

Beacon Lights

For Protestant Reformed Youth

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DAFFODILS

*I wandered lonely as a cloud
That floats on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd
A host, of golden daffodils;
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.*

*Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle in the Milky Way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.*

*The waves beside them danced; but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee:
A poet could not but be gay
In such a jocund company:
I gazed — and gazed — but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:*

*For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with rapture fills,
And dances with the daffodils.*

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

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Ascension -- Pentecost

By the Rev. C. Hanko — Oak Lawn, Illinois

Triumphant Easter, day of first-fruits, in which Christ arose as Victor over sin, death and the grave.

Glorious ascension, for He went through the heavens to Father's throne, where He was crowned with glory and honor to rule over the works of God's hands.

Blessed Pentecost, feast of harvest, when He came to dwell with us in the Spirit, to bless us with all spiritual blessings from heaven and to take us unto Himself that we may be where He is.

Without His ascent into heaven there could be no outpouring of the Spirit on Pentecost, no more than there could be an ascension without the resurrection from the grave. Nor could there be a resurrection unless it was preceded by the atoning death of the cross, no more than there could be a Cross unless the Son of God came into the likeness of our sinful flesh, born of the virgin.

Christmas, Good Friday, Easter, Ascension Day and Pentecost are

so many links in the chain of our salvation, filling our hearts with joy and praise to God.

Yet Ascension Day is a forgotten occasion. And Pentecost suffers the same lot.

Who would forget Christmas? If for no other reason than that the stores and display windows are decorated in festive array weeks in advance and carols are as popular as turkey on Thanksgiving. Even Good Friday gains recognition, and Easter vies with Christmas in growing popularity. But who bothers about Ascension Day or Pentecost?

Even in the Church the interest waxes warm at Christmas time, for the story of the Christ-child never seems to lose its appeal. Also the passion weeks, climaxing in Good Friday, hold our attention to the suffering and death of the cross. And interest once more flames high on Easter as we follow the rapid flow of events on the amazing, glad day of the resurrection. But we need a special note

on our memorandum pad to remind us of Ascension Day, and a similar note, twice underscored, not to forget Pentecost.

What may be the reason? Are these last two occasions less important than the others? Is it of lesser importance to the Church of Jesus Christ here on earth that Christ ascended to heaven and poured out His Spirit upon the Church than that He was born, suffered, died and arose again on the third day? Perish the thought.

Or is it because historical facts, which always have a special appeal to us, are somewhat lacking at these last two occasions? It is true that the story of Christ's ascent into heaven is very brief. The historical facts of Jesus' last appearance to His disciples on the mount, His final words, His being received up into heaven, so that a cloud received Him out of their sight, and the sudden appearance of the angels and their message, are all soon told. And the known facts accompanying the outpouring of the Spirit are also few. There was the fact that it was Pentecost and the disciples were all with one accord met in one place awaiting the promise of the Spirit. There were the signs of the rushing, mighty wind, cloven tongues as of fire sitting upon each of them, and the speaking in various languages. There was the gathering of the multitude that

had come together to investigate more closely into these things that were noised about, the speaking of the disciples to each in their own language, the reaction of the people and the sermon of Peter, followed by the conversion of about three thousand souls. More facts than could be mentioned about the resurrection. Yet, when we stop to think of it, do we have so many facts immediately connected with the birth of Christ that Christmas should take such a predominant place, even in the Church? And even so, what do we have left if we have nothing but the historical facts of Christ's birth and death and resurrection? What spiritual value lies in a mere story, if we lose ourselves in that? A story cannot save us, no more than it can fill our hearts with praise to God.

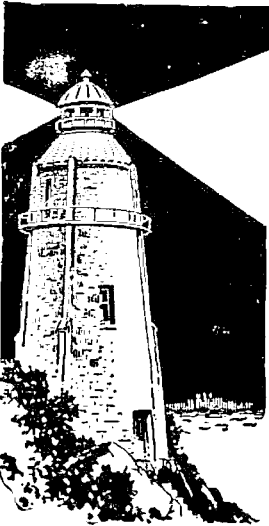
The facts of the case seem to be that there is some natural appeal to the historical events connected with Christ's life on earth. That appeal we fail to find in the ascent into heaven and the outpouring of the Spirit. Yet if we lose ourselves in that natural appeal, Christ's birth, suffering, death and resurrection cannot have any real significance for us. Nor will we look forward in anticipation toward the commemoration of Ascension Day and Pentecost.

