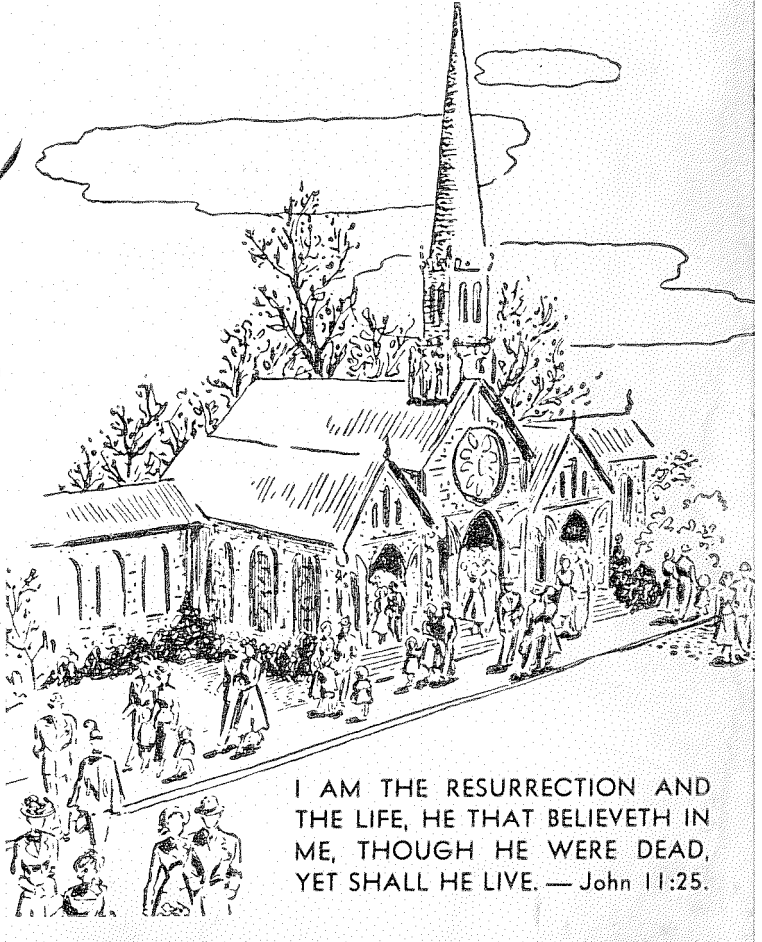
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

Easter ISSUE



"CHRIST THE LORD IS RISEN INDEED"

I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE, HE THAT BELIEVETH IN ME, THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE. — John 11:25.

APRIL - 1949

BEACON LIGHTS

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Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME IX. APRIL — 1949 NUMBER 7

EASTER - (Paaschen)

Rev. Bernard Kok — Holland, Michigan

The Date of Easter:

Although the early Christian Church from the time of the Apostles looked upon the first day of the week as the Lord's Day, as the day of resurrection, yet it was not until the Council of Nicea (325 A.D.) that it was decided that Easter, the *pascha* of the Lord, should be observed on one day, and at one time throughout the world. Before this time there was a wide difference in the Christian Church as to the day of the year, and of the week, on which the *pascha* festival was to be celebrated. The Christians of Asia Minor had the custom of celebrating the *pascha* (Easter) invariably on the 14th of Nisan, the first month of the Jewish yeår, and falling in the Springtime. This was the day of the Jewish passover. But then, the day of the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord did not always fall on Friday or any other day of the week. Among the Churches in the West, i.e., in the European countries, a different custom prevailed. There, among others, it was customary that the various Bishops would proclaim the day of Easter. The result of these differences was that different sections of the Church might and did observe Easter on different dates. It was felt that there should be a unification of the date of the Christian *pascha*, so that all the Church would commemorate the Lord's resurrection on the same day. Therefore the Council of Nicea fixed the date of Easter Sunday as the Sunday immediately following the first full moon which happens on or first after the vernal equinox, i.e., the 21st of March. Easter, then, cannot occur earlier than March 22, or later than April 25. This year, as you perhaps know, it falls upon the 17 day of April. The date of Easter also determines the date of Ascension Day (forty days after Easter), and of Pentecost which comes fifty days after Easter.

Its Celebration:

Let us beware of worldliness in our Easter celebration. The world does not, neither can understand the spiritual significance of Christ's

resurrection. Therefore it seeks to associate Easter with mere material and earthly things, and thus attempts to draw away the hearts and minds of the believers from the true joy of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the world associates Easter with the Easter egg, the Easter bunny, associations which have been borrowed from paganism. In our modern day Easter is also associated with the Easter bonnet and the Easter parade. Christ did not suffer, die, and rise again merely to perpetuate earthly life, as is implied in the Easter egg, but neither did He come forth victorious over death and the grave in order to clothe us with fine 'Easter' toggery, but rather to clothe His people with garments of righteousness. Is there anything wrong with a new hat, or a new suit in the spring of the year? Not at all! Who wouldn't like a new hat or suit occasionally, and especially in the springtime of the year, but let us not do as the world, let us not associate our new spring garments with Easter. Let us rather rejoice that He who was delivered because of our sins, was raised again because of our justification. Another evil that is becoming prevalent in our day are the sun-rise services held on Easter Sunday. To the best of our knowledge these sun-rise services originated in our country by conducting early morning services on Easter Sunday on some hill or mountain peak. Now they are also held in large auditoriums and in some churches. I fear that this custom arises from a craving for the spectacular, for something out of the ordinary, as though a sun-rise service on Easter Sunday has some special significance. Our forefathers always felt that there was a certain danger in limiting the commemoration of the glorious facts of our redemption in Christ to certain days, such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost. There is a danger that such days leave the impression as though the remembrance of these glorious facts of our redemption is something out of the ordinary, the exception rather than the rule. This may not be so with a child of God. Every day a Christian should drink from the cup of salvation, and the power of Christ's resurrection should be the daily dynamic of our lives. No we do not agree with those who in the past have advocated that we do away with our Christian feast days, but we would urge upon our young people, and upon all of God's people to always strive to live upon a high spiritual level. Every Sabbath day, is the Lord's day, reminding us of Christ' resurrection from the grave, and instead of striving to make Easter Sunday out of the ordinary, we should strive to make each day of our lives a day of Resurrection.

EDITORIALS

Question Box

Every year about this time the staff of people responsible for the publication of Beacon Lights holds a meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss ways and means for producing a better magazine for our readers. At this meeting Beacon Lights really is taken apart piece-meal and every section of it is evaluated to determine if there is room for improvement and every effort is made to exhaust all the possibilities of the literary skill and other talent that may be available. Your support of our magazine is evidence of your approval of this work in the past. In the next issue we will present the "new look" for the current season. We hope you will approve.

Among the features of Beacon Lights, we should like to place a new one. The Federation Board and the Beacon Lights staff have decided to introduce a question-box. The intention of having such a question-box is that an opportunity will be given for you to find an answer to certain problems and questions about the Bible which may arise either in your society or in your personal reading of the Scriptures. Thus this question-box will be confined to matters that pertain to the correct interpretation of Biblical passages. Other questions about Christian living will continue to be treated by that person known to our readers as "Schuiler".

We have been very fortunate that we have received the consent of Rev. B. Kok of Holland, Michigan to edit and answer the questions that may be submitted. Incidentally Rev. Kok was present at the staff meeting mentioned above and he was able to talk again. His recent incapacity in this respect appeared to be relieved and he was able to give us some appropriate guidance in our meeting.

