BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION

MARCH · 1947

BEACON LIGHTS

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For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VII MARCH — 1947 NUMBER 6

Letter from The Netherlands

By C. J. KETEL — KAMPEN, NETHERLANDS

One of the board members of Beacon Lights, Mr. Hoeksema, asked me to write an article about "conditions among the Netherland youth". It is difficult in a short article to give some information about the conditions of the youth in our small country. But this is no reason for us to refuse to accede to this kind request: any opportunity that is offered us to afford information concerning the spiritual need of our Holland youth we must grasp with both hands. For all this will surely be subservient to the growing contact between America and the Netherlands. We must support one another in the gigantic struggle of the spirits, which becomes manifest more and more. For also through this our Lord Jesus Christ prepares His coming, and unto this purpose we devote our whole life because He has already long demanded it of us. Everything He requires for the cause of His kingdom,—also this article.

The Second World War was not so much a milestone but rather a hastening process for the development of present conditions. For a long time a tremendous levelling-process was in operation: people no longer sought their power in an independent, thorough development of tested ability, but were soon satisfied with some job that did not require much mechanical knowledge, and netted sufficient wages to make a living. One "let himself be lived" rather than that he would himself take hold of life and submit it to his own will and ability. Everyone pursued a certain knowledge of good-for-nothing things: only he could get along who was thoroughly informed about the newest and latest fads. This tendency revealed itself in every department of life. Politics was no longer controlled by the question of principles. Instead of being men of principles, political leaders became opportunists. The best speaker was he who knew how to gain the people. When there was no work and poverty threatened, he simply chose a slogan that promised heaven and earth, and the

masses of the people followed him. The people did not judge for themselves. Thus they yielded to the tremendous levelling-obsession. A typical example of this is Nazism. The German soldier said, "In Berlin werd gedacht" ("In Berlin they think for us".) At present, after the war, a constantly increasing influence of the state is found; and always it surprises anew how easily one submits himself to all this. Everything is all right if one does not need to exert himself too much.

In the religious sphere the manifestation of this process was alarming. One was indeed called a Christian and he still appreciated to be member of some church-denomination, but in reality he knew nothing anymore of God and His precepts. An ever-increasing number of societies and committees began to call themselves "Christian". Their work, however, had nothing to do with Christianity, or was even in dire conflict with it. In the church and in the denominations the ministers joined this levelling process. They catered to the people. No longer did they deliver the message of joy for them who know themselves to be sinners and convert themselves; but they rather pursued the ideal to deliver something new every time, something that would draw the attention. One had to "catch" the people. The service of the Lord no longer stood at the center. The best speaker was the people's choice. Instead of seeking power in the Word, they tried to find it in the word. There was no longer a great deal of difference between the demagog and the preacher; more and more the world encroached upon the church. The "church" lost her significance and place in the world. One mocked at all that Christian quasi-Christian ado. The church was without power: for the Word had been blacked out. No longer could she touch the "conscience" of the world. The "church" had become an article of fashion, and therefore soon became superfluous. Our age is too sober to maintain things that are expensive and don't produce.

Then came the war. Because ties were severed, people went in hiding; because of rassia's, the work of the underground, deportations, etc., this process developed even faster. Being essentially empty many a Christian action collapsed under the sledge-hammer blows of the Nazi regime. Professor Schilder and Dr. Dam were the first that with great emphasis called the attention to the impending peril and sent forth the clarion call to principal resistance. There was indeed resistance, but rather because of one's own life and possessions than because of the violation of the righteousness of the Lord.

* * * *

And now we are in the post-war

period. From America comes a request for an article about the conditions among the Netherlands youth. The situation is not improved. The levelling-process continues with faster strides. It seems as if everything prepares itself for the coming of the anti-Christ. The young people prepare themselves in great numbers to meet him with a smile on their face through the sunny fields of Holland. Is it not intelligible that on every side the attempt is made to dam this stream? The dreadful feature of it all, however, is that none of these dams prove to be firm: they cannot stand because they were put up in the power of man. The only thing we can still do against this is that we do not follow this example of prophecying in our own power, but speak of the glorious majesty of God, Who stands sovereignly above our whole life and is revealed to us through His Son Jesus Christ. Him we must show forth clearly and concretely. We can say so easily, "I choose for Christ", but we forget just as easily what John writes, "He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar and the truth is not in him." We must show forth the Christ in His concrete significance for the present time. Christ is not an abstract concept. He confronts us in every concrete situation. There He places His precepts before us. In all whom He puts on our way, in America or Holland, in whatever He brings upon our path, our work, our hobbies; He demands that we be faithful. To love someone frequently means little more than that we nourish some romantic feelings. But in reality it means to be faithful to our life's partner, to show him what Christ demands of us, to point it out to him repeatedly. This concerns, of course, first of all Christ Himself. He who loves Christ faithfully investigates what He has revealed in His Word. The bride reads the words from the lips of the bridegroom in rapt attention. Only when we thus put ourselves in His service will we learn to know Him; only then will we live and overcome death in us. For it is not I that live, Christ lives in me.

Then slowly there develops a growth. First it seems somewhat unusual. It is as with a new suit; at first it does not seem to fit exactly, but when we have worn it for a while we do not want another because we've become used to it. Every day we start anew, and every evening we conclude that we almost made a complete failure of it, that we must always again live out of grace, not at our own expense but at the expense of Christ. We are bought with a price: our life is no longer ours but His, and even now He asks, "What are you doing with it? Are you stand-

ing with your whole life in My service or in the service of yourself?" To stand in His service means to be faithful in our everyday life and work. We are not being tossed to and fro as the waves of the sea by every wind of doctrine, because we are of Christ. We do not follow every speaker that comes, even though he be a preacher, because Christ put His seal upon us. We do not run around, now with this, and then with another girl, because Christ does not want it. That it is to be faithful! And because we love Him, we keep His precepts; that is the strongest protest over against all levelling-processes. For the levelling spirit abandons principles, cares not for being faithful, and causes love, that is, true love, to cool off. It delivers people over to the ablest demagog, also in the church. We have seen it in the case of National Socialism, how a father will sacrifice his child, and the children their parents, to the spirit from the abyss. The levelling process builds wide roads for the coming of the anti-Christ. But they that are faithful, faithful to the holy will of the Lord, prepare a highway in the desert for the coming of Him Who will destroy the anti-Christ. They that are faithful do not try to save their lives in this world, they do not proclaim from the house-tops: "Here is the Christ and there is the Christ". They work toward His coming in the often quiet faithfulness of their everyday work. What does it matter then to lose one's own life? Only thus will we save it.

In America and Holland we bear the name "Christian". And when the generation that after us must perform the faithful service in a desperately confused and levelled-off world shall ask us: "But why art thou called a Christian?" Then you and I will answer: "Because I am by faith a member of Christ and thus am partaker of His anointing; that so I may confess His name, and present myself a living sacrifice of thankfulness to Him: and also that with a free and good conscience I may fight against sin and Satan in this life: and afterwards reign with Him eternally, over all creatures." (Heid. Cat. Qu. 32).

Editor's Note:

Mr. Ketel is a seminarian in the Liberated Churches in the Netherlands. He has been corresponding with Mr. Homer Hoeksema for some time, and was requested by the Staff of Beacon Lights, through Mr. Hoeksema, to write an article on conditions in the Netherlands, especially with reference to Holland youth. The article was written in the Holland language, and translated as it appears here by Rev. H. Hoeksema.

Calvary's Sympathies

By GERALD VANDEN BERG — GRAND RAPIDS

Troubles!

Grief and sorrows without number!