The shepherds found more than a mere babe in the manger. They

found the promised Messiah, the Saviour, born in poverty and shame to bring glory to God and peace on earth in the people of His good pleasure. When Jesus died on the cross the disciples lost more than a friend and master, for they confessed Him to be the Christ, the Son of the living God. When He died they seemed to have lost all for time and eternity. Therefore the glad day of the resurrection left Mary Magdalene without her Rabboni, but enriched her and all the true disciples with the hope of an eternal and blessed reunion in Father's House with its many mansions. The resurrected Lord has gone into heaven, whether He now dwells and rules over all

things, whither He blesses us with all spiritual and eternal blessings in the Spirit, and whence we expect Him in that day when He will change our vile bodies into the likeness of His glorious body. Christ in heaven means more to us than His presence on earth could ever mean. Besides, He is busily engaged in preparing a place for us there, and preparing us for that place, that we may be where He is. And He will take us unto Himself in a perfect and eternal reunion in glory.

Of that we are assured through His Spirit in our hearts.
Triumphant Easter.
Glorious Ascension.
Blessed Pentecost.



A Message To Our Young People

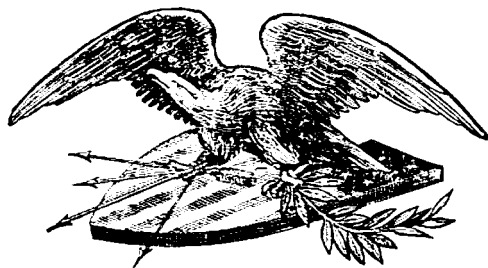
As you know the Federation Board is planning to publish two Summer Issues of Beacon Lights. The success of this undertaking and the general welfare of our paper depends upon your support. Help along by securing new subscribers. Aim to put Beacon Lights in every home.

Boost Subscriptions!!

A Soldier's Reverie

By Miss Elynore Hofman

Grand Rapids, Mich.



The khakied body of an eighteen year old lay crouched against the damp earth on the south side of the hill. His blood-shot eyes showed signs of sleepless nights; still he gazed intently of the hilly slopes surrounding him. His face was covered with smudges of two-inch whiskers and his hair was a mass of snarls. He was caked with dried mud to the waist, a souvenir of a two-month tramp through the swampy forest. His lips were cracked, his hands chapped and bleeding.

A faint drizzle began to sprinkle his helmet and jacket as he lay on his side. A drop of perspiration raced down his brow and then created a white path along his dusty cheek. He looked at his watch. It was seven A. M. His mind wandered slowly towards home and his life as it was a year ago. He'd probably just be rolling out of bed now. . . .

"Good morning, Dad. Still thinking of going fishing in all this snow? . . . Well, the best of everything and I sure hope the ice is good and thick. . . Hey, Mom, fix

me an egg will you? I'll be down in a minute."

The rain aroused him from his reverie. What wouldn't he give to trade this ice cold shower for a tub full of steaming hot water. The hint of fog that preceded the rain forced itself down over the land making it practically impossible to see two feet in front of him. He lit a match but it went out before he could. . . .

"He pulled on his trousers and buttoned up his shirt. Taking the steps two at a time he reached the kitchen just as the clock was striking half past. "Morning, Mom, thanks for the toast. Hey, you forgot the milk. I'll get it. Boy, do I have to hurry. Suppose I'll be late again."

He glanced at his watch. It would be only a matter of seconds before the next attack. A chill ran down his back as he grasped and fixed the cold bayonet. He tried to rise on his elbow but slipped on the wet grass. He rolled over on his side; yeah, there they all were Joe, Tom, Gordy, Bob,

Matt, and all the rest, clutching their guns, awaiting the signal.

He reached into his pocket for the bus chip as he saw the Franklin coming down the street. He had missed his regular bus, so lost no time jumping in when the driver stopped. The motor started

Whistles shrieked, lights flashed, dirt flew, and at the command, 'Advance,' the attack began. He, like his comrades, lifted his rifle and emerged from cover into the open. While running down the side of the slope he slipped and lost his balance. After regaining his position, he had only taken a few steps when a bullet nicked his hand. He stared at it.