We urge you therefore to submit your questions pertaining to Biblical interpretation to either Miss Reitsma or Rev. Kok in order that we may all benefit from the questions and answers which shall be published. If you so desire, it will not be necessary to have your name published with the question. We only ask that your questions be sincere and confined to the explanation of the Bible.

H. G. K.

Significant Statements

Your editor receives exchange copies of other Christian magazines and among those we receive is the Moody Monthly, a publication sponsored by the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. From time to time the editorials of the Moody Monthly have been very critical of conditions in Fundamantalist church life and there are some significant statements made which we feel are of interest to our readers.

In the March 1949 issue, the author of an editorial on Christian scholarship climaxes his writing by stating: "Today the emphasis is for the most part on speed and breadth rather than depth. We are satisfied with the superficial; second hand scholarship is the goal rather than first hand digging for years to acquire the tools and the facts that will make a man a biblical defender in his own right and name".

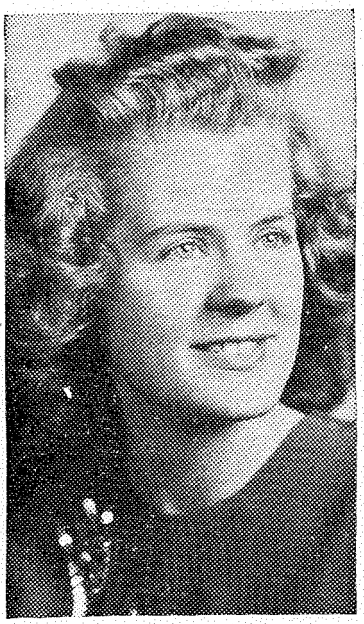
In the February 1949 issue we find a vigorous editorial on the need for church discipline. After quoting the scriptural command for discipline in 1 Timothy 5:21, the editorial states that "This solemn counsel is needed in this day when leaders in the church and those who follow them not infrequently stand unrebuked in open sin". In another editorial in the same issue, lamenting the moral sickness that is spreading in fundamentalism the editor states: "We are splitting hairs and churches on nonscriptural issues, we are driving men and women, boys and girls away from the Savior by. . . our misunderstanding of the Lord's will that makes 'preaching the Gospel' more important than the spiritual welfare of our own neglected children".

We mention these significant statements to you in order that you may realize the advantages of the Reformed system of church government and the blessing of parents who insist on your attendance of catechism classes. We should not try to be self-righteous in this situation but neither should we underestimate the pearl of great price which we have in the heritage of the Reformed faith.

To the editor of the Moody Monthly, we say in all humility, you must overhaul your church government ideas and depart from the doctrinal errors of Pre-millenialism, Pelagianism, and Arminianism, which are eating the heart out of your churches and the Gospel of the kingdom of heaven. This is a drastic solution to the problems you face but if you mean what you say, it is the only solution.

H. G. K.

"Winnie"



As you probably noticed, the inside front cover no longer shows Winnie De Vries' name as Business Manager. Winnie resigned at our last staff and board meeting and was replaced by her assistant, Thelma Yonker, who will be assisted by Mae Bylsma.

The work of the business manager includes a great many details. Subscribers must be notified of due dates, payments must be recorded, and the mailing list must be kept up-to-date. Often these girls spend their "Saturday afternoon off" at the printers, making changes on the address plates used in mailing Beacon Lights.

We thank Winnie for her three years of service. We know she has devoted much time to this work, but we also know she enjoyed it. She has resigned because she is planning to be married in the near future.

We wish her God's blessing.

A. R.

New Christian Schools

Young People:

When you graduated from High School did you pack away your books with your diploma and say: "There! I'm through with schools for good!"

You're not though. For as long as there is a world there will be a church, and as long as there is a church there will be children. As long as there are children there will be schools, and as long as there are schools *you* won't be through with them.

You may never be a teacher; you may never be a school board member. But you are a member of the church, and schools are an

integral part of the life of every church member. No one can be interested in the church and not be interested in the schools where the future church is being educated.

New Christian Schools are being built in Grand Rapids and in Edgerton, Minn.; schools where we hope to instruct our children according to our Protestant Reformed principles. We young people should be amongst the leaders in the support of these schools. The benefits will accrue most directly to us since our children are the ones who will be privileged to attend.

We must help finance these building programs, as societies and also as individuals. Our names must appear on the list of workers-by-proxy. Our money must be used to buy brick and glass, desks and seats and blackboards.

We must be preparing ourselves to become teachers able to instruct according to our principles and convictions. We have a student-teacher club for this purpose. Why not attend?

We must give our moral backing. The school board should have plenty of evidence that we young people are vitally concerned with the educational program going on in our churches.

Every one of us must meet the challenge in our own way—financially, educationally, morally. No one can sit back and claim to be unconcerned! As members of the Church we are never "through with schools". We must meet the challenge!

A. R.

CONVENTION
DATES
HAVE BEEN SET
FOR
AUGUST 23, 24, 25

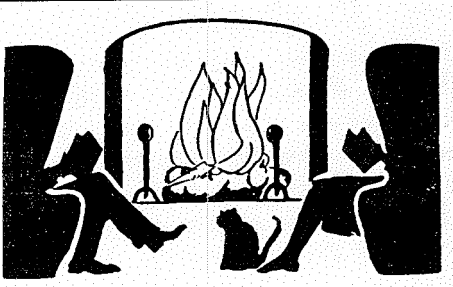
Tentative plans are being made to hold our 1949 *Convention* in Iowa.

Full details will appear in the May Issue.

Watch For It!

Christian Living. . .

REV. R. VELDMAN
Grand Rapids, Mich.



Entering Into God's Covenant

Baptism, we stressed, is the sign and seal of the covenant of God.

However, that can mean much more. More must be said. With respect to that covenant of God, that blessed relation of infinite fellowship between God and His people, just exactly what does baptism signify?

Christian friends, our baptism signifies and seals our *entering into* that covenant of God. That is the difference between it and the sacrament of Holy Communion. When a child is born it enters, as it were, into the home; it is received into the fellowship of the family. That is signified by baptism. When a sinner is born again, regenerated by the Almighty grace of God, resurrected from that spiritual death wherein we lie by nature, he enters into the covenant and is received into God's family. Therefore baptism is called "the water of regeneration" or the sacrament of incorporation. After a child is born into a home it *lives* in that home continuously; eats and drinks there from day to day; plays and sleeps there. That is signified by communion. Having been received into the covenant of God, we live in that covenant continually. Therefore baptism always precedes communion. You must enter into a family before you can live in it. Therefore you are baptized only once, but you celebrate communion all the rest of your life. You are born into a home only once, but you live in it continually. If you are really baptized, therefore, you have entered into the covenant of and with God. Of course, entering into something also implies a *going out* of something and a *passing through* something. These are simply three phases of one thing. Thus, entering into the covenant of God implies a going out of the world and a going through Christ. We shall return to these other elements in a following article. Even so, the end and purpose of it all is our entering into God's covenant.

That this is indeed the main significance of baptism our Baptismal Form indicates when it begins:

"The principal parts of the doctrine of holy baptism are these three: First, that we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath, in so much that we cannot *enter into the kingdom of God,* except we are born again. This, the dipping in, or sprinkling with water teaches us."

Hence, baptism is a sign and seal of our *entering* into God's covenant.

However, we enter into God's covenant only by faith. You understand, that we are not really in God's covenant simply because we are born of Christian parents and in the church of God on earth. We must be born again; ingrafted into Christ by a true and living faith. No man can dwell with God except in the way of righteousness, and righteousness is only through faith. Therefore Scripture speaks of the sacrament as "the seal of the righteousness which is by faith". Only in the way of a living faith can God be our Friend, and we His friends; can God be our Father, and we His children; can God dwell with us, and we with Him; can God take us to His bosom, and can we love and serve Him as His friend-servants.