Sorrows and pains of body and soul! Yes, these things, regardless of their cause, spell the need of that psychological phenomena which we call human sympathy. And the peculiar thing about sympathy is that in spite of the character or degree of one's affliction, we always seek to obtain it. Perhaps it is due to the fact that we are not strong enough to bear our own grief; perhaps it may be attributed to a lack of wilfulness or patience that our natural tendency in moments of sorrow is always to seek to derive comfort from the encouragements and cheer of our friends. The well-known slogan "A friend in need is a friend indeed", is surely a proper one. For this very reason a young child always seeks refuge in distress in its own parents. A true friend is the most refreshing source of consolation. When the three friends of Job hear of his great affliction, they make an appointment together to come to mourn with him and to comfort him. For seven days and seven nights they sat down with him upon the earth and none spake a word, for they saw that his grief was great. David comforts Bathsheba, his wife, when she lost her child, and by Rachel, Isaac is comforted after the death of his mother.

However, this mutual exchange of words and sentiments is not in the real sense of the word true and ultimate sympathy, because in this way, though the grief-stricken may be considerably relieved, the deepest reason for the sorrow and the very grief itself is never removed. It is true that another may enter in with us into our perplexities and sharing our grief bestow a measure of appeasement upon our broken down spirits, but no one, though he be friend or kin, can remove our miseries and its causes. To understand this, we must focus our attention on Calvary and the Cross of Christ. He alone entered into our deepest pain and grief of heart and removed the cause of it all from us by the way of His suffering. For sin and all its implications is the deepest source of all our pains and sorrows. In the good creation of God, prior to man's sin, there was no remorse and neither shall there be in the world to come, for God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. For God, who

has made the soul of His own Son an offering for sin on the Cross of Calvary, has made all things new. For He sympathized with us when we, being alienated from Him, were lost in the depths of misery and woe.

However, looking at that cross and suffering of our Lord from another point of view, we may say that here we find no sympathy whatever. For in our day the land is full of institutions and homes for the poor and depressions but when the Man of Sorrows was despised and rejected, men hid their faces from Him and refused to give regard unto Him. Already at His birth, when as a helpless babe He was garbed in swaddling clothes and laid in the cattle's bed, there was no one who felt sorry for Him. And there were none that take pity when presently, He is ousted from the synagogue and ejected from the city of His nativity. When, in the darkest hour of His affliction, His soul becomes exceedingly sorrowful, we find His closest friends, who had sworn their faithful allegiance unto Him, now in the quiet and peaceful repose of sleep. When reproach has broken His heart and He is full of heaviness, He looks for some to take pity but there was none and for comforters but He found them not. There was not a soul to share His sorrow; not a man to bear His pain. He must suffer and die alone. . . .

"Alone, alone, He bore it all alone;
He gave Himself to save His own,
He suffered, bled and died alone. . . alone."

And well it is that no part of that awful cross was borne by another lest the flesh should glory in His presence. For it must become perfectly manifest that in no way whatever is Calvary a manifestation of man's sympathy but is exclusively the revelation of God's love to usward. From our viewpoint the cross portrays the opposite of sympathy for it is fully a manifestation of our deepest cruelty and hatred of God. For rather than enter into His suffering with Him, we turn our backs upon Him and flee from Him when the way becomes difficult and seemingly impossible. We deny Him to His face, we mock Him, buffet Him, spit upon Him and make Him the object of reproach. Indeed He was encompassed by dogs and enclosed by the assembly of the wicked. For when He cried for thirst, we mercilessly gave Him gall and vinegar. Worse than dogs are we and for us the reward of the wicked is too lofty.

Do not say, my friend, that because this was done many years ago, it does not apply to us! Do not try to find excuses for this great evil! For in the very measure that we fail even now to enter

with Him into His sufferings, we are guilty of this same offense. Do not misunderstand. I do not say that we must stand at the foot of the cross and shed tears of pity, thus thinking that we can relieve Him of His suffering. But we may and must beware, lest by our sin, we heap upon Him greater reproach. Let us not deny Him but rather bear His shame. Let us go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach. Let us not be ashamed to suffer for His sake but rather count it all joy that we may be considered worthy. And when the world comes to us with its vain appeals, temptations and pleasures, and proffers us riches and honor, let us remember that in these things lie vanity and vexation of spirit and that to seek and know only them is to be encompassed by a multitude of sorrows, without sympathy in the day of visitation. For there is no true sympathy among the wicked nor is God sympathetically disposed toward them.

But we have a sympathizing high priest. He is a high priest who is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and who, moved with compassion toward us, bore our grief, carried our sorrow, was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. And He lay down His life for His sheep. For it was in this that the magnificent character of His deep sympathy for us is revealed. For by His suffering, He did not enter into our sorrows to share them with us, nor did He go before us as an illustrious example of intrepid courage, but He took all our grief and pain together with its complete cause upon Himself and bore them all away. So now there is no more reason for us to sorrow. For our High Priest, who is Jesus the Son of God, did not remain in the sphere of our grief, but is passed on into the heavens and sits at the right hand of God our Father. From thence, He rules over His church, making perpetual intercession for her as she lives in the midst of this world of sin and darkness, and bestowing upon her all spiritual blessings in heavenly places. He imparts unto her the forgiveness of sins through His blood, and He makes her principally to live the life of His glorious Kingdom which is the blessed life of fellowship and friendship thru the Comforter whom He has sent unto us from the Father. Such is the blessed fruit of His sympathy.

And well does He know that we now lie in the midst of sin and are surrounded by manifold temptations and that in the present body of this flesh, there are still present with us an ever increasing number of reasons to make us full of sorrow, grief and pain. And, then, too, the world of wickedness

(Cont. on page 13)

MOVIES....

BY REV. W. HOFMAN — HOLLAND, MICH.

This is not to be a discussion of the movies as they are shown in the present day theatres and shows. It shouldn't be necessary, even though it probably is, it *shouldn't be* necessary to discuss that evil among us. And that a discussion of that *shouldn't* be necessary is evident from the pamphlet written by the Rev. R. Veldman on this topic. Which, by the way, we would urge all our young people and parents to procure and read. But we will limit ourselves to movies, and more particularly, to movies at our Conventions.

Even though this too, has been discussed in our paper recently, we are returning to it for especially two reasons. In the first place, we had also remarked on the subject in our first editorial commenting on the last Convention. This reflection never appeared, yet it stands. It seems that our managing-editor needed a bit of space and hence "cut" a few lines from that article, which contained our reaction to these movies. If our memory serves correctly, we wrote somewhat as follows: that we felt that the moving pictures might have been eliminated without detracting from the otherwise splendid program which closed our meetings. Further, we stated, that they soon become habit-forming and for that reason are dangerous and to be avoided. So, we are not exactly injecting ourselves into some one else's debate when we return, but simply maintaining and defending a position which we also took. In the second place, we feel that the matter has been left rather "hanging-in-the-air". That which was to be one of the most potent arguments against them was subsequently overthrown and there the matter has come to rest. We feel that something more definite should be concluded.

Well, what shall we say? It would, of course, be foolish to attempt to prove that *moving* pictures are wrong. They are not. Perhaps it would be too "narrow-minded" to point out that even in the unobjectionable films that were shown that night there were objectionable features. We were offended, for example, when the nar-

rator of one of the pictures injected the theory of evolution in explaining the wonders of God's creation. Other instances might also be cited. But that's becoming pretty "narrow", isn't it? Then, too, that touches such small, fine points that we ought to overlook and be reasonable about. Nor do we suppose it would avail much to argue the point that they are habit-forming. We, carnal creatures that we are, are strong enough to be discreet and discerning in our attitude and use of movies. Even the contrast from the sacred to the secular probably doesn't bear much weight. The change was striking, for example, when immediately after a message from the Word of God the movies were announced, the room darkened, etc., in preparation for their showing. All that movies connote couldn't help but rise in the mind. It was all in rather glaring contrast to what we had enjoyed. Do not mistake us. It is not the pictures shown, for they were relatively good — perhaps, of the best that can be procured, but the connotation of the thing. But even that is rather negative and the imagination of our own evil mind.