"Ouch! That railing. What a time to cut my hand, just before math class." When he got in school he stopped at the drinking fountain to dip his hand in the running water a few times and then tied his handkerchief around it.

The slight wound stopped throbbing and in a moment the soldier was running cautiously forward again. The battle raged all day and many never heard the lonely taps, that sounded sleepily across the battlefield that night.

A soldier lay, mortally wounded, on an old, tattered, army blanket, looking up into the night skies. A tremor of pain shooting through

his body dimmed the blinking stars but his eyes remained fixed upon them. Five years ago. . . .

"Nite, Mom."

"Goodnight, Phil. Do you want the hall light out?"

"Why don't you read me a story first?"

"O. K. a short one then because it's getting pretty late."

* * * * *

The Lord is my shepherd;

I shall not want.

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:

He leadeth me beside still waters.

He restoreth my soul:

He guideth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me;

Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:

Thou hast anointed my head with oil:

My cup runneth over.

Surely goodness and loving-kindness shall follow me all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

The soldier closed his eyes, and his head fell to one side.

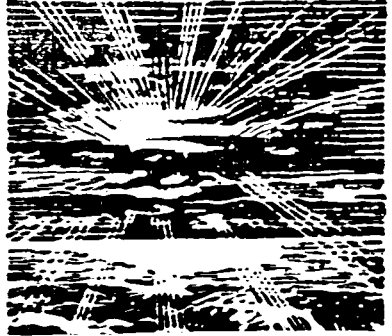
God Worketh All Things

By Maynard Bouman — Grand Rapids, Mich.

Today as our great nation is cast into the bitter onslaught which is upon the earth, only a true child of God believes and realizes that it is according to the fulfillment and accomplishment of God's great purpose: As true believers and strong in the Lord we know that God for the highest of all-ends fore-ordained all that which comes to pass in all the days of our lives.

Many of you Fathers, Mothers, sisters and brothers have a loving son in the service of our country. No doubt many have a son and brother "overseas" and you are in deep despair wondering whether or not he will return again. Be as it may our adversity is great, yet let us be patient knowing that we must suffer for Christ's sake, and in so doing we shall be blessed.

Our trials are great in these times and more than ever before we must look unto God for guidance and strength to face all that which comes our way. Let us stand fast putting on the armor of faith knowing that God worketh all things according to His purpose, and after the counsel of His will and knowing that nothing occurs in this sinful world today or any other day that is apart from His Eternal purpose or free from His government. Those that seek after worldly pleasures and seek their own craft do not look unto the Lord even in these dark and trying times, what of



them when God pours out His great judgment upon the earth in time? Let it be far from us to rebel against the Lord's will and know that "God's way is the best way." Rather than rebel let us say "Thy will be done." Our boys in service, your sons and brothers, have overwhelming temptations and great sin about them as I experience that myself. What a great and blessed consolation it is when we can open the Scriptures and meditate on God's Word after our daily toils are over and thus let our light shine as soldiers of the cross as well as of our country.

God's promises are sure, and pray we must for His all sufficient grace which we must have in our hearts, speech, and song in these times even though they may be dark. Whatever our days may bring forth let us all put all our faith and trust in Him Who is our Sovereign God for of Him, and through Him are all things. Let us give Him all the honor and glory forever as He alone is worthy.

The Story Of The Mennonites

By Miss *Peternella Poortinga* — South Holland, Ill.

If one should be traveling through some parts of our farming country in the Middle Western states, or more particularly, through Lancaster County, Pennsylvania one would pause a moment along the way. In box-like horse-drawn wagons that pass there are bearded men in black broad-brim-hats and their bonneted wives with long full skirts. They look like people from another world; and so they are. They belong to the sect of the Mennonites; and because of their plain clothes and rigid adherence to customs of two centuries ago, they are known as the "Plain People."