Hence, baptism is the sign and seal of entering into God's covenant, *by faith.* Never does baptism signify and seal and promise anything *to everybody.* Whatever it promises, all the riches of God's grace, it promises only to believers.

Now this faith, whereby we enter into the covenant, is of God alone, never of ourselves. "By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Eph. 2:8. Thus baptism represents and guarantees the sure and irresistible grace of God, whereby God freely gives the faith whereby we enter into His fellowship. Hence, baptism is the sign and seal of entering into the covenant, by faith. Never does the sacrament declare anything else.

Once again! If all this is true and faith is the free gift of God, contingent on nothing in man, a matter of pure grace, it follows, that God alone determines sovereignly who shall receive that grace and thus be received into the covenant of God. Those thus determined unto eternal blessedness are, of course, the elect. As many as are ordained unto eternal life believe.

Hence, baptism is the sign and seal of entering into the covenant of God, by faith, the free gift of God *to the elect only.* Never does baptism promise or guarantee anything except to the elect from eternity.

Now, then, that sign of the covenant you carry along with you when you are baptized; that distinguishing mark of the covenant you bear on your forehead; that uniform of the covenant you wear. And always it declares to the

church and to the world: I am such a covenant child, such a believer, such an elect; I have entered into that covenant relation with God; I am God's friend and He is mine; I am God's child, and He is my Father; I dwell in His high and holy place, and He is my Host forever. Remember, whether all this is really true or just plain hypocrisy, whether you are really a covenant child or only a wolf in sheep's clothing, whether you are really the friend of God or only a child of the devil in disguise, whether you are really a citizen of the kingdom or only a fifth columnist in covenant garb,—that is a question of faith. Even so, that in each case you are the former, not the latter,—*that* is the testimony of *your uniform*.

Young people, what a tremendous responsibility is ours to live according to that testimony! What a calling is involved here! What an obligation to live and walk according to what our uniform declares, that is, to manifest ourselves from the heart as children of God, to seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness, to find our delight in the things of God's covenant and the activities of His church, to be diligent in catechism and society, to confess His Name and to abstain from all the corruptions of this present evil world.

And what a crime against the living God it is to do the very opposite! To say: I am a covenant child, and then seek to serve the world with heart and soul. To say: I am God's friend, and then seek the friendship of this world in all that you do. To say: My father is God,—and live: my father is the devil. Walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, sitting in the seat of the scornful is always wicked, of course. To do all this while wearing the uniform of God's covenant is doubly so. Again, to seek your pleasure in the company of world, in their filthy movies and dance-halls and dens of vice, is always an abomination to the Lord, of course. It is infinitely more so if we do these things as one who calls himself a Christian. How unspeakably terrible it is to *say*: I am a member of God's church (this your baptism does), and to *live*: I am a fifth columnist, a quizzling, a spiritual termite who will do all in my power to devitalize and destroy the covenant of the living God.

To them who walk in such a way of high treason the word of the Lord Jesus certainly applies: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell."

However, knowing who we all are by nature, I say to all of us: Let us seek the kingdom of God and its righteousness! Fight the

(cont. on page 12)

NATURE STUDY

Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

Growth Regulation

During the last decade there has been extensive investigation in the field of plant physiology. Age-old questions have been partially answered as a result of these significant studies. Perhaps, one of the more familiar results of these experiments is the weed killer (2-4-D), which is well known for its practical significance in horticulture.

Curious investigators have wondered what causes fruit to set; what causes fruit to drop off the tree when ripening; what factors regulate plant growth. By carefully designed experiments they isolated certain chemical compounds made by the plant in minute amounts which act as growth regulators or hormones. (The word hormone is derived from a Greek word meaning, "I arouse to activity"). These chemicals do exactly that—they arouse the plant to set or drop its fruit. Frequently these growth regulators after being isolated were identified and efforts were made to produce these hormones synthetically. The attempts proved successful, resulting in a cheaper product which could be produced in great abundance. Today they appear under various trade names as "rootone", "Weedone", etc. It is of great significance that these chemicals can be used in a twofold way—either to stimulate production or to retard growth, depending on which of the two is required at the time.

Perhaps, you, too, in moments of reflection have wondered why the cherry or apple stem breaks *where* it does and *when* it does. Careful microscopic examination will reveal a layer of cells in the stem, where it is attached to the twig; this is known as the abscission layer. Abscission means to "cut away from". When the fruit ripens the abscission layer separates and the fruit drops. Often the fruit begins to fall before it is highly colored and completely mature.

Sometimes there are insufficient pickers during the limited harvest time resulting in a heavy loss due to fallen fruit. A hormone spray, consisting of only 10 parts per million parts of water, will retard the splitting of the abscission layer and thus delay droppage from ten to fourteen days. This gives the harvesters a much longer period to pick the fruit. Also, it allows the fruit to become more highly colored, which increases the value

of it for it can be classed as "fancy fruit".

Another problem confronting the orchardist is the thinning of fruit, particularly apples. As it requires considerable labor thinning fruit is not only a tedious task but also an expensive one. As a ladened tree is unable to supply proper nourishment, inferior fruit is produced for size and quality are effected. Once again the use of hormone sprays proved satisfactory. By spraying the tree when it is in full bloom, all but the center flowers are destroyed, for they are the first blossoms and have already set. Thus about 80% of the bloom is killed and only 20% is allowed to set fruit. (If only 5% of the Wealthy apple tree's blossoms develop, it is considered a full yield.)

Many are familiar with the fact that fruit trees bear "heavy" every other year. Experiments have shown that by spraying on the "on" year the crop is not only reduced considerably but the course of events is reversed and the tree bears more heavily on the "off" year.

These hormones are also being used as a valuable aid in storage. Root crops and potatoes are sprayed before they are stored to retard sprouting and budding. Nursery stock, especially roses are treated before shipment to give them a longer dormancy period.

Another chemical growth regulator is sprayed on potatoes and plants before they are planted with the intent of having the opposite effect; namely, to stimulate rapid budding and root formation. Baffling, indeed, is this intricate hormone relation!

Today must nurseries and flower-growers treat their cuttings and seeds with a hormone spray, because they have found that it produces earlier and stronger roots and increases the percentage of survival.

The hormone in the destruction of weeds by 2-4-D (mentioned above) effects the new growth and causes the stem and leaves to twist and bend in various contortions as if it were in pain. After a day or two the foliage and roots begin to die, and within two weeks the plant succumbs. The unusual feature of this hormone is that it is effective on broad leaf plants but not on narrow leaf plants as grasses, grains, sugar cane, corn, and most of the other monocatyledons. Hence it is a selective weed destroyer especially useful on the lawn or in the grain and corn fields.

Both temperature and sunlight are important factors to consider when the application is made, for some plants survive when sprayed at a temperature of 65 degrees, but if sprayed when it is 75 or 80 degrees, they are destroyed. It has also been discovered that shad-

ed plants are not affected, while the same variety growing in the sun, in destroyed.

Now isn't it amazing how the Creator has placed these hormones in the plant to govern and control its complex activities? Does it not surprise you that He has seen fit to reveal these things to man in the course of history? Do you not marvel at these intricate details in the growth of a plant? Does it not make you stand in awe when you ponder on these minute and complex chemicals affecting the setting of the blossom and the dropping of the fruit?

Growth regulators — hormones — indeed! Above the plant world is He who regulates the "growth regulators" so that *seed-time and harvest* may manifest His glory!