Let's approach it from a positive point of view then, and ask, was this the best possible entertainment for the occasion and the most excellent we have to offer our Young people? What we mean can best be brought out by referring to the speech which immediately preceded the pictures. The speaker said that the gathering was potentially an audience of the most beautiful people on earth. He said that we occupied the very center position in the brush line of God's grace: where all the hues are brightest and most clear. That this beauty is to be revealed in being transformed after the fashion and model of Christ: God's Most Beautiful Son. The question then is, do movies, and all that they connote, express the heart of our beauty or are they a symptom of conformation according to the fashion and pattern set by this world? Is it the *most* beneficial and *most* beautiful material we have to offer "the most beautiful audience"? They certainly deserve only *the best*... If we were always moved by this consideration, doubtlessly, many of our activities would be re-formed. What do you think?

— NOTICE —

The April issue of Beacon Lights will feature our California churches. Hence, all the material except our regular article by Mr. C. De Boer, on Nature Study, and our serial, will be written by our people in California.

"Don't Miss It!"

Friends

Man is a sociable sort of creature. He likes company, and seeks it, and except in rare instances, enjoys only occasional solitude. One who is continually alone is liable to become moody, absent-minded, odd, and in general, different from his fellow creatures. There are few people whose personalities are so self-sufficient that they can find enough pleasure in their own company to do without that of their fellows. Man needs friends.

A friend is someone with whom we have fellowship because we find enjoyment in his presence. With some of our friends we merely like to visit. They are those with whom we chat over a cup of coffee. Such friends do not mean a great deal to us, but come and go, seemingly having little effect upon our lives. But there are also friends who are very dear to us. Most of us have what may be called an inner circle of friends, one or two persons who are close to us. We share with them our highest joys, and our deepest woes, and we even feel somewhat their pleasures and pains as they feel ours. Of such Solomon wrote, "there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."

Friends like these have a tremendous influence upon us. Consciously or unconsciously, we imitate them in various ways. We copy their clothes, adopt their mannerisms, read the same books, and even borrow their current favorite expressions. If a friend thinks a book is "simply super" we are sure to use those words to express our opinion of someone's new car. If a friend lightly refers to someone as a "sad sack from way back" we are quick to apply the term to the next person who doesn't stand too high in our esteem.

Now, just who *are* our friends? By what standard do we measure a person before we call him our friend? With what kind of person do we share our happiness and our grief? To whom do we go for sympathy and counsel? And what kind of person do we imitate?

Can we really make friends with a person who doesn't love God, or who claims to be a Christian and lives like the world? Is that the kind of person we are copying?

The apostle warns us against being "unequally yoked together with unbelievers." We should find our friends in the church, among the people of God. And, incidentally, our young people's societies are good places to cultivate the right kind of friendships, even though that is not their primary purpose.

"Make friends of God's children", then. We will find ourselves living a healthier, happier spiritual life. And the church will be stronger for it. —Lois Hoeksema.

Monsters Of The Deep

By MR. C. DE BOER — Kalamazoo, Mich.

"Praise Jehovah from the earth,
Ye sea-monsters, and all deeps;"
Psalm 148:7.

Stealthily thru the depth of ocean and sea swims the largest animal of all creation—the whale. Monsters, indeed! They weigh from 40 to 100 tons and are 50 to 100 feet in length. These enormous creatures resemble submarines as they ply the deep, occasionally rising to the surface to obtain a fresh supply of air.

Perhaps, the first question our readers ask, is the pertinent one, "Is a whale a fish?" In Scripture the word rendered "whale" denotes any great sea animal, as it is used in a general sense. However, according to a scientific classification, we must distinguish between fish and whale: for their resemblances are merely superficial, in that they both have tapering bodies, fin-like tails, and fin-shaped paddles on each side of the body.

Now, if you consider their fundamental differences we can readiy discern that the whale cannot be in the same classification with its aquatic neighbor—the fish. The most important distinction lies in the fact that the whale is a mammal; that is, it is warm-blooded and has well defined veins and arteries: it breathes by means of lungs (not gills); it produces living young (a few species of fish also do, but this is the exception); after birth the suckling young are nourished by the mother's milk; the brain is well developed: and the bones, joints, and muscles resemble the higher mammals.

In reality, these formidible looking creatures are timid and shy, but when they are attacked they are well prepared for defense, for they are fortified by a powerful tail some 5 to 6 feet long and 20 to 25 feet wide. With their large nose they can ram small craft, and in the case of larger vessels they capsize them with a powerful motion of the tail.

One of the distinguishing features is the extremely large head which is 1/3 the length of the body. The eyes are small and the whale possesses only one nostril — S-shaped— which can be closed by a valve and is located on the top of the head. It is erroneously believed that the whale takes water in the mouth and expels it thru the nostril. However, the air which is emitted so forcefully thru this opening when the whale ascends to the surface comes from its lungs, and as this warm air comes in contact with the surrounding cold, it condenses and forms a column of

vapor which rises several yards.

Not only is the tail useful for defense but it is essential for locomotion. It might be interesting to note that the tail is at right angles to the body and is horizontal to the water rather than vertical. Whales, in contrast to fish, do not have pelvic or anal fins and the dorsal fins lack bones.

Generally, whales are classified into two groups — the toothed and toothless. To the former group belong the common sulfur-bottom or blue whales which live upon small plant and animal life. Their upper jaw is lined with two ridges or triangular, cartilaginous plates which act as a comb or sieve, removing the small animals and plants from the water as the fish skims over its surface with its mouth open. It has a very small throat for two reasons: first of all, it must be able to close its throat when in the process of catching food to prevent its digestive system from filling up with water (it has no gills as fish which serve as an exit for the water entering the mouth. Secondly, it needs only a small throat because of the type of food upon which it lives. There are as many as 200 plates, suspended from each side of the roof of the whale's mouth, and they vary in color— white, grey, black, or striped.

The second class is identified by their canonical shaped teeth and their large throat, which enables them to swallow large fish, seals, and even man. To this later class belongs the highly prized sperm whale, which is the source of several very valuable products.

Perhaps, few of us realize the size and importance of the whaling industry. Before the war there were over 8000 men employed in this business, and they operated some 210 whaling ships plus 31 huge vessels called "whaling factories" which cut up the animals, smelt the blubber, grind up the bones, etc., at the amazing rate of 40 whales per day! Approximately 16,000 whales are killed annually with an estimate of 500,000 for the period 1919-1939.

Much adventure and danger has been removed from modern whaling by the use of the explosive bullet. A trained gunner on a large ship will make as much as $25,000 during the four months season (Nov. 24-March 24). About 90% of the men engaged in this occupation are Norwegians, and their best hunting grounds are in the Antarctic off the coast of South America and along the coast of Greenland.

The most important product of the whale is the oil obtained from the blubber, a layer of protective fat under the skin. The average whale produces about 20 tons of oil which sells at $250.00 a ton. Just prior to the war the German scientists reported they were per-

fecting a method of manufacturing artificial wool from whale blubber. During the war blubber was used as a source of glycerin in making explosives and also in the manufacture of margarine for the British people. Before the general use of mineral oils, whale oil was burned in lamps throughout the world.

Baleen (triangular shaped plates in the mouth of the toothless whale) is very light, strong, and flexible: and hence, is used in the manufacture of umbrella and corset ribs, whips, and surgical instruments.