The Mennonites take their name from Menno Simons a Dutch priest though the views of these people originated in Switzerland during the time of the Reformation. In 1525 some of Zwingli's more radical co-reformers broke with him. They favored a complete break with the Catholic Church, however, infant baptism was the chief bone of contention between the two groups. And so after rejecting infant baptism, which separated them from the Zwingilian party, they inaugurated the movement known as Anabaptism. They introduced the rite of adult baptism upon the confession of faith.

The whole movement was an at-

tempt to reproduce literally as possible the primitive, Apostolic Church in its original purity and simplicity; and restore Christianity once more to a basis of individual responsibility. The Anabaptists insisted that each individual must decide the Bible message for himself. The greatest degree of liberty must be granted the individual conscience in spiritual matters. Religion, pure and undefiled, to the Anabaptist was not merely a set of dogmas, but a life, and it must function in an improved conduct.

The faith of the Swiss Brethren, as they chose to call themselves, spread rapidly, and was subject to persecution from the first. The fundamental doctrine of non-resistance, especially, led to trouble with the authorities. The movement spread through the means of persecution, from Switzerland to Germany, Tyrol, Austria, Moravia, The Netherlands, The Southern Baltics, and Russia.

Menno Simons, a priest at Witmarsum, Friesland through a gradual process, became convinced that the Catholic Church taught erroneous views regarding transubstantiation, and infant baptism. From the New Testament he could find no justification for these doctrines. In 1536 he laid down his office,

and renounced the Catholic Church. He was baptized by Obbe Philipps and ordained as an elder. Menno's pre-eminence among the leaders of the Ananbaptist movement in his day, and his dominating influence among their later followers is no doubt, due more to his literary efforts than to any other cause.

About 1693 a Swiss Mennonite, Jacob Anman, accused the Mennonite Brethren of laxness of discipline, especially in applying the practice of avoidance. This practice required the members of the church to shun or avoid a member under "the ban," so that he might be ashamed of his particular sin. With sympathizers Anman formed a group known as the "Amish." They virtually bent backwards to return to the original articles of faith.

The Mennonites did not favor a specially trained and supported ministry. During the 17th century some of their leaders were trained at the seminary of the Remonstrants. Much in the religious philosophy of the Remonstrants appealed to the Mennonites, especially their common belief in the freedom of the will, and opposition to the idea of predestination.

European wars, with privations and sufferings, and political and religious persecutions sent many Mennonites to America. The first permanent Mennonite colony was that established in Germantown,

Pennsylvania, in 1683. They came largely from Northwestern Germany.

Amish colonies were established about 1736. They brought with them all the conservatism from the Old World, holding fast to all of their strict customs and traditions.

Due to heavy immigration, and the fact that the Mennonites were mostly farmers, they began to expand westward. Around 1850 settlements had been established in Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Nebraska, Kansas, the Dakotas, Idaho, Oregon, Colorado, Oklahoma and Texas.

Churches of the Plain People are severely lacking in ornament. Simple, too, are the services—singing without accompaniment, and prayer by members of the congregation. Sermons are not a doctrinal type. The preacher usually begins with the story of the fall of Adam, and continues on through the Bible for several hours. After the preacher has finished, two or three men arise and testify to the truth of what has just been spoken by the preacher, "that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established."

There are two principal divisions among the Amish. House Amish (Old Order) and Church Amish (New Order). The former hold religious services in large barns in the summer and in homes in the winter time: the latter have

church buildings, and also use automobiles and electricity in their homes. Old Order Amish are still very much afraid of worldliness. Still forbidden by them are: buttons, store clothes, hats for women, pictures, bathtubs, automobiles, radios, telephones, Sunday schools, fourpart singing, high school attendance, etc.

In recent years, the Mennonites have adopted a more progressive program of church activities, but have remained conservative in maintaining traditional religious and social practices and customs. There has been a tendency toward higher education, and today there are several colleges and junior colleges maintained by the Mennonites.

It is an interesting fact that the Mennonites in America have survived longer than those in Europe. In all of Europe, Mennonites gradually lost their distinctiveness when they gave up their traditional principles of conscience against war, and against religious oppression. In Germany today former Mennonites declare that they have no quarrel with the Nazi regime, and even join with the totalitarian state in sending certain Lutherans to concentration camps. One wonders how long the Mennonites in America will survive, especially if religious freedom should be taken away from them.