CHRISTIAN LIVING

(cont. from page 9)

good battle of faith! Keep your garments clean in the midst of the world! That is the way of peace and eternal life. Remember the words of our Baptismal Form and let them sink deeply into your souls: "Whereas in all covenants there are contained two parts: therefore are we by God through baptism, admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience, namely, that we cleave to this one God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that we trust in him, and love Him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, crucify our old nature, and walk in a new and holy life."

A CHINESE PROVERB

If there is righteousness in the heart;
there will be beauty in the character.
If there be beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.
If there be harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
there will be peace in the world.

—Southern Presbyterian Journal.
—Southern Union Herald.

Current Comments

REV. L. DOEZEMA

Bellflower, California

Israel . . . .

It always strikes me as very strange when I read of the nation of Israel. Some time ago I called your attention to the struggle of the Jews to gain a homeland and to organize a nation. Now it is an accomplished fact. The Jews were well organized and gained surprising victories. They even have gained the Negeb, the desert area around Beersheba. They have formed their Assembly and have chosen Dr. Chaim Weizmann their first president. Their celebration was held in Jerusalem last month. About this celebration I read this statement: "High above the ancient shrine of three faiths (Jerusalem), A Zionist banner proclaimed: "Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem." In the flag-decked streets below, Jewish youths danced the *Hora.* It was a day of triumph in the city, which, for centuries of their exile, has been the symbol of the Jews' lost homeland."

Will the Jews be able to keep what they have gained? The last chapter has not been written about the Jewish land, it seems to me. I do not believe in the theory that the Jews shall return to the holy land and shall reign with Christ. This present nation of Israel is a far cry from the Pre-millenialist's conception of the return of the Jews to Palestine. Israel is the result of the struggle of a cast-off people to maintain for themselves a place on the earth, to make this position as glorious as the past.

It is just a pawn of the powerful nations. It remains to be seen how they shall play with this pawn and other pawns. Sometimes a pawn is sacrificed, and sometimes a pawn becomes very valuable in the game of power politics.

China . . . .

For the present the Communists have gained their objectives and there is nothing to report about this important area of the world. It should remain on our list, however, as the most important spot to watch to see the development of control of the world. This was also the significant statement of a leading columnist.

We shall have to wait for a more definite statement of the real position America will take in regard to China. Dean Acheson, the new Secretary of State, may give us some statement in the near future. He is known as one who has changed from favoring Russia to giving Russia stiff opposition in its moves for world domination. The Secretary of the Army while in Japan is reported to have said off the record that the U. S. might not attempt to hold Japan in case of war with Russia. Later this was denied. It shows us this much, that the position the U. S. must take is not clear to the leaders.

Faith in Whom? . . . .

Dulles was speaking before the gathering of delegates of 35 million U. S. Protestants under the auspices of the Federal Council of Churches. The purpose of the gathering was to survey the world crisis and chart a realistic Christian course of action.

According to Dulles, it is quite wrong to say that a third world war is inevitable.

Among other things, he is quoted as saying that the Christian responsibility is to preserve in our nation human sympathy and compassion such as Jesus had when He saw the multitudes. If our churches perform that task. . . .then perhaps it may be said to our nation: "thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace."

This is typical of the spirit of modernism. It quotes the works and words of Jesus without meaning the same thing.

To this we should ask the question, Faith in whom?

It is definitely the position of Dulles and his associates that the next war can be averted if we believe in our ability to avert it and if we follow up our faith with works of human compassion and sympathy. He means faith in mankind, therefore.

Jesus was speaking of exactly the opposite faith. Not the faith in self or in humanity but faith in God. Because we believe in God we shall be saved. Because the world does not believe in God it shall not be able to do good works and shall be destroyed by its own corruption.

— DONATIONS —

BEACON LIGHTS FUND

Fuller Ave. Holland Ladies Aid	$10.00
M. Van Antwerpen (G.R.)	5.00
Singspiration at Creston Church	25.05
G. Stonehouse (G.R.)	5.00
Miscellaneous	1.00

BIBLE OUTLINES

Rev. John Blankespoor

Grand Rapids, Michigan

LESSON XXVII.

"Jesus Testimony Concerning Himself"

(John 8:12-30)

Jesus' Testimony True. Vss. 12-20:

It cannot be said with certainty when Jesus spoke these words, either on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles or shortly after that. But it very likely was in the temple, the most public place in Jerusalem. In vs. 12 He again causes them to see, according to the theme of the book, that in Him only is there salvation, He being the light of the world. Only in Him by following Him can men have the light of life and not walk in darkness as all men do by nature. The question is how Jesus comes to use the figure of light at this time. Perhaps it was occasioned by the many candles in the temple, which portrayed a grand show of lights. We may even conjecture that these lights were symbols of the cloud that led Israel through the wilderness. Remember that this was the Feast of Tabernacles reminding the Jews of the journey through the desert. Like the pillar of cloud led them, so Jesus as the fulfillment of this type is the true light that leads men out of the darkness of sin and death into the light of fellowship with God.

But the Pharisees again object. They pay no attention to what Jesus says of Himself. Never do they question themselves, but always Jesus. They are always looking for something whereby they may accuse Him. In vs. 13 they deny the authenticity of Jesus' words.

In reply Jesus first of all tells them that His testimony is true. He declares His testimony to be true for the simple reason that it states the true facts concerning Himself. Anyone can speak of himself and speak the truth. The Pharisees would arrogate to themselves the position of legal judges over Jesus. But Jesus in the latter part of vs. 13 shows that they are incompetent because they do not know whence He came and whither He goes. Further, vs. 14, they judge according to appearance, not according to the reality of things. This, we too, do from time to time. We so often judge without knowing the true facts. So Jesus never judges. He judges a righteous judgment, chapter 7:24. But Jesus

also has a witness, the Father Himself. No one can therefore accuse Him of disregarding the law of Moses, Deut. 9:15ff.

But who is Jesus' Father? Vs. 19. This question has a mocking tone. If God, indeed, is His Father, and if this God is to be the second witness, then let Jesus present Him. And they present this question knowing that Jesus cannot produce His second witness. Jesus, however, shows them that this is a piece of fatal ignorance. They don't know the Father (how would they therefore recognize Him), but neither do they know Jesus, even though they think they do.

These words were spoken in the treasury. Just what place is meant by the treasury is disputed, since there were several treasure chests. But John's purpose of mentioning it is very likely to show that it was in a public place, for all passed by the treasure chests.

Questions: How do we often judge after the flesh? Wouldn't it be better not to judge at all? Why is it necessary to have two or more witnesses? In which sense didn't the Pharisees know Jesus or the Father?

Jesus' Testimony continued, vss. 21-30.

Again Jesus speaks to them in a very serious tone. For some these words will be a savour of life unto life and for others of death unto death, as will become plain in the subsequent verses.

Jesus' mission is approaching its end, His work on earth will soon be finished. He will then leave them. Now they scorn Him, but then they will seek Him and not find Him. This, of course, cannot refer to a penitent seeking, still less to a hostile seeking since He will be in heaven. We believe that it refers to a seeking of Jesus in the times of calamities and distresses, "praying" for physical deliverance. Ungodly people do this frequently when brought into difficulties. But they shall die in their sins, and that means hell for them.

The Jews, vs. 22, further asks if He will kill Himself. The implication seems to be that if He commits suicide He will go to hell, and there they cannot and will not come. But this they do not expect, for the question is asked in such a way that it expects a negative answer.