From the sperm whale three valuable products are obtained—namely, sperm oil, spermaceti, and ambergris. From the blubber of the sperm whale is produced a very high grade oil used for typewriters, sewing machines, various other machines, and for dressing leather. The spermaceti are white flakes formed by precipitation when the thick oil from the cavities of the head is exposed to the air. It is used in making candles and cosmetics of fine quality. Ambergris is a substance produced in the intestines of the sperm whale and is occasionally seen along the sea coast in the form of a peculiar yellow lump which has been washed ashore. This is used in the manufacture of perfumes. Thus we can realize that whales are of great commercial value.

CALVARY'S SYMPATHIES
(Cont. from page 7)

heaps upon us reproach, casts us out, for it hates us as it hated Him, and makes this life as much of a perfect misery as is possible. Is that your experience, fellow-Christian? If not—then, why not? If so—then do not go to man to receive sympathy for I am sure he will fail to satisfy your earnest desire and you will remain without relief in your misery. But go to the cross of Jesus and there take refuge in the shelter of His blood which was shed because He was moved with compassion toward us. Oh, how great is His mercy from everlasting to everlasting. There cast all your cares upon Him because He careth for you. There make all your needs and requests known unto Him by supplication and prayer with thanksgiving. There obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. "What a friend we have in Jesus. All our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to God in prayer." And that because He sympathizes with us in all our weakness. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

The Arian Controversy

By REV. J. A. HEYS — Grand Rapids, Mich.

A nation that is at war with a neighboring country finds itself hindered to a great extent in its efforts at home in construction and general improvement of living conditions. Today our country is not yet back to normal after the war has been brought to a close for a considerable length of time. To a certain extent this was also true of the church before the peace which was brought about by Constantine and of which we wrote last time. All during the period of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists the church had a struggle on its hands. That is always the case with the church in this world. She must always fight the good fight of faith. However in these first three centuries after the death and resurrection of Christ she had a special battle to fight. The church had to defend the Christian religion over against the Pagan philosophies and Judaistic antagonism, and as we have seen, the apologies written by the church fathers in this period were intended to show that Christianity rightfully has a place in this world and is in fact the true religion so that all other religions have no right of existence. Now, however, after Constantine embraced Christianity and being a world ruler made Christianity the state religion, the church was free to study and develop the various doctrines taught in Scripture. The enemy outside the church is no longer a powerful force that threatens to destroy the church. Now a careful and uninterrupted study of the teachings put forth can be conducted in order that the church may derive a clearer conception of what is taught in the Scriptures.

It must not be thought that there was no doctrinal development during the first three centuries after Christ's ascension. There certainly was and in former issues of this department we called your attention to some of this development. Now, however, there is ushered in a period of more intense study and of deeper and more frequent discussion of the doctrines taught in God's Word. One other element which enters the picture is that due to Constantine's work of making Christianity the state religion, many were brought inside the church institute who were steeped in Pagan philosophy. Many of these men were capable writers and speakers and began to expound their views freely inside the church. One such a man was Arius, who taught a very corrupt doctrine which spurred the church on to greater study of the matter and ended in a clearer declaration of

the truth than the church had enjoyed before.

Arius was a presbyter in the church at Alexandria. He was a very capable man having attained quite a reputation as a teacher of great ability. He was also highly respected for his apparent piety. But the doctrines he began to teach were such that he clearly branded himself as a heretic.

His false doctrine centered about his corrupt conception of the divinity of Christ. In fact, it was just exactly this divinity of Christ that he denied. The Son of God, so he taught, is not of the same essence as the Father. He believed that all things were created by the Son. How could he deny that when in John 1:3 it is plainly stated that all things were made by the Word and that without Him was nothing made that was made. But Arius maintained that the Word, or the Son of God, was Himself created by the Father. He existed before the creation of the world, according to the view set forth by Arius, but it is not co-eternal nor equal with the Father. He is a creature made by the Father who only is God. Arius considered Christ to be a creature of far higher degree and power than either man or angels and that all men, angels and all that appeared from the moment that God said, "Let there be light" have been created by God.

You understand then that Arius not only denied the truth of the Triune existence of God, but he also taught a doctrine which makes salvation impossible for us. If the Son is not of the same essence with the Father, then we do not have three persons dwelling in one divine essence. Nor do we really have a Saviour in Christ. If He is not truly God as well as truly man, salvation through Him becomes an impossibility. As the Heidelberg Catechism states, Christ must be very God "that He might by the power of His Godhead sustain in His human nature, the burden of the wrath of God; and might obtain for and restore to us righteousness and life". If Christ, that is the Son of God, is simply a creature God has made, even granted that He made Him higher than man and created Him long before the foundation of the world, He still cannot bear the wrath of God without being consumed by it. Then He perishes under that wrath, and we have no salvation. Only Christ as the Son of God of the same essence with the Father and Spirit can bear this wrath, sustaining His human nature in it and delivering us from it.

In our next installment of this department we hope to call your attention to the defense of the church over against Arius and the historical proceedings which led to the final expression of the church.

To Our Boys In Service

Grand Rapids, Feb. 1, 1947.

Dear Fellows:

Somewhere in Scripture, the Lord warns us that there will come times so fraught with the danger of apostacy that, if it were possible, the very elect would be deceived.

What else does this mean than, that, in those times especially, the devil will appear as an angel of light? The Lord, no doubt, refers to times when the lie of the antiChrist will be so garbed in the cloak of the truth of Christ that it is extremely difficult to distinguish the one from the other. In the name of the Christian faith all kinds of human philosophy and heresy will be offered. And the purpose is to lead the people of God astray, not only in regard to doctrine, but, of course, also in respect to their walk in the midst of the world.

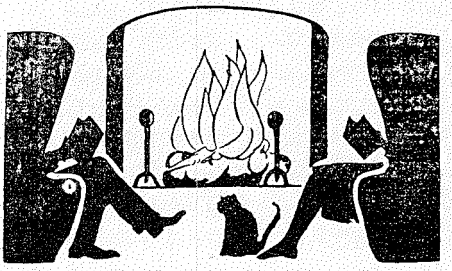
I often think that our times are especially characterized by this danger. How many wild movements are initiated in our day in the name of Christ, that are agencies to inculcate the lie. And they find no difficulty to gain followers, thoussands of them, all over the world, because our generation is noted for its ignorance of sound doctrine, and men are easily swayed by various winds of doctrine, especially if the leaders know how to sweep the emotions and to create enthusiasm. Moreover, even modernism itself usually speaks in terms of the historic Christian faith. They, the modernists, do not hesitate to speak of Christ as the Son of God, even though they mean something entirely different from the denotation of that term in true Christian doctrine. And how general is the movement to unite all churches into one mighty institution. The slogan is so beautiful: the Church must be one in Christ! In the meantime, a unity is sought regardless of the truth, and at the expense of the Christian faith.

Now, we know that the world will never succeed to deceive the very elect. Nevertheless, over against all these movements and in opposition to this tendency of our times, we have a serious calling. And our calling is plain: we must hold fast our confession! For us, this means, not that we maintain a general and vague expression of Christian faith, but that we firmly adhere and unmoveably stand on the basis of our own, definite, Protestant Reformed Confession. It requires, of course, knowledge of that Confession. How shall we hold fast that with which we are not acquainted? It means that we heartily believe the truth of that Confession. It implies that we speak of it, and that, in our walk and conversation we adorn that Confession by living in sanctification, forsaking the world, and fighting the good fight, even unto the end, that no one take our crown.

Dear fellows, I hope and pray that you may never be deceived, but that you persevere in the faith once delivered unto saints! As ever your friend,

H. Hoeksema.

Christian Living. . .



By REV. R. VELDMAN — Grand Rapids, Mich.

An Appeal to Movie-goers.