One thing the Mennonites have failed to understand is, while a person may try to separate himself from the world, it is impossible to separate himself from his sinful heart. No matter how extremely careful and strict he may be in his outward walk in life, it avails nothing, as long as the heart remains unconverted. Only when the heart is converted to God, is it possible to live as pilgrims and strangers—"in the world but not of the world."



SCIENCE



Harbingers Of Spring (Cont.)

By Mr. C. De Boer — Kalamazoo, Mich.

*"His eye is on the sparrow—
And I know He watches me."*

Of the many varieties of sparrows, the imported English sparrow is the most numerous. Being a member of the finch family, it is related to the canary, which it resembles rather closely, except for color. If you stop to consider that it was first introduced into the United States in 1869 (only 75 years ago) you will wonder why it multiplied so rapidly. Various factors account for this: it produces several broods per season, it is extremely vicious and thus maintains its species in spite of competitors; but the most significant reason is the fact that its natural enemies, which were present in Europe, are not found here, and, therefore enabling these birds to increase with astonishing rapidity. Formerly, many states placed bounties on them, but, today, some states enforce laws protecting them because of their valuable consumption of weed seeds.

In 1886 the state of Pennsylvania placed a bounty on hawks and owls, resulting in the extermination of

125,000 during a period of eighteen months. At that time, approximately \$90,000 was paid in bounties to save \$2,000 worth of chickens. In the meantime, field mice abounded, as their natural enemies were being destroyed. Very surprised was the public, when the statistics were released for \$2,000 worth of chickens actually cost the people \$90,000 in bounties plus \$4,000,000 damage to the grain caused by the field mice.

Another interesting phase of bird study is "nesting." Generally, bird nests are classified into three groups: those built on the ground, in banks, or in trees and shrubs. Of the first class the ostrich is of special significance. In their natural habitat, the desert, the male is escorted by several females, who all lay their eggs in the same hollow in the sand. During the day, the eggs are kept warm by the sun's rays, but at night the faithful father bird maintains the necessary temperature for incubation. However, in captivity ostriches are usually paired, and the female sits on the

eggs during the day, while the male keeps vigil in the hours of darkness. Each egg weighs about three pounds: they are a delicacy to the African natives, who use the thick hardened shells for cups and bowls.

Another peculiar bird of central Africa, lays its eggs in a heap of decaying leaves, the decomposition of which furnishes the necessary heat for the incubation period. And one of our common ground nesters—the turkey—conceals her eggs by scattering leaves over them when she leaves the nest in search for food. Other familiar birds in this class are the pheasants, quails, "kill-deer," herons, etc.

Belonging to the second group are those who build their nests in banks such as petrels, swallows, kingfishers, and sand martins. Excavations have revealed that some kingfishers built tunnels 5 or 6 feet long as entrance ways to their enlarged nests, which have been found to be littered with the skeletons of many fish. The petrel constructs a winding stairway descending to its nest, which is directly below the entrance.

The more familiar types of nests are those found in trees and shrubs. They vary considerably in shape and structure, some requiring carpenters, others masons, and still others weavers. In southwestern United States, the ivory-

billed woodpecker hollows a place for his nest in the trunk of a living tree. His hammering sounds very realistic as this carpenter picks little cavities into the sides of his nest, where he stores his food supply-nuts. On the other hand, the eave-swallow—a mason by trade—gathers particles of clay and cements them together to form his abode under the eaves of some high barn or home.

One of the weavers known as the tailor-bird selects a large leaf, the ends of which it sews together by means of its beak with small fibers found in the woods. This cone-shaped encasement is then filled with a soft cotton material which it gathers, providing a cozy shelter for the young. Another member of this group is the weaver-bird, which is a native of India. Two species of special interest are the social weaver, and the yellow weaver. The former band together, and after selecting a suitable crotch formed by the union of several branches, they construct a common dome which they use as a roof. Then, underneath this, they each build an individual nest. In comparison, the nest of the yellow-weaver appears very solitary as it hangs suspended from a branch far out over the water: thus it is protected from most intruders. Very skillfully, this weaver gathers grasses and assembles them into a bottle-shaped

nest, hanging it in an inverted fashion, so that the opening is at the bottom.