To ignore is also to answer, and often more effective. Jesus gives His judgment of them. They are from below, He is from above. There is a vast difference between them, that of heaven and earth. Therefore they don't understand. Who is He, anyway? So the Jews sneer at Him, vs. 25. In reply Jesus again, as the one who came down from heaven, speaks of Himself as the Son of God and the Saviour. Now they refuse to believe, but when they shall have lifted Him up (the cross, etc.) then they shall realize who He is and that He speaks the truth. This perhaps refers to His judgments which He will later send upon men.

And many believed on Him, vs. 30. That was the positive effect of this preaching. The negative we find in the obdurate Jews.

Questions: How must we explain vs. 21 in the light of "seek and ye shall find, etc. of Matt. 7:7? Can we conclude from

vs. 22 that suicide is an unpardonable sin? Show that Jesus in His entire discourse with these Jews comes with no offer, or "goes out of the way" to win them? Why not? Would Jesus have gained more of them if He had been, as some criticize Him, more tactful? How does all this refute the First Point of 1924?

* * * *

LESSON XXVIII

"The Real Nature of the Jews Revealed"

(John 8:31-47)

True Disciples, vss. 31-32.

In the previous verse it was stated that many believed on Him. This, however, does not mean that all were true believers. This becomes manifest when they are put to the test. Of that test Jesus speaks in these verses. Faith without works is dead. They must continue in His word, be steadfast, persevere in sanctification. Then, and then only, shall they know the truth, understand it, and the truth shall make them free.

Abraham's Seed, vss. 33-42.

Now the spirits come to manifestation, for a separation is made among those of whom it was said that they believed in Him. To the words of Jesus that they shall be made free the Jews retort with haughty pride: Seed of Abraham we are and never were in bondage. With this the Jews certainly cannot have in mind political bondage, since they had been subject to many nations. But spiritually they had never been slaves, unbroken religious liberty they had always enjoyed, compared with all the Gentiles who were slaves of idols.

But, vs. 34, the sinner is a servant of sin. And who does not commit sin? And slaves serve only for a limited time; besides, they work for wages and not out of love. To remain in the house of the master they must become sons, and this is possible only through the Son of God. He shall make them free indeed from all slavery of sin and give them true liberty.

This is certainly not true of these Jews. According to the flesh they indeed are Abraham's seed, but not spiritually. They seek to kill Him because His word has no place in them. And whoever does not have the word of God in His heart is a murderer.

For two different reasons they are not children of Abraham. First of all not because they would as his children do the works of their spiritual father. Abraham desired to see the day in which they are living, to see the fulfillment of all his hopes and longings, Jesus Christ the Son of God. But they seek to kill Him, a man who speaks the truth to them, which He heard of God. No, they have different fathers. Jesus speaks that which He has seen with His Father, but they do that which they have seen with their father, the devil.

Again they object. They are not born of fornication, in the sense of having two fathers: one their real father, who actually begot them; the other their apparent

father, in whose house they are merely tolerated. Jesus means to tell them that they actually are born of sin though they bear the name of being spiritual children of Abraham. To the Jews this is, of course, impossible. They are children of Abraham only, physically and spiritually.

Jesus, however, in vs. 42 gives another proof why they cannot be spiritual children of Abraham, and thus children of God. Being children of God they would necessarily have to love Him because He also came from God, being sent of God. Consequently there must be agreement among the two.

Questions: Prove that all those of whom it is said in vs. 30 that they believed were not true believers. Is the spirit of being Abraham's seed still present in our day? How does it reveal itself? Can we say that for these unbelieving Jews it was to their own condemnation that they were children of Abraham?

Why the Jews Fail to Understand, vss. 43-47:

In the next verses Jesus comes to the deepest cause of their unbelief. They cannot hear His words. The carnal mind cannot understand spiritual things. They are of their father the devil. Jesus is very outspoken about it and certainly does not "soft-paddle" the truth. The devil has always been a murderer, such is his lust. No wonder that they as his children desire to do the same thing. Therefore he also speaks the lie, and they with him. They love the lie, and hate the truth. No wonder that Jesus, who is the truth, loves the truth, and always defends the truth, is opposed by them.

That He speaks the truth even the Jews must admit, for no one can convince Him of sin. And if the Jews could have done so in any way, they certainly would have been glad to do so. And they still don't believe. Why not? He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God, vs. 47. They are not born of God; they are of the earth earthy.

Questions: How would a modern preacher approach these Jews? In which sense is the devil a murderer? Why is it that the preaching of the truth always evokes enmity and bitter opposition on the part of some?

* * * *

LESSON XXIX.

"Jesus' Clash With the Jews" (continued)

(John 8:48-59)

Jesus Honor The Father, vss. 48-51:

The boiling rage of the Jews breaks out in vicious insults and revilings. They have no respect for Him, whatsoever. By denying that they are true children of Abraham and of God, and by calling them the devil's offspring, Jesus, though He is a Jew, speaks like a Samaritan, one of the hated race who would reciprocate with equal hatred. Besides, He speaks like one possessed of

the devil. These vicious insults intend to wound most deeply.

With calmness and complete mastery Jesus makes reply. When He was reviled, He reviled not again, I Peter 2:23. He simply puts in glaring contrast what He is doing and what they are doing. Jesus comes back only on the second accusation. Being a devil He would certainly also be a murderer, fulfilling his own lusts, contrary to the will of the Father. But He honors the Father, while they dishonor Him. He honors the Father when he asserts that they as wicked men are not of God, nor of Abraham, but of the devil. Never does He seek His own glory, always God's.

So Jesus suffers the terrible insults, He does not retaliate; He commits Himself to Him that judges righteously, I Peter 2:23. Therefore: There is one who seeks and judges. God will in His time defend Him, and His cause. He always justifies Him who honors His cause. This is true at all times, for all of God's people when they must suffer reproach and false accusations, etc. by faith they may look to the time when God will render a just reward.

In vs. 51 Jesus again speaks of Himself as the Son of God in whom there is salvation. Notice that Jesus does this to these wicked Jews. Those who keep His words shall never see death, spiritually, of course.

Questions: Why did Jesus continue to argue and refute these ungodly Jews? Wasn't He casting pearls before swine? How long must we preach to the wicked so that they are left without excuse? The result of these bitter clashes is that they are left without excuse? The result of these bitter clashes is that they finally crucify Him. Could this also have been Jesus' purpose? If so, is this also the purpose of the Gospel? How does this contradict the teaching of a general, tender and well-meant offer of salvation?

Jesus Greater Than Abraham, vss. 52-59:

The Jews are determined to repudiate whatever Jesus says; such are always the actions of sinful human nature. The statement that he who keeps His word shall never die, is the occasion for their denial of His superiority over Abraham. No man in possession of his own sound mind would say a thing like this. With Abraham and the prophets they have in mind the holiest of the Old Testament. And with superficial blindness they substitute physical death for eternal death and thus pervert the word of Jesus. Perhaps this perversion was deliberate, an evidence of their wicked intentions **not** to understand whatever He may say if it does not serve their purpose.

The question of vs. 53 according to the original expects a negative answer. He surely is not greater than Abraham who died like other men. Fact is that Jesus is greater, much greater than Abraham, but this these Jews will not believe, no matter what evidence is produced. So they come with another question. Who does He make Himself, anyway?

Jesus' answer is twofold. First of all He answers the question regarding His

glory. The Jews insinuate Him by ascribing fictitious glory to Himself. Self-praise is always abominable, also with Jesus. He does not glorify Himself, but God does. It is God who gave Him this exalted position above Abraham; according to His divine nature He is God. Here Jesus thus again declares that He is the Son of God, as He does throughout the book. Now these Jews also claim the great honor of being children of this the true God. But they hate Jesus, the very Son of God, consequently they do not know God. This is Jesus' first answer to them.