There is every reason to believe, from things one hears almost continuously, that the evil of movie attendance is spreading day by day, also within our own Protestant Reformed churches. You young people are certain to know more about this than I do. Nevertheless, what I do know is more than sufficient to give cause for deep concern.

There was a time, not so many years ago, when the overwhelming majority of our young people of Reformed persuasion did not think of seeking their entertainment in these places of the world. It was understood and accepted without question that movies and theatres were not for the children of God's covenant. They were worldly places where worldly people sought their amusement. God's people, on the other hand, centered their activities around the church.

Today, however, this is different. No longer are movies identified with the world. They that do so are considered old-fashioned and undeveloped in their conceptions. More and more young people are kicking over the traces, breaking away from this traditional stand of the Reformed churches and seeking their amusement in the worldly movies, until now we have come to the point where those who can say that they never have gone to "a show" are the exception rather than the rule.

It was not my intention to write about the movie evil at this time. My article for this issue of Beacon Lights was already written when the determination came to me to direct this appeal to our young people, especially those who are just starting on this road of sin, who still enjoy the confidence of their parents and church, but who secretly attend shows nevertheless.

I do not mean to say, that I am excluding the others from my appeal, those, namely, who are more bold and regular about their movie attendance, whose parents are aware that they go, and who do not hesitate to tell their pastor and

elders in the presence of their parents that they see no wrong or harm whatever in this practice. To them as well I say: Turn from your evil way to the paths of righteousness and godliness.

However, I am thinking more especially of you, who know that you are walking in an evil way, who still are active in catechism and societies, who still enjoy the confidence of your parents and fellow Christians but are violating the same, nevertheless, by your more or less frequent attendance of the worldly movie. Of you I pray: don't continue on this sinful road; abstain entirely from this form of worldly amusement; don't permit yourself to be tempted, even to accomodate boy friend or girl friend, but rather stand your ground and show them the way of purity and uprightness.

And parents, may I have your attention for a moment? Don't tell yourself that this admonition and appeal is uncalled for, or even that they are entirely superfluous in your particular case. Better it would be to investigate than to assume this attitude of smug complacency. It is more than just possible that a surprise is in store for you,—and a shock, too. At any rate, the unfaithfulness of so many, who always were regarded as exemplary children and young people, has forced us to a point, where no parent in the home or consistory on family visitation can afford simply to assume that there is no ground for suspicion. Many of our parents are shocked and grieved when they discover the truth about their children. Many more would be, if they knew the truth. I'm speaking, of course, about those parents who are deeply conscious of the evil of movie attendance. Others are neither shocked nor grieved). I do not say, you understand, that our relations with our children should be based on distrust and constant suspicion. I do say, however, that we do well to keep this thing in mind and to remember, that our own children, too, as well as the neighbor's, "are incapable of doing any good and prone to all evil."

* * * *

Young people, will you listen to me? I'm not going to argue with you. This matter is too obvious. I merely want to remind you of a few things you know only too well, in the hope that the Lord will bring you to your senses.

You know very well that the movie is a corrupt institution and that, therefore, you are walking in an evil way. You'd know this even though you never had attended a "show". The advertisements in any newspaper, the pictures on almost any billboard will tell you that. All they speak of is horror, crime, sex and carnal love. All they portray is passionate em-

braces, lustful kisses, murder, violence of every description, nudity, suggestiveness that knows no bounds. How much advertising does the movie industry do that itself does not have the purpose of exciting the carnal passions of man? You agree with me, do you not? You'll find the proof in any movie magazine or any newspaper, your conservative Grand Rapids Press included. Turn to the movie page in any edition of any newspaper and the one thing that will strike you is the worldliness of it all, the sensuality, the appeal to the carnal appetites of man. All that the movies do to lure the customers through the turnstiles speaks one and the same language.

You know very well, that once you are inside things do not improve one bit. How could they? Surely, anything that deliberately makes itself appear so objectionable in its advertisements cannot itself be good. If, perchance, you are minded to defend your movie attendance, you had better answer this question: If there is not unadulterated sex and crime and sensual love in your movies why do they use these themes as the principal appeal to draw the public to them? And how long would the movie survive if it did not give the people exactly what they were promised by these advertisements? We know very well that all this obnoxious and sensual advertising is simply the breaking out of the putrefaction within. Still you go, don't you? Exactly because you crave those very things that the movies have to offer in the way of the satisfaction of the flesh. Let's admit it. Then there is hope.

You know well enough that "the show" is purely a thing of the world: that it depicts the life of the world, speaks the language of the world, instills the vain philosophy of the word and reveals the passions and ideals of the world; that it more than anything else reveals the inner self of the natural man. There the world declares, in unmistakable language, what it thinks of God and His church, heaven and hell, marriage and divorce, the Name and Day of the Lord, murder and theft, etc. You cannot help but realize what it means when young people and even children, in the tenderest and most impressionable years of their lives, allow their receptive hearts and minds to soak in this filth and corruption and permit the children of this world to instruct them in all their evil ways. You are aware, too, that no method of instruction is so effective as that which is used in the movie. What the eye sees is assimilated so readily, and remembered so long. Is it really your desire to be identified with such an institution?

You know as well as I do, that sin against every one of God's com-

mandments is played with in your movies, for your entertainment; that the movie is a school of crime and a perverter of morals: that there sexual impurity is extolled as love, murder is offered for entertainment, indecency is glorified as beauty and divorce is presented as legitimate. There the sacred is profaned, the minds of children and adolescents are poisoned and the passions are inflamed. Too many have testified that they received their start on the way of crime and shame in the movies. Too many young people have admitted that they learned their methods of love-making in the movies and then went home to practice the same on each other. You know in how far the shoe fits you yourself. You wouldn't deny the truth of these things, would you, when modern educators and psychologists themselves verify it? You wouldn't deny, would you, that the majority of the movies are not pure, and that the movies appeal to man's baser appetites? And you will pardon me for doubting your motives too. Otherwise, why does the world offer this "stuff" in such abundance? Why are sex, horror, crime and worldly love the themes in from 75 to 80% of all movies, according to reliable statistics? Why do pictures like "Gone With The Wind" and those of a similar nature draw the largest crowds and run the longest in any given locality? Because they are educational? You know better. It is because they are expected to be extra suggestive, smutty, "frank". That's why some of you, who are reading this now, and who otherwise are not movie addicts, did have to go to see "Gone With The Wind".

All this you know, and more.

You also know, or should know, that in attending these places and diverting your attention to the things of the world you are aiding the forces of darkness to undermine the life of the church. Indeed, you are! Whether you realize it or not, but by your actions you are aiding the forces that are working for the deterioration and devitalization of God's cause in the world. Oh, you say, but that is not my purpose at all. Then forsake this evil way, and do so entirely. You cannot serve God and Mammon. You cannot fill yourselves with the smut and sensualism that the movies offer and at the same time live, really *live*, in the church and concentrate on the study of God's Word, your catechism work and society life. Do these things ever go together? At any rate, the fact is, that while movie attendance is becoming more and more general, church life is on the down grade all along the line.

One more thing.

You know, how shamefully you are deceiving your parents and "letting them down" who are so

eager that you shall continue in the right way. They don't know that you "go to shows", do they? They trust you. They pray for you. They feel that you are better than the average. Yes, the majority of young folks go to "shows", but they are confident that you do not. And they thank the Lord for it. So positive are they that you abstain from this evil that they do not even feel the need of over questioning you. They feel that this would be an insult to your integrity. And that's the way your minister feels about you too. That's why he did not ask you, when on family visitation in your home, about attending movies. No, he had not forgotten! He thought that much of you. They should know, shouldn't they? They should know how you violate their confidence. Looked at now from this point of view, doesn't it all make one feel like a "heel"? Serving the world and doing the very things they so confidently know you would never do, and all behind the very screen of their implicit faith in you. This alone is very sinful, remember that. But some day your sin will find you out. Then their confidence in you, such a beautiful thing to have, will be shattered.—and confidence, once lost, is difficult to regain.