Perhaps most of you have seen an oriole's nest, a pouch-shaped structure swinging from some delicate branch. Why was such a frail branch chosen? Very wise was the mother bird when she cautiously searched for the cite of her home. Instinctively she avoided the larger and firmer limbs, which would enable such animals as squirrels and cats to prey upon her young.

Generally birds are very active and ambitious, but an exception is the cow bird, who lacks the energy to make a home of her own. Instead, she watches her opportunity to invade the freshly-built nest of a yellow warbler. During the brief absence of the owner, the cow bird lays her eggs among the other eggs. Upon returning, the discerning warbler immediately notices the strange addition, and commences to build a new story covering all the eggs. Some instances are recorded of warblers building three story nests due to cow-bird invasion.

It is indeed wonderful that each of these feathered creatures is so miraculously guided by instinct that it is enabled to construct a home suitable to its own peculiar needs. Very amazing is the fact that the young, although never having been taught by the parent

birds, build the same type of nest year after year. Characteristic of its particular species God's providence surpasses human understanding.

Certainly, bird study is a comfort for all of us, especially when we think of Christ's reference to fowls in His sermon on the mount.

"Behold the fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they." Matt. 6:26.

* * * *

And after April, when May follows,

And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows!

Hark, where my blossom'd pear-tree in the hedge

Leans to the field and scatters on the clover

Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—

That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,

Lest you think he never could recapture

The first fine careless rapture!

And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,

All will be gay when noontide wakes anew

The buttercups, the little children's dower

—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

ROBERT BROWNING.

Current Events

By the Rev. H. De Wolf

Manhattan, Montana



In Memoriam.

Worthy of brief comment is the passing of our beloved Rev. W. Verhil. It is not our purpose to write a eulogy; we simply wish to make a few comments. Rev. Verhil was one of the first to graduate from our own theological seminary. He is also the first of our ministers to be called away by the hand of death. No doubt the news of his death came as a shock to all that knew him and there are many. It seems as though we hadn't given much thought to the fact that a thing like this could happen. That those things can happen, yes, we all know that. Death is not strange, it is not something unusual. But it just never occurred to us that it would happen. We take life for granted: we do that with a view to ourselves and also to others. Yes, when a person has become rather old, when he is well along in years, then we begin to expect these things. But that was not the case with Rev. Verhil. May his death remind us that there is but a very narrow line between life and death:

it takes but a moment to cross it. And that is not simply true with a view to the aged but applies equally well to the youth.

As churches we mourn the loss of our beloved brother.

May the Lord of all grace comfort the family and also the congregation where he was serving. And may we all find strength in the unquestionable fact that our God does all things well. Also these things are for our good.

Women in Industry

One of the signs of the times that has been produced by this war is that of women taking over the work that was always done by men. In almost every branch of industry one finds women doing the work of men. Our country was not the first to do this nor are women employed in men's labor here in the U. S. to the same extent as they are in other countries. In Russia, for example, women work on boats and ships and are listed as regular crew members.

This unusual condition of men

and women working side by side has resulted in problems of a moral character. That is especially the case with a view to married men. More than once we have read about such a problem and the companies employing men and women will readily admit that this problem exists. A certain news article ends with the following paragraph:

"This isn't a new problem in industry," one plant executive explained. "Plants which always have employed men and women always have had it to some extent. Scores of plants which never employed women before are forced to do so now, and thousands of women, who never worked have taken war jobs. When a man finds himself working on a machine next to a pretty girl—well, the opportunity to get acquainted is there."

This situation presents a danger to christian young men and women. It is so easy to strike up an acquaintance with someone of the opposite sex that may result in much grief. We have seen in the past where someone who was "sure of themselves" and "knew exactly what they wanted" fell head over heels in love with someone they knew practically nothing about. Our christian men and women should not assume the

"sure of myself" attitude and think that they cannot be deceived. Nor should they assume that they have complete control of themselves so that they can say "so far and no farther." The young lady who has a date with a man whom she knows is not a christian has taken the first step in a dangerous way. She has no right to imagine that she can do as she pleases and can stop when she wants to. She is playing with fire. And above all, the young lady who does such a thing has no right to think she will be able to convert her unbelieving friend or husband.