In vs. 56 Jesus comes back to their argument regarding Abraham. He is much greater than Abraham that this patriarch exulted to see His day, and did see it and therefore was glad. First of all he rejoiced that he was to see it, and secondly he did see it and was glad. The question is how Abraham saw the day of Jesus. Many answers are given to this question. We believe that it refers to the birth of his son Isaac. Being an old man it was from all natural viewpoints impossible for him to have children. The father in him was dead. But the promises of the Lord were his. Isaac was therefore according to the promise and by strength of the promise a child raised from the dead. In this Abraham saw Christ and His resurrection. And these blind Jews are living in the days of Jesus, hear and see Him, and understand nothing of Him, but on the contrary hate Him and ere long will nail Him to the cross. "Before Abraham came to be", says Jesus, "I am". Jesus always is, never was or will be. He is also the eternal present, being God Himself.

This is enough for the Jews. Parts of the temple being in the process of rebuilding, the Jews find no difficulty in finding stones to throw at Him. They will take the law of Lev. 24:13-16 in their own hands. But Jesus passed right through the midst of them, another wonder taking place, and they fail to realize their intentions. Again do they see the power of God, but they are too blind to see.

Questions: Why did the Jews so often speak of Abraham, instead of one of the other patriarchs? Why didn't the Jews ever really enter into Jesus' arguments, but on the contrary hurl some other accusation at Him? How do people today speak the language of these Jews in boasting in and relying on their descent from Abraham? Why is this so dangerous?

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LESSON XXX.

"Jesus Heals The Man Born Blind"

(John 9:1-25)

The Miracle, vss. 1-7:

Jesus now shows by **deed** that He is the light of the Word, just as He had showed it before by His **word**, John 8:13. This is one of Christ's symbolical miracles whereby He shows that He can give to men, who are born blind, spiritually, the true light of the Holy Spirit.

At the same time the breach between Jesus and the Jews is widened.

Perhaps this wonder was performed on the same day that the Jews tried to stone Jesus, according to the previous chapter. And in passing by He saw this man. Perhaps Jesus (and the disciples) saw this man on previous occasions, but doesn't pay any special attention to him until now. Now the right time has come.

The man has been blind from birth, a blindness which naturally is incurable. This makes the healing so much greater in the eyes of the people. The disciples ask first of all who has sinned, the man or his parents. They are of the opinion, with many of the Jews, that a specific sin has been committed, the punishment of which consists in this blindness. But they are at a loss as to the guilty person. Jesus answers that this man is blind that the works of God may be made manifest; this man is blind in order that Jesus may perform this miracle with him and so God's works may be seen. Think of it, this man has been blind all these years for this very purpose. Now the time has come. Often undoubtedly similar things happen in our lives, even though we often fail to see them.

The purpose of it all is that men may see Jesus in His power as the Light. Now it is still day, vss. 4, 5, soon it will be night (the cross, etc.) and the end well have come of His labors on earth. The description of the healing is very short, as is usually true of the miracles. We can ask why Jesus used means here, wouldn't the spoken word have been sufficient? Perhaps the purpose was to impress upon the man that the healing power comes from Jesus. Besides, saliva was commonly considered to be a remedy for diseases of the eye, although not, of course for the removal of blindness. This Jesus can do. The man obeys. It is quite likely that he has heard of Jesus before. He comes back seeing, but Jesus has retreated from the scene. He will stand in the background for the time being, taking notice of the effect.

Questions: How does this miracle show that the restoration from darkness to light is in no way the work of man himself? Do children bear the results of the sins of their parents? Do they also bear their iniquity?

The Miracle Made Known, vss. 8-12:

Nobody being around the man went home. How strange! Yet so proper, for Jesus will let His work speak for itself. The neighbors and others soon recognize him as the former blind beggar. It seems well nigh incredible to them. They even doubt whether he is the man, but the man given sight puts an end to that question: I am he. Naturally these people ask: How then were thine eyes opened? And the beggar narrates the story quite correctly. Then they ask: Where is he? The answer: I do not know.

The Pharisees' Obstinacy Revealed, vss. 13-25:

The man is brought to the Pharisees, they must hear of the matter. This evi-

dently was an unofficial gathering of the Pharisees, but they acted with authority nevertheless since they later cast him out of the synagogue

John makes a note of it that the miracle took place on the Sabbath day. Why? To show how the hatred of the Jews has increased Formerly they made a big issue of this, now they will deny the miracle itself, if at all possible. Therefore they go to the parents, perhaps this mas never was the beggar who he claims to have been. In this they fail. Then they will discredit Jesus. In all their words it becomes plain that they are determined not to give Jesus the credit, denying His power even here with the beggar standing before them with open eyes. Here is a picture of the hardness of the sinful heart, hardened by the Word itself. The beggar only, as it appear, is brought to Christ by means of it, and gives Him the glory. The Jews in their devilish hatred and feigned religion tell the man to give God the glory, implying that Jesus should receive none at all. They simply **refuse** to acknowledge Christ.

Questions: Wouldn't it have been better that Jesus had simply refrained from having any more contact with these miserable Jews? What do you think of the beggar, spiritually? What do you think of his parents?

* * * * * *

Be thou my helper in the strife, O Lord, my strong defender be;
Thy mighty shield protect my life, Thy spear confront the enemy.
Amid the conflict, O my Lord, Thy precious promise let me hear,
Thy faithful, reassuring word: I am thy Savior, do not fear.

Ashamed, confounded let them be, Who seek my ruin and disgrace;
O let Thy angel fight for me, And drive my foes before his face.
Without a cause my life they sought, Without a cause their plots they laid;
Themselves within their snares be caught, And be my crafty foes dismayed.

My soul is joyful in the Lord, In His salvation I rejoice;
To Him my heart will praise accord, And bless His Name with thankful voice.
For who, O Lord, is like to Thee, Defender of the poor and meek?
The needy Thy salvation see, When mighty foes their ruin seek.

AFTER RECESS PROGRAMS

THE GLORY OF GOD - *And Science*

Pierson J. Van Alten — Grand Rapids, Michigan

Often when one begins to study science he is informed by many prejudiced individuals that one who believes what science teaches cannot believe what Scripture teaches. In order to support their arguments they will refer to the great astronomer Laplace who stated that "God is a hypothesis which cannot be proved". Of course they never refer to equally as good a scientist as Robert Boyle who saw the work of God in every single chemical and physical law which he studied. It is clearly evident that the scientist who sees God in nature must first have seen Him in Scripture. There is no conflict between faith and science; the conflict is rather one between the question of whether the world is normal or whether it is abnormal. And the Calvinist considers the world as abnormal since it is under the influence of sin. The scientist, who is a Christian, is able to see God's glory in all natural phenomenon, and in all chemical and physical laws. The title of this paper is very broad and sublime, therefore we will only consider a few properties of the very common substance *water*.

We have often noticed that when water freezes, the ice which forms floats on the top. Also that whenever a solid of some other substance is placed in its liquid it sinks, or if the liquid solidifies it usually solidifies from the bottom up. The scientist investigates this fact and discovers that at four degrees Centigrade or 39.2 degrees Fahrenheit the maximum density of water is reached, and from this point to the freezing point the water becomes lighter. Because of this peculiar property water freezes from the top down.

One may ask why this is important. Water is a very poor conductor of heat. With this in mind we discover that the water underneath the ice seldom goes much below 39.2 degrees Fahrenheit, thus preserving aquatic life. Think what would happen if this were not true. There would be no aquatic life and in the summer at most there would be only a few feet of water above the ice on any lake. Is this exception to the laws of nature a mere chance occurance, or does it reveal a great Divine Planner?