* * * *

My covenant friends, will you receive these lines in the spirit wherein they are written? I plead with you who are guilty, (for I still believe that many are not, a greater percentage, perhaps, than in any other church) : Mend your way!

Don't sacrifice the welfare of Zion on the altar of worldliness and passion.

Don't saturate your hearts and minds with the corruption of the world and exchange the riches of your covenant life for the vain pleasures of Egypt, selling your birthright for a mess of pottage.

Don't join the company of them concerning whom it is written, "Knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same, but *have pleasure in them that do them.*" Rom. 1:32.

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."

— DONATIONS —

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Send all donations to Winifred De Vries, 354 Diamond Ave., S. E., Grand Rapids, or to Wilma Pastoor, 939 Sigsbee St., S. E., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Book Review

BY BERDINA KNOT

GRAND RAPIDS, MICH.

THE EMPEROR'S PHYSICIAN

Today there are many fads. School boys and girls have taken to wearing brightly colored sweaters with animals marching across the breast. Not long ago every girl had to have a plain silver clasp called a barrette to hold her hair in place. The mode for knee-length skirts has been giving way to a trend toward longer dresses. These are fads which affect adornment.

There are also fads in the field of writing. It has become fashionable to choose a Biblical character as the principal figure in a story and to weave about him fact and fiction into an interesting plot which the author's imagination dictates. Novels such as *The Robe, The Apostle, David the King, Hearken Unto the Voice, Jacob, Behold Your King, The Brother,* and *The Emperor's Physician,* illustrate this literary bent during the last few years.

The Emperor's Physician tells us about Luke who has received an assignment with Sergius Cumanus, the personal doctor of the Roman emperor, to make a survey in Palestine of the most prevalent diseases among the Jews to discover causes for their existence. This area of the Roman Empire had been showing more unrest and human misery than any other province. The two eminent physicians begin their work at the time of Christ's ministry, and their work and Christ's healing quickly become interwoven in a strange succession of events.

Throughout Luke is presented to us as a believer in mind and matter in the modern way. He recognizes the psychological power of a healer as having strong influence upon the patient. Sergius Cumanus, on the other hand, believes only in matter. A doctor, according to him, can aid the sick only through skill in diagnosing and prescribing medicine for them. A struggle develops between the men over a recognition of Jesus' healing abilities.

Luke comes to consider Jesus a man of intense personality, who

can draw from his own nature a tranquility of mind which he gives to others. This feeling of security and certainty becomes the possession of the patient of Jesus due to the latter's dominant personality. He is also clever at judging a man's greatest need and of supplying that need, thus resolving the sick person's inner complex and rendering him easier to cure. Luke's analysis grows clear as he argues with his companion. To Sergius, Jesus is a fakir preying upon the minds of a people long known for superstition and ready to turn in their wretched state to anyone who extends to them a hope of better conditions.

Mr. Perkins has worked hard to supply a background which will take the sting induced by the word "miracle" out of the deeds of Christ. For example, the two physicians have been prescribing rest for Mary Magdalene over a period of several weeks before Jesus meets her and casts out the devils. Her illness they term epilepsy. Also, the Gerasene demoniac has been treated by Luke and Sergius and has shown much improvement before Jesus arrives to cast out the Legion of spirits in the demoniac's last violent fit of lunacy.

The author strikes another bizarre note when his plot introduces threads of Roman protection for Jesus. The Syrian governor is said to favor Jesus with his protection after his daughter has been cured of leprosy by Christ. The cure was effected over a period of twenty days of course, and once more after fruitless treatment by the physicians. Again, the Captain of the Guard at Jerusalem rewards the Healer with several rescues from the jealous Jews because his servant was brought back from point of death by the therapy of Jesus plus the medicines of Luke and his friend.

Such a book as *The Emperor's Physician* is lauded by many for its interpretation of ife and customs among the Jews.

In an evaluation of this type of book, however, one must not lose sight of its real significance. The fact that these books are written and eagerly read by the public so that they have become the rage shows us that the world that is acquainted with the Bible to some degree, nominal Christendom, needs the lie expressed to assure itself that none believe in the true Christ. They must sugar-coat the man, Jesus, and his followers like Luke and Paul to take his Messiahship away. They must make Him serene and untroubled in order to deny sin and the necessity for redemption. But their words stumble and contradict each other. These books are fads which pass away. And as their murmuring dies away the Truth of Scripture shines forth forever.

Current Comments

By HOMER G. KUIPER

Kalamazoo, Michigan

GENERAL MARSHAL'S APPOINTMENT

The appointment of Gen. George C. Marshall as Secretary of State by Pres. Truman has evoked considerable comment in the national press. By and large, the bulk of this comment has extolled the wisdom and sagacity of Mr. Truman in selecting a man of such caliber to succeed the Hon. James Byrnes. Many have expressed the opinion that the nation needs a strong man to guide it thru the perilous waters of post-war diplomacy so that the United States will emerge from the post-war chaotic world conditions as a strong and powerful nation which will lose none of the prizes and victories attained during the fierce struggle of the war. The supporters of Gen. Marshall point out that his brilliant military record as Chief-of-Staff in Washington during the war is unquestionable proof of his ability to handle the very complex details of international diplomacy.

That the former General intends to fulfill the expectations of his well-wishers became plainly evident in his speech at Princeton University in conjunction with the observance of the birthday of Geo. Washington. In effect, he advocated a much stronger foreign policy for this nation backed by a unified non-partisan public opinion. The mailed fist of a tough-minded military man, cognizant of a world where sheer force is the order of the day, is to be seen in the remarks of the famous General.

The man of affairs, the banker, the industrialist, the politician, the business man, is gratified to know that the man who will be responsible for the foreign affairs of our nation for the next few years is a realist and fully capable of meeting the realism of nations such as superrealistic Russia without failing. Full of complacency now they can go about their affairs with the assurance that they now have a "good" man at the helm of the ship of state.

We believe that the Christian approach is entirely different. We recognize that man is but a vapour and that the premise underlying the worldly complacency is false

because it is based on man. The Christian proceeds on the proper premise that "the hearts of kings are in the hands of the Lord as streams of living water." The Christian's complacency in a world where brute force is constantly meeting brute force, finds basis in the fact that he knows from God's holy and infallible word that the events of this world are under the direct and absolute power of his covenant God. We therefore look upon the appointment of general Marshall in an entirely different light as a man used by God in the execution of His Providence to protect His people living in the sphere of the power of the U. S. government against the hostility of such anti-christian powers as the Soviet Union.

A Letter From A Reader

Twenty years ago I was a High School Senior faced with the question ,"What shall I choose as my vocation?" Being a girl I might become a wife and mother but again I might not; so I wanted to prepare myself for work in which I felt I could use my talents to the best of my ability and also I wanted to be contented and happy in my work.

Most of my class-mates were planning to attend the home town school, Hope College. But it did not offer courses in Home Economics, the subject in which I was interested at the time. Our State College did, so, against considerable opposition I started my course there.

"You'll get away from the church". "You'll become an Atheist". were just samples of the things people said to me. No remarks remain so vivid in my memory as those made by one who today has practically forgotten what the inside of a church looks like—he stayed home and made money—. I received my B S degree there, spent one semester at a private college and a year at a large University Hospital where I interned as a dietician and worked on a Master's degree.

Among my friends and acquaintances I can number almost all nationalities and religions, including Jews, Catholics, Seventh Day Adventists, Christian Science, Mormons, and the general run of Baptists, Methodists, and Congregationalists.