These things cannot be over-emphasized. Especially is that true now when so many of our christian young women are entering the various factories. Let those who contemplate an action of this nature look at those who have done that before them. And let them not think that it will be different with them. Remember that our strength is weakness. In all the temptations of life with which we so often find ourselves surrounded, there is only one power that can cause us to persevere and that is the power of God's grace.

Let us as young people not fail to realize this fact.

And let us seek help at the throne of grace that we may be found faithful to Him Who bought us with His Own Blood.

To Our Boys In Service

Dear Fellows:—

Thanks for the letters. They are always very interesting to me not only because they contain information concerning your present environment and way of life, but especially because they generally strike a sound spiritual note. And that is very encouraging. For it is a proof that the Lord is hearing our prayers concerning you, and that He gives you grace to be faithful.

I will quote from a couple of letters I received from "the land down under" a few sentences of special interest. Louis Sytsma writes from "somewhere in Australia" that "during the past few months many strange and thrilling experiences have taken place. . . I have learned through correspondence that a few of the fellows I know are now temporarily incapacitated due to recent engagements. . . I have not much knowledge regarding the churches and church life of the Australian people, but obviously the populace here considers the sabbath not only a day of rest and worship, but also a period of recreation. Speaking of our own people, I believe it is safe to say that many of us don't appreciate enough the blessings of being able to attend a sound church every Sunday, and as civilians we merely take these blessings for granted. . . . It does seem as though I see things differently. It is as if I were living in another world, a pretty big, serious

world. It makes the world I have lived in all my life seem awfully small, and a good many things that I thought were quite important seem rather unimportant to me now." Ralph Meyer writes that he is glad "to be back in the homeland for a while" (he means Australia) for it seems quite a relief not to have to crawl on your stomach through the jungles "to avoid flying lead." The brother enjoyed a period of rest from fighting in New Guinea.

And so we learn that you fellows in the service, and especially those of you who are abroad and see real war, begin to see things in a new perspective. Things look different to you now than when you were at home. What seemed big things now look small. And this is only natural. And, with a view to many things your new way of seeing things is probably far more correct than the old way. If only we bear in mind that there are many things that never change their value, and that, no matter what the perspective, always remain the same. They are the eternal things of God's Word and Kingdom. Christ is the same today, yesterday, and for ever! The world may be shaken to its very foundations, He, of Whose cross and resurrection we are especially reminded this very week, never changes. And the truth in Him is a firm and abiding foundation. May your hope and confidence always be in Him!

Rev. H. Hoeksema



Letters From Our Boys



Seattle, Washington

Dear. . . .

As you probably have heard I am stationed in Seattle, Washington; and am in the medical corp of the 212th Regiment Coast Artillery.

On Sundays I attend the Christian Reformed Church here in Seattle. It appears to be a new congregation which was organized last summer. There are almost as many soldiers that attend this church as civilians. The people are all very friendly and also the Rev. and Mrs. Smit. So far I have found Rev. Smit a very good minister and very Reformed. After the evening service many of us soldiers gather at Rev. Smit's house for a sort of hymn sing and refreshments which I enjoy very much.

We really had some excitement here today. This noon after dinner we were all sitting around talking, getting our shoes shined, and lockers straightened out, when we heard a big four-motored bomber fly over the dispensary. It was a new B-29 bomber which the Boeing plant here makes. As it flew over we could hear one of the motors sputter and we thought it was queer. All of a sudden smoke started pouring out of one of the motors and we knew something was wrong. Three of the fellows hopped in one of the ambulances and the Major and one of the Corporals loaded up the ambulance with stretchers and also went in the general direction from

where the bomber crashed. We knew it had crashed because we could see big clouds of black smoke arising from that direction. The plane had crashed right in town and to make it worse, it had pancaked down on the top of a meat packing firm. There were eleven men in the plane and every one was killed. There were also two employees of the plant killed and about twenty missing. Our ambulances were about the first ones there; but there wasn't anything that could be done, but pick up the dead men who had fallen or had jumped out before it crashed and bring them to the Marine Hospital Morgue which is right near us here. You probably read something about this in the Press.

Well, I must close now. Let me hear from you again.