Water manifests a peculiar pro-

perty in that it has the highest heat of fusion of any substance. When water changes to ice at zero degrees Centigrade or 32 degrees Fahrenheit, it liberates eighty calories of heat for every gram which change into ice. The scientist uses the calorie for measuring heat energy. The calorie may be defined as the amount of heat necessary to raise the temperature of one gram of water one degree Centigrade. An ounce is equal to 28.35 grams. Water having the highest heat of fusion is especially important because of its effect upon climate. In the fall a large amount of heat is liberated as the water cools and much more yet when water freezes. The reverse is also true in the spring. One can now see what vast stores of heat the oceans are!

The last property we will consider is that water has the highest heat of vaporization. Maybe you have wondered why buildings are heated by steam, and probably dismissed the thought by considering that water was probably the cheapest substance. The reason for this is because of this peculiar property of water. It requires five hundred and forty calories of heat to change one gram of water into steam at one hundred degrees Centigrade, and when steam condenses it liberates this heat again. This also is important in regulating the temperature of the earth. Water has more properties than these and all are as fascinating in revealing God's Glory through science.

The Calvinist holds to the position that the soul purpose of man is to glorify God. Now there are many more ways in which science reveals the *Glory of God* than in merely a molecule of water composed of one atom of oxygen and two atoms of hydrogen. But it is only the scientist who has first seen God in Scripture who is able to see God's Glory in science. Therefore it is our duty as Christians to search for and make explicit these revelations of God's Glory. Recently the book *Beyond the Atom* by John De Vries, Ph. D., has been published which is devoted to the subject, *the Glory of God and Science.* Any one interested in reading more on this subject should by all means read this book. In conclusion let me reiterate that to the scientist who is truly a Christian God is revealed in all His Glory from the largest even to the smallest detail of the Universe. *Truly there is Glory to God in Science!*

DEVOTE: . . . .

at least one
after-recess program
to this interesting discussion on
The Glory of God
and Science.

Faint-Hearted Calvinism

Albert Heemstra — Grand Rapids, Mich.

It should be apparent to the intelligent observer that there exists in modern orthodox christianity and in ourselves particularly, a growing lack of courage to speak out for principle's sake. Our willingness and desire to walk as a living testimony to the truth and its power in our lives is, generally speaking, diminishing as the years roll by.

Sunday church attendance is not what it used to be; week night church going is not nearly what it ought to be. The Family Altar is fast disappearing. Denominational Loyalty in our circles is weakening as time goes on. Our church leaders speak of luke-warmness and indifference to the "Faith of our Fathers".

In his article in the Beacon Lights last month, the Rev. J. W. Van Weelden also voices the need of self-examination and spiritual rejuvenation within our circles. Among other things he says: "It is something which we as Protestant Reformed people, old and young alike, must take hold of, that we may strive to maintain and restore through the power of the life of Christ 'the Christian home'."

There is of course a very definite cause underlying our spiritual retrogression and it centers in the development of sin in the world and in the fact that the line of separation between the true and false church is becoming increasingly difficult to discern. And just as the Church of Christ has continued to develop in numbers and tradition for almost two thousand years, so also has the devil been active in creating divisions and misconceptions of the truth within the church.

Without a doubt there exists among us in some measure a false legalistic piety which may well be a root cause of much of the faint-hearted Calvinism our leaders are deploring.

But we are dealing here with an age-old problem, however contemporary its inflections may be. Note the situation as it was in the time of Christ. The doctrines of the Pharisees and Sadducees had degenerated into little else than a legalistic emphasis upon the strict keeping of the law. There were long lists of prohibitions. The religious leaders of the day were characterized by Christ as blind leaders of the blind. They were blind in their adherence to traditionalism. The spark of true worship and understanding remained in only a few of the members of the church of that day, as for ex-

ample, Simeon and Anna and the parents of John the Baptist. And what, may we ask, can be said of us in this day of spiritual enlightenment? Have we any leanings towards the dangers of traditionalism?

From an editorial in the most recent issue of the Calvin College Chimes I quote the following "Legalism is worshipped with such intensity that Christianity has become an empty shell stripped of all significance for the pulsating life of modern mechanized society . . . ." Now it is not completely true that Christianity has become just an empty shell without significance for the life of modern society. Today, just as in every other age in history, there are many men and women, right thinking and devout, who have the desire and the capability to successfully resist the wicked influences in the world. The true church, of which we are an integral part, has a good deal of significance for those who live out of the principle and conviction that Christ is our all in all. However I believe the possibility exists, and is in fact a real probability, that just as in the days when Christ walked on earth, so today within our own church assembly, traditionalism is creeping in on us and is even now fostering a tendency to adhere to the definitions of our doctrinal confessions primarily for the sake of convention rather than completely out of the principle of conviction. Just how much of our way of life is cultured solely on the basis of the saying, "it was good enough for father and its good enough for me".

By definition the word 'tradition' means the handing down of information, doctrine and opinion thru successive generations. It means further that a tradition can be a code of doctrine and discipline which has continued to develop and grow as it is molded and absorbed by the generations of men who are influenced by it.

This latter meaning—in a large degree—defines our Compendium of the Christian Religion, our Heidelberg Catechism, the Canons of Dort and all the Liturgy peculiar to us which for our convenient reference has been gathered together at the back of the Psalter.

In none of them do we find the hierarchy of rules and prohibitions which characterized the church traditions just prior to the advent of Christ and which Jesus vigorously attacked and overthrew. This collection of dogmatic truth and order in worship is the embodiment of the right and true concepts of God and Christian living which have an end in us and are to be completely assimilated by us, and thus revitalized, are to be handed down to the generation which will follow us.

But friends, isn't it just possible

that we have, *without our being aware of it,* permitted an element of traditionalism to surround these cardinal expressions of our doctrinal position? Has the force of habit and the repetition of liturgies —rather than the thrust of faith and reason,—become the inducement to cause us to assume the responsibilities of church membership?

A Fundamentalist is one who approaches the teachings of Scripture and the consideration of church affiliation, purely on the basis of its literal inspiration. He attempts to formulate his own convictions without any creed or doctrine to guide him. For us as Calvinists to do this would be to trample under foot the experience of all our fathers. In no other sphere of life would we consider doing this— we cannot do it in religion either.

Of course it is true and we can never doubt it, that only through the grace of God in our heart can we accept the Lord Jesus Christ and take our stand for Him among His people. And it is also true that the power of the Word and its preaching should ever be the overpowering influence in directing us to join the body of believers as members of His Church here in the world.

What we call our tradition is in reality no more than this concept of God's sovereign love and plan of salvation evaluated and illuminated by the personal experiences of generations of God-fearing individuals. For us to ignore this testimony in formulating our own principles of belief and faith would be ludicrous, to say the least.

The danger of traditionalism, however, is to make out of this same testimony nothing more than an accumulation of opinions and customs which by virtue of their antiquity need not be questioned— much like the 'wisdom of the ages'. It is when this becomes the case in our lives that we turn into faint-hearted Calvinists and unhealthy Christians.

We said a moment ago that tradition has an end in us. By that we mean to recognize the personal heritage which comes down to us from yesterday. Our responsibility to the traditions of our fathers is to take them, not in blind adherence, but in eagerness of purpose to study them, examine and prove them. This reasoning out of the conclusions of the past, serves to revitalize them and thus they live again in us not only as honored traditions but as shining beacons of inspiration and guidance. Then and then only can we in turn pass them on to tomorrow untainted by a false sense of piety and hypocritical formalism.