If nothing else I have learned tolerance for others rights and beliefs, but I was born with a herit-

age of Reformed Doctrine of which I am justly proud and humbly grateful, and I am doing all in my power to pass this on to my children.

Perhaps I was just fortunate that God lead me through those years and into a better life. He might have left me to become an Atheist as some of my friends predicted, but I cannot recall any temptations to leave my faith. Temptations in small matters I can well recall, but the fundamental principles of Christianity are not so easily thrown aside as some people believe.

True, it does happen, but if you are bringing in facts in regard to how many individuals have left the church when pursuing courses of higher education, do not forget that alongside that figure you must also place the number who have stayed home and left the church. Lust for money has taken as many as higher education.

If you were to ask the question, "Would I repeat my course if I were given a second chance?" I would have to answer two ways. First, God had a purpose when He led me through those years, so I have no right to regret them in any way on that basis. Second, I know I have missed something that I could only have obtained in our own schools of Christian training. Therefore my children are receiving what I missed.

Again you might ask, "What would I advise a High School Senior of today to do?" In the light of what the years have taught me, I would say, "Senior, the first, foremost, and only important question to ask yourself is as follows: How may I best use my God-given talents and aptitudes to serve God and my fellow man?" To do this carefully review your past and try to visualize your future in the light of what your natural abilities and inclinations mean to you. If you choose a vocation in which you have a natural talent your chances of success and happiness are much greater. There are two other factors you must take into consideration. The effect on your health and the financial aspects of a vocation are minor elements but must not be overlooked when planning a future.

I know of no finer way to be of service to God than through the medium of teaching or its allied fields. Only a few are called to be ministers or missionaries, but there is an urgent need in our midst for teachers to lead our children. We need writers and speakers to teach us and our children. We need workers in our hospitals and homes as cooks, nurses, psychiatrists, and scientists.

Seniors, I would first consider very carefully the courses offered in our own schools. Attend them if it is at all possible, but if you

have a strong urge to be of service in a field in which there is no course of study offered in our schools, try to attend at least one year by taking a general course. Then very carefully select the institution which is located in a city where you will have the best contact with the church dearest to your heart.

If you keep in mind that you are attending the institution with the ultimate purpose of serving God to your greatest capacity, do not be afraid to venture forth. Seek and you will find friends who love God as you do. You may not find many interested in our Reformed faith, but remember that although for us our Reformed faith is the only way, there must also be other ways to Heaven. Few but Hollanders adhere to the Reformed faith and I cannot imagine a Heaven in which Hollanders are the sole occupants.

It is not right to draw ourselves further into our shells and let the world minister to our needs. Our young men and women must go into other schools to earn degrees as Doctors and Nurses. We need men and women in many fields. Science cannot disprove the Bible. We need people to teach these things to our children. If our children receive the proper home instruction and a good Christian High School training we should not be afraid to trust them to tell right from wrong. A Christian youth will have only pity for the highly educated man who has neglected his soul. Much as he may admire his brilliant mind a Christian youth will know wheat from chaff.

In closing let me once more remind you young people, WE NEED TEACHERS! Teachers with hearts filled with LOVE for God and His people. Use your talents for service no matter how small that service may seem to you.

Mrs. G. Landstra.

VOCATIONS

Dear Editor:

In referring to the article "Choosing a Vocation", in the February issue of Beacon Lights, I would like to support what has been said about obtaining an education in worldly institutions. We are all familiar with the ungodly teachings and surroundings of the public grade and high schools as well as in Army and Navy life and can expect nothing better in the higher worldly institutions of learning. I would suggest to those, who are planning such an education and to those who are further interested in this subject, to read the book, "Crucifying Christ In Our Colleges", by Dan Gilbert, which can be obtained at any religious book store.

Seymour F. Beiboer.
Grand Rapids, Mich.

CHARIOTEER

A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph

By GERTRUDE EBERLE

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Grand Rapids, Michigan

ISME-DAGON stalked about rubbing his aching limbs. "It would be small wonder," he said, "If we had all been churned to butter or cheese on these jiggling animals."

Egiba gave a loud guffaw, and his eyes twinkled. "You cannot expect, my friend, to be seated in the lap of luxury when fate has chosen an ass's back for you instead." He clapped a pudgy hand on Isme-Dagan's shoulder. "Faith, on such a long journey, a man must not pamper his flesh."

"Take your own advice," Isme-Dagan tweaked Egiba's beard, causing him to howl, while the other trademen tittered.

Meanwhile, in a spot of shade, the slave maids arranged a spread on the ground for the merchantmen. Before they could heap the cloth with victuals, the men seated themselves cross-legged and impatiently around it, while talk was bandied about with convivial spirit.

Raanah was busy for some time supervising the care of the donkeys. He saw that they were not watered too heavily at first, that their saddles and bridles were removed, and that they were hobbled where they could graze. Then satisfying his own thirst, he threw himself down, hot and weary, beside Joseph under a carob bush.

For a time, the boys watched the stirring scene in silence. "It's a great life," Raanah said finally, seeing that Joseph was interested. "While the old dragon creeps along the road calmly enough, once it turns off it hisses and lashes itself into a fury of impatience. And each day its fighting spirit provides some fresh excitement."

Seeing Raanah and Joseph under the bush, one of the younger maids approached with a large portion of barley bread, a square of dated cake, and a small gerba of curdled camel's milk. Both young men sprang to their feet to receive the offering. Raanah thanked her with a grace of which he was pecul-

iarly capable, the while wondering why she wished to serve them. He could have fetched the food himself after he had cooled off a bit.

She was a strikingly beautiful girl, somewhat younger than himself, though dressed like all the other women in a voluminous dark gown belted at the waist. In contrast, her skin was as creamy as old marble. A thin veil was wound around her head, probably to conceal her fresh beauty from predatory masculine eyes. Her face lighted in eager responsiveness to their thanks. She spoke only a few words and did not linger, but as she walked away, Raanah's eyes followed her curiously. He wondered why he had never noticed her before. She must have been with the caravan throughout the journey. But, of course, the women always kept to themselves. He decided that hereafter he would see more of her.

Over at the merchant's spread, the meal was progressing noisily. Raanah and Joseph ate their lunch in silence and listened to the babble of the men. Isme-Dagan's gruff voice floated to them over the still air. "What contentment there must be for the man who sits under his own vine and fig tree with his family around him." He paused to help himself to a generous handful of dried herbs. "Now, we who travel—."

"So that is your dream of life," Egiba twitted him. "But let me ask any of you," he waved a goblet of sour wine around the board, "could a woman be found who could love such a hairy—."

Isme-Dagan gave a resentful glance, but he went on. "Never, of course, would I seek household dullness, yet I can vision a turning spit with a juicy lamb brewing on it, a ripe fig tree nearby, a luscious vineyard, and a lentil garden."

"What you intend to convey," Kedar suggested, "is that our present fare grows monotonous."

"That is it exactly," Isme-Dagan agreed. "What I crave is not a husbandman's life, but his victuals—fresh meat, green leaks, sweet wine—ah!" he smacked his lips appreciatively, while the other men laughed.

"There should be little difficulty in getting such fare." Kihai-Del leaned forward, his dark face with its high cheek bones and green eyes lighting up cunningly. "Of course, through the desert—. But now, all about us are grazing flocks, and I noticed some fine gardens—."

At that moment, Calah, the steward, whispered to Accid-Adab, who arose stiffly and left the company. He was no sooner out of hearing than Dahmru looked around cautiously, and not seeing Raanah and Joseph under the scrub carob, whispered loudly and significantly, "And we could have such food with no risk. If rumor be true, Raanah is such a lucky fellow that he could lead a dozen slaves on a foray and never be caught."

As if touched by a common spring, the conspirators around the spread drew their heads together and lowered their voices to discuss a matter that had nothing to do with food. The air was still, and their words were audible to the youths, who were only a short distance away.

