His Son in these last days. b. And therefore he may not resist God.

3. What weight this has for Peter and for the conduct of the church in the future can be seen in Acts 15:6-11.

B. For the brethren. 1. For the six brethren (at the house of Cornelius). a. They had been amazed. Had agreed with Peter's interpretation. b. And here they are called in as witnesses to this effect.

2. To the brethren here in Jerusalem. vs. 18. a. They are convinced by the testimony of Peter. b. Then "also to the Gentiles God has given repentance to life" they say.

Questions: Had Christ not opened the minds of the Apostles that they might know the Scriptures? Luke 24:45. And did He not tell them that they should preach the gospel to all nations beginning at Jerusalem? And did not the prophets all speak of the preaching of

peace to them that are afar off? Ps. 107:20; 147:18; Isa. 52:7; Nah. 1:15. Why then did Jesus need to come to Peter in this vision and why does Peter only then begin to understand that the gospel is also for the Gentiles? Could John not have written John 3:16ff; 12: 20-33; I John 2:2 before this apology of Peter? Or did John feel no need of calling Peter to task? Or was the revelation of this mystery only for Paul? Eph. 3:1-4.

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Outline XXX
GOSPEL-PREACHING IN ANTIOCH OF SYRIA
Acts 11:19-30

I. Christ Preached to the Greeks. vss. 19-21.

A. No longer only to the Jews is the Gospel preached.

1. Indeed the gospel had been preached in these regions before. a. Since the persecution of the church by the Jewish leaders at the time of Stephen's martyrdom men had preached Christ even as far as Phonecia, Cyrus and Antioch of Syria.

2. But they had preached only to the Jews! b. Thus the apostles had done thus far. b. And they could go no further than these men directly appointed by Christ.

B. But now (subsequently to Christ's revelation to Peter) the gospel is preached also to the Gentiles—to the Greeks!

1. These preachers were men: a. Not from Jerusalem, Judea. b. But they were from Cyrus and from Cyrenea. (An island in the Mediterranean sea and from the continent of Africa).

2. What they preached? a. The text says: The Lord Jesus. b. This implies the full, rich Christ. 1- In His suffering and death. 2- His resurrection, ascension and sitting at God's right hand, Lord over all!

3. How they fared in this preaching: a. The "hand of the Lord" i.e. God's power was with them to salvation! b. Result! Many believed and turned in heartfelt repentance to the Lord Jesus.

II. Barnabas Sent to Antioch by the Church in Jerusalem. vss. 22-24.

A. Who this Barnabas is.

1. Some particulars known from other parts of Scripture. a. Earlier we meet him in the book of Acts. 1- As belonging to those who sold their goods for the sake of the poor. 2- He was a Cyprian. Acts 4:36. 3- Possibly the uncle of John Mark and the brother of that Mary of whom we read in Acts 12:12. b. He it was who had intervened in Saul's behalf in Jerusalem when the latter had come there to visit Peter prior to being directed by the Spirit to go to Tarsus.

2. In relation to the task at hand here in Antioch. a. He is called a "good" man. 1 This does merely mean that he was pious. 2- It must refer to his usefulness in the work of the gospel. b. This is evident from the fact that we read of him that he was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith. 1- He compares favorably with Stephen. 2- He is capable to handle the situation.

B. How Barnabas finds matters. vss. 23-26.

1. He finds here faith, repentance, and all the evidences of the "hand of the Lord". a. He goes deeper than what he sees—deeper than the fruits. b. In the fruits he sees the cause. And this latter is none other than: the grace of God. And this is reason for great joy!

2. Yet there is room for admonition also here. a. The congregation must persevere in purpose of heart. A deep and abiding and sanctified resolution of purpose must be theirs. b. And that in view of their new relationship to the Lord, and consequently in their new relationship to all things.

3. The congregation is great in numbers. Barnabas goes to Tarsus to get Saul. a. Together they labor here. b. For one whole year. The believers were here in this city of Antioch first called: Christians. What glorious title.

III. Christian Stewardship Practiced. vs. 27-30.

A. The Occasion. vss. 27. 28.

1. Certain prophets came down from Jerusalem among whom was a certain Agabas. Compare Acts 21:10. Prophets in the N. T. Dispensation. a. Was not a part with the O. T. prophets. b. It seemed to be an office of helpers to the apostles as long as these latter lived and the written record was not yet complete.

2. Agabas prophesied through the Holy Spirit. a. That a great dearth was to come over the entire inhabited earth. b. And it was going to strike very hard in the land of Judea. This would mean hardships for the church in Jerusalem. It seems that this mother church was very hard put financially apart from this famine which was to come. Think of the collection that Paul gathered in all the churches for the brethren in Jerusalem. II Cor. 9:1-15.

3. This famine actually came too. Not under the present emperor Caligula, but under the next emperor, Claudius.

B. The Stewardship in Christ practiced.

1. They gave from the liberality of their heart. Not a tenth. b. But as each had means to give. They were free from the law, but this freedom was freedom from greed and covetousness. They were gracious givers. II Cor. 9:8; givers who labored with their hands that they might have to give to the poor.