NOTE: This address was given by Mr. Heemstra at a combined meeting of Talitha and Young Men's Societies, March 8, at Fuller Ave.

OPEN FORUM

The Fact - Youth for Christ

Marvin Koerner — Grand Rapids, Mich.

It has become necessary to clarify myself with regard to my article on Y.F. C. in the February issue of Beacon Lights. The main fact that I wish to make clear is that Y. F. C. is an organization *outside* of the Church and therefore is to be condemned.

First, then, I would like to state that preaching is, authoritatively proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ, by one that is sent, serving the Word of God. Therefore, a minister cannot preach whatever he feels like preaching, but he must stick to the Word of God entirely. He must be able to say, "Thus saith the Lord", and this by the authority of Christ Jesus. For Christ has sent him through the call he received from his consistory.

From this we may conclude that the preaching done at the Y.F.C. meetings is not authoritative; in fact it is not preaching at all, for the speaker is not under the authority of a consistory. They are outside of the church. And Christ *never* calls His people in any other way than through the church. "Paul", called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, unto the *church of God* which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, *called to be saints,* with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." (1 Cor. 1:1-2)

The Gospel must never be preached in the wrong sense, that is, in contradistinction to the doctrinal truth, especially by the emphasis of the so-called invitation to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, (as if by nature we had that power) and finally ending in what is known at the "Altar Call"; for in preaching of this sort there is no edification for the people of God. What must be preached is the whole counsel of God, as concerns the salvation of elect sinners.

Now we shall see to whom this official and authoritative message is to be preached. The congregation is the coming together of true believers with their children, organically existing in the line of the covenant, in continued generations. "I am the vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5)

The church is not a mixed crowd, and a minister must address the church as the beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ. "The elder unto the

elect lady and her children, whom I *love* in the truth; and not I only, but also they that have the truth." (2 John 1)

Because of the fact that the speaker in the Y. F. C. meeting is not a minister, for he is not under a consistory, he is not sent by Christ; therefore they can expect no fruit, for Paul says in Romans 10:14-15, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written: how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

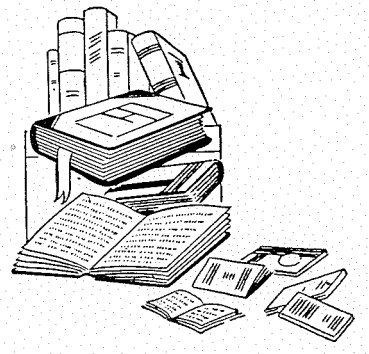
Now I think that we all ought to agree that the Holy Spirit does not work, in gathering the people of God, except through the church. Then to say that "hundreds and even thousands" of young people have come to the realization of their sins through the influence of Y. F. C. is plain folly. For this is nothing more than a mere assumption. It cannot be so that an organization outside of the church, can call God's people to repentance.

Yes, we may never say that we disapprove of the existence of Y. F. C., for God uses it as He uses all the works of the anti-christ, such as the theatre, the dance-hall, and the Godless Unions, in the service of His elect people. We do not object to their existence, because God has put them in the world. But God does not use them to gather His elect, and because of that we may have no part in them. The only way God's elect are gathered is through the preaching of the Whole Counsel of God.

Finally, let us look at the minister, who he is. The minister is one who is called, one who is sent, and he is an ambassador. "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in bonds: and therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak." (Eph. 6:19-20)

Now apart from the fact that this minister must have an internal calling, a desire to serve the Lord, he must also be called externally. And aside from the fact that he must have talents, which need not be extra-ordinary, the minister must be called by the church. If he is not called by a congregation, he may not consider himself called to the ministry. Y. F. C., being outside of the church and not having a consistory or ruling body, which is authoritative thru the Spirit of Christ; cannot, and does not call their speakers authoritatively. If they are not called they cannot preach authoritatively, and therefore they cannot call to repentance.

Book Reviews



THE CITADEL . . . .
by *A. J. Cronin*

With its setting in England, in and near London, the story tells of the life of a struggling young doctor, Andrew Manson. His first appointment was in Blaenelly, a small mining town, to serve as an assistant to an older, experienced doctor, Edward Page. Arriving in Blaenelly, he found that Mrs. Page had neglected to tell him that Dr. Page had had a severe stroke and was entirely incapacitated for any work. The whole burden of Dr. Page's practice rested on Manson now. Inexperienced though he was, Dr. Manson worked hard, arrested a typhoid fever epidemic, and would often spend sleepless nights trying to diagnose his patients' illnesses.

He kept his mind almost exclusively on his work, until he met the school teacher, Christine Barlow.

After his marriage to Christine, and his securing a better position in the mining town of Aberalaw, he set himself to further study to obtain a higher medical degree.

Always a poor small-town doctor, Andrew Manson wanted a larger and more profitable practice, and *money*. He began to do anything for rich patients just to gain wealth and prestige. The story of how his thirst for riches ended is told at the end of the book.

The plot of this book moves rapidly and certainly holds the interest of the reader. The troubles and successes of Dr. Manson might have been taken from real life.

Dr. Manson is portrayed as a rather stiff Scotsman, a clumsy conversationalist, always blundering, too proud at times, but a conscientious and successful physician. In him, the author has created a very interesting character.

It is far from being a Christian novel. God is not reckoned with except a couple of times near the end of the story. Throughout the whole story, Dr. Manson is pictured as ruling his own life, dependent only on himself for his success or failure, with never a thought of God in his mind. There is profanity also in the book, though

not as bad as is found in most modern novels. If we read the book, knowing that it was written from a materialistic viewpoint, we may enjoy it as a relaxing, interesting story.

Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema —

* * * *

THE BIG FISHERMAN.

By Lloyd C. Douglas, Boston Hougton Mifflin Company, 1948. 581 pages — $3.75.

The big Galilean fisherman, who is Simon Peter, the Apostle, is not introduced until the fifth chapter of this book. In the first hundred pages the author succeeds to interest the reader in the conflict and hatred existing between the wandering, wilderness-loving Arabians and their Jewish neighbors living in the cities of Palestine. Fearing Rome, King Herod schemed an alliance between the Jews and the Arabs and sealed it with a royal wedding between these two irreconcilable nations. Fara, the child born from this unfortunate marriage, vowed to avenge Arabia by killing her Jewish father, the Tetrach. This vow brings Fara to Galilee where Jesus is preaching and Simon Peter is fishing. In this way the two plots are interwoven.

The big fisherman, busy with his awl aboard *The Abigail,* is presented by the author as "a despiser of the Synagogue" and as "stridently irreligious". On the feast days when other Jews attended the Synagogue he preferred to tinker at odd jobs on shipboard. The Day of Atonement meant nothing to this "incorrigible skeptic". But the preaching of the Carpenter did! It made him uncomfortable, restless. It made him lose his interest in fishing. It made him wonder, marvel, ... believe. And when the Master's voice across the waters called him to come and follow and "fish for men" he was ready and willing.

Peter is naturally an interesting person to every Bible student. We love the deep, yet impulsive Peter as we learn to know him through the Gospel writers. But our novelist, though he tells the same story, fails to arouse in us this admiration for his major character.

Fara is the one who holds the interest of the reader, not the big fisherman. When Fara is out of the picture, the story lags. This is perhaps because in re-telling the story of Jesus' public ministry and Peter's discipleship the author is in competition with the four Gospel writers who have done such a beautiful job that Mr. Douglas can not possibly improve upon it. What is more, the Gospel writers were inspired infallibly so that their story is Truth. This means that when Mr. Douglas twists facts to suit his fiction, as he often does, he writes Untruth.

A. Reitsma.

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