"Raanah—oh, yes!" said Asaph. "He

is especially protected against harm by the goddess Ishtar, for he carries her celebrated moonstone image in his pocket.

Joseph glanced at Raanah, but the Chaldean youth kept his eyes on his food with no sign that he had heard.

"What!" Dungri exclaimed, his mild eyes staring with surprise, "you say that Raanah has the blue idol of Ishtar—and he but a slave lad? Surely, you jest!"

"It is not jest," Egiba affirmed.

"Why", Dungri persisted, "that jewel was a talisman of kings. It is said there is no charm like it in the world."

"True, true!" Isme-Dagan nodded sagely, "yet the lad carries that jewel. And it is said its gems alone are worth the price of a princedom."

"Even aside from its value," Dahmru ventured modestly, "its good luck heritage would be enough for me. Tradition says that this particular moonstone image of the mother goddess has a protective virtue above all her other images or those of any other Eastern god."

"That must be true," Isme-Dagan agreed, "for several times I have seen Ishtar's protection extended over the lad."

"How did he come by such a treasure?" Dungri asked. "Does Accid-Adab know that he has it?"

"Of course," Egiba declared, "but he does not like to have mention made of it. Nevertheless, I shall some day pluck courage to ask him about it. I know Accid-Adab desires that jewel for himself, yet he dare not force it from the lad for fear of Ishtar's vengeance."

"So that accounts for the youth's lightheartedness, and his spunk and courage in dissenting with his master," Kedar mused. "I have often wondered how he bore up so lustily, tramping all day with only a light cap and scarf to cover his head from the sun."

Again Joseph glanced at Raanah, but the Chaldean youth was intent on plucking the fruit from his date cake.

The chatter of the merchantmen ceased abruptly, and they arose from the spread as Accid-Adab, having finished with the steward, returned to the group. The slaves were already making preparations for departure amid the usual confusion, and Raanah and Joseph went forward to bring up the asses and saddle them.

CHAPTER II

A HOT and weary day was left behind when the caravan stopped for the night beside a spring cleft deep in some rocks on a hillside. It was a lonely place, open to the sky and winds, with vast grasslands undulating toward the horizon. The slaves felt its eeriness and intoned queer Arab songs as they staked a tent for the merchantmen.

Chewing a mouthful of almonds, Egiba sauntered about to limber up his legs. He stopped before the other merchantmen who were seated on the ground, too tired to stir. "After all, this is a fair place to pitch by."

"No!" Isme-Dagan shook a doleful head. "Before dawn icy breezes from Mount Lebanon will dance upon us. You will not dare stretch your feet from the covers."

Egiba turned on him testily. "You should have been a crow. You are al-

ways croaking."

Unaccustomed to long marches, footsore and weary, Joseph threw himself upon the grass near the tent, while the weight of his misfortune pressed heavily upon him. Raanah told him to rest there until he returned. Although Joseph had not complained, during the last few hours Raanah had seen his plight and had become concerned over him.

Left alone, a convulsive sob shook the youth. He turned his face to the ground and abandoned himself to pain and discouragement. Then an innate pride pricked him. He rolled over and lay quietly looking up at the sky.

Raanah soon returned with a large bundle. "I have brought food," he announced, "and plenty of covering against the night." He worked swiftly, spreading out their sleeping pads and piling skins upon them. "Now unlace your sandals, and let me anoint your feet. It is a long way to Egypt, and longer yet when the feet hurt."

When he had finished massaging Joseph's back and legs with ointment of oil and vinegar, Joseph felt much refreshed. They sat upon their pallets with a large piece of date bread in hand and a jug of cool water between them.

The dayglow still lingered and the activities of the camp were visible. The camels were tethered a short distance away. Relieved of their heavy packs and blanketed against the chill of the tropic night, they shook themselves freely and growled at each other as they browsed in the grass the camel boys had cut for them. The dogs prowled about, snatching at scraps of food tossed at them by the slaves.

Some distance away on the hillside, the asses hobbled and grazing, were watched by Shobal. Because of vocal tendencies they could not be tolerated close to the camp. Besides, in that rough country, with much valuable merchandise, it was expedient to set a guard at night. Shobal sat on the warm ground playing a reed flute which carried such a soft, melancholy sound that it never disturbed the sleepers.

"He pipes to let Accid-Adab know that he is not asleep," Raanah chuckled. "At the middle hour he will be relieved by Zerah."

Night descended quickly, its silence disturbed only by the snarl of a crouching camel, or the yip of a slapped dog. The slaves rolled themselves in old skins and slept in the open.

Raanah's eyes roved over their prostrate forms. "See, the dragon sleeps." he said softly, "but it will get up in the morning with the old combative spirit."

Their meal finished, the boys lay back on their pallets and gazed at the blue canopy above. Raanah heard Joseph catch a sob, and reaching over, laid a hand on his shoulder, as one in perfect accord with the loneliness and unhappiness of another. "Night is never blacker than just before the moon rises," he whispered. "Oh, look!" he thrust his covering aside and sat up, "the eyes of the moon-man are peeping over the edge of the earth at us."

Willing to be diverted, Joseph also sat up. As the moonlight grew in brilliance,

the bondboys saw the roadway stretching among the low hills like a silver thread of destiny. One youth saw on its shining surface a chariot drawn by prancing horses, and his heart beat with wild joy at the vision. The other youth, his spirit broken and discouraged, saw only some bowing sheaves of wheat, and a bobbing sun and stars.

Too worn for immediate sleep, Joseph asked in a hushed voice, "Do you really have the jewelled image of Ishtar?"

And night ever being the time for friendly confidences, Raanah answered, "Yes, I will show her to you."

Unbottoning the flap on his tunic, he drew forth a parcel wrapped in coarse linen. Uncovering the tiny idol reverently, he held it up so that the moon rays fell upon it, setting it aglint with a thousand irridescent sparks.

Joseph gave a low cry of surprise and admiration. The idol nestled comfortably in Raanah's palm. It was carved from a single piece of feldspar, which gave out silver-blue rays like the moon, to which Ishtar, as Queen of the Heavens, was related.

"It is exquisite," Joseph murmured, feeling at a loss to say more.

As Raanah turned the image to catch the light, Joseph saw that the deep neckline and girdle of its tunic were outlined with large diamonds, and the hem was banded with rows of colored gems. He stared in wonderment, for the simple Hebrew youth had never seen such gems before.

Raanah named them as he ran his fingers over them, "Ruby, emerald, sapphire, garnet—My old master used to say that gems have souls, that they burn with spirit fires, not just the flash of the jewel."

Joseph's gaze rested on the diadem of beaten gold, which was studded heavily with living pearls. Then the bulging eyes of cat's-eye-precious and the gleaming teeth of tiny diamonds compelled his attention. While the exquisite carving of the image would delight the heart of an artist, its sinister, grinning face set off by such brilliance revolted the youth. He was awed to silence; but finally, not to seem discourteous, he was compelled to speak.

"Do you pray to this—to her?" he corrected himself quickly.

"She is my goddess," Raanah smiled, so absorbed in admiration that he failed to notice Joseph's constraint.

"Since the image is so valuable, could you not buy your freedom with it?"

"Oh, I could never part with her. She protects me from harm. When she is angry, her eyes dart fire, and all her gems are set aflame. With their shafts she can strike dead any person who tries to harm me."

Raanah kept turning the image to catch the moonbeams and Joseph was so overcome by the hideousness of the godling that he stared in fascination.

"If you had had a goddess like mine," Raanah ventured delicately, "your brothers would not have dared to harm you."

"But I have a God," Joseph answered, "and He protects me." He looked away from the grinning goddess as he spoke.

(To be continued)

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