2. And it was handled in an orderly way. vs. 30. a. It was placed in the hands of Saul and Barnabas. b. These delivered it to the elders in Jerusalem.

Questions: Did God send this dearth to try the faith of this congregation in Antioch? Would this flock deserve so much thought and consideration? Is there a great lesson here as to the proper manner of giving?

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Outline XXXI

HEROD AGRIPPA I PERSECUTING THE CHURCH

Acts 12:1-24

I. The Persecution. vss. 1-4.

A. The Persecution as Such.

1. Its time. a. The sense of "at that

time" vs. 1 seems to indicate that it was about at the time of the breaking forth of the gospel unto the Greeks in Antioch. b. And it was more particularly the time of the Passover. (This feast was continued to be held).

2. Its form. a. The word "to entreat evilly" is employed in Acts also for the ill-treatment that was afforded to Israel in Egypt. Acts 7:6, 19. It indicates ill-treatment from the motive of pure maliciousness. b. Just which special forms were employed is rather difficult to say, but we can imagine the worst, for it culminated in the beheading of James the brother of John, the son of Zebedee. c. And the prize victim was to be Peter whom they had imprisoned, and who was to be executed after the Passover. vs. 4.

B. Its Motive.

1. Herod wished to do something to please the Jewish leaders. a. Certainly not because he loved these latter; how could this be the case. Was he not a grandson of Herod the Great; a true Edomite was he. b. He does something to court their favor. 1-From this viewpoint he could have done no better. It was good politics! 2-The christian church must serve as bait. Herod does not count the blood that he is shedding precious.

2. That Herod loved popularity is evident from vss. 22, 23. a. He claims the blasphemous praise of the populace's flattery. b. Here is a little Nero! Beast of iniquity.

II. Peter's Signal Deliverance. vss. 5-19.

A. The Deliverance as Such.

1. In the dead of night an angel comes to sleeping(?) Peter. a. Peter is as securely kept as is humanly possible. Four quarterions of soldiers watch him. He is chained to two soldiers with as many chains. b. The angel rouses Peter, tells him to rise in haste. The chains fall from him. He is led out to the iron gate which opens automatically. c. After he is out on the street the angel leaves him.

2. Peter soon becomes fully aware of the situation. a. At first he thought that he saw a vision. b. But now he understands. The Lord Jesus is with him. He has led him: 1-From the hand of Herod. (Is He not LORD of lords and KING of kings?) 1-And from the evil expectation of the Jews. O, but the "blood of this man was coming on them"! c. Peter hastens to the house of Mary where many believers are praying. Their prayers have been heard. The humanly impossible comes true.

B. The Purpose.

1. Answering the prayer of the believers. a. In this instance it was necessary. Has the Lord not work yet for Peter. Think of Acts 15. Is his testimony not going to be coupled by that of Paul? And then he must also write yet the epistles to the churches which later would be organized by Paul. His hour was not yet! It would come as well as that of James. John 21:19. b. And God puts to nought the wisdom and power of man.

2. The triumph of God's cause in Christ over every foe. Also this foe in Rome! Is this not the "stone" rolling down the mountain in Nebuchadnezzar's dream?

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III. God's Speedy Judgment Upon Herod. vss. 20-24.

A. The Occasion.

1. The general occasion. a. The Sidonians and Tyrian ambassadors were in Caesarea where Herod is staying. This was a Roman stronghold. Paul will later be imprisoned here for more than two years. b. These countries had fallen into Herod's disfavor and had now come to sue for peace. They were attempting to court his favor by bribes and intrigue and flattery. It was worldly diplomacy. c. They succeeded in this with the king's chamberlain, Blastus their friend.

2. It seems that in the great arena, the place of the Roman games, Herod was attending a great celebration of Roman success. a. The one just completed on the "diplomatic front". b. The other possibly on the battle-field in far of Britain. At least so Josephus informs us.

B. At the height of the games Herod makes an oration.

1. He is robed in the royal, glittering apparel of the kings. a. All the cymbals of earthly kingliness and greatness. b. And all centers here in him.

2. When he speaks the populace (not christian to be sure) applauds with cries: a. The voice of God. b. Not the voice of man.

C. Sudden Destruction falls upon Herod.

1. The form. a. An angel of God smites him. There are more with the church than with the enemy. b. He is eaten by the worms. He dies.

2. Reason for it: a. God is jealous of His honor. b. Vengeance belongeth to Him, also for the blood of His saints. Questions: Which was the greater sin on the part of Herod, the one perpetrated upon the saints, or that of receiving the praise of the people? Was Satan also in the picture here? Can we see quite clearly that God is preparing a place of refuge for the church in the world? Compare Rev. 12:13ff. Has this any significance say for the teacher of "civics"? Does not Christ have the last word here? Notice: "But the Word of God grew and multiplied."

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