Your Friend,

John Koster (Grand Rapids)

* * * * *

Camp Haan, Calif.

Dear Friends:

I received my March Beacon Lights this week and was glad to get one again. I find it very interesting and know I should have written long ago. It surprised me very much to read that over a hundred boys have already left from our congregation.

I've been in the army about six months now and I don't mind it as much as I

did the first month or two. Of course I'd rather be home but this is the way the Lord has called me. I know that the Lord is with me every day and is keeping me from many temptations. If He were not with me I'd never be able to stand it with all the many temptations around us. It makes me so happy to know that He is always near and I know that the heavenly Father is with my loved ones at home.

Last week I visited some friends in Los Angeles. It was very comforting to be with our own people for a day.

The weather is very nice here during the day but in the morning it is quite cold. We live in tents and have no electricity so I do all my flashlight; I manage somehow.

Enclosed you will find a small contribution to cover the cost of my Beacon Lights.

Your Christian Friend,
Pvt. Louis Kikstra (G. R.)

* * * * *

Hamilton Field, Calif.

Dear Friends:

First of all I want to thank you for being so faithful in sending the Beacon Lights. I have received every one from the Dec. issue through March. I enjoyed reading it very much. I also received the Standard Bearer and the Church News, so I have a good idea of what is going on in our churches even though I am in the army.

I have been in the army almost fourteen months now, but it seems only a

short time. I have been in this vicinity since my induction and I have no idea at present when I will be moved. I have a lot to be thankful for. The Lord has blessed me both bodily and spiritually. I have had the privilege of going to church at least once almost every Sunday.

I am stationed a little outside of Oakland and about eight miles from Alameda. I usually go to church there.

Of course there are a lot of temptations in the army and then the thought of God's Sovereignty is truly a great comfort also in the army as Rev. Camenga wrote in the Feb. issue.

I read in the Feb. issue that there are twenty eight of the boys of our church stationed in Calif. so would you please let me know if there are any of the boys stationed in or near San Francisco or Oakland.

This is all I have to write this time. Wishing you the Lord's blessing and guidance.

Your Friend,
Cpl. Paul Van Dyken

* * * * *

Dear Sir:

The constant urging in the Beacon Lights for us service men to write has finally persuaded me to do so. Although there is not much we can say, the few words that I do write will, I hope, prove satisfactory.

The weather here is great. The past week has been an ideal week for beach

BEACON LIGHTS

picnics. People flock by the hundreds to the white and black sea beaches and enjoy the cool sea breezes and sunshine.

This place is really interesting. Maybe it's because we are so glad we are in a place so much more peaceful and civilized than where we came from. We have been at this rest camp for some time now and are becoming quite accustomed to the surroundings. It no longer seems strange to hear these people talk with their own peculiar accent, and to see the traffic running in reverse order from ours. Naturally I could write a lot more about the customs etc. but since all that might make known our location it would probably be censored.

I have received the Beacon Lights a few times and enjoy reading it very much. The last copy I received was the January issue so I am expecting another very soon.

It's chow time so I must say good-bye.

With Christian Greetings.

C. P. Kuivenhoven Sea 2/c
Navy 8040 Fleet P. O.
San Francisco, Calif.

* * * * *

Dear Friends:

I received the Beacon Lights and thought I should drop you a few lines. It is always welcomed and I enjoy reading it. There is a lot of reading material available in the army but very little of it is of a religious nature or of the kind to which we are accustomed.

Nobody but a soldier knows how he enjoys reading material that has been written by our own people.

I have been in the army 3 months now and enjoy it very much. I am going to school studying Army Administration. I can attend church every Sunday which is a real comfort to me. I miss my own church, of course, because the preaching of the Word is not what I have been used to hearing.

Since I have been here I have met quite a few different types of soldiers. We can realize then that we are few in number and can stand by God alone. Thanks for sending the Beacon Lights.

Sincerely,

Pfc. Jim Swart
Jonesboro, Arkansas
Co. D Platoon 1 Class No. 4
Enlistment Branch No. 5
Army Administration School
Arkansas State College

* * * * *

Dear. . . .

I have been receiving the Beacon Lights ever since I've been in the Army and wish to continue to receive it. Enclosed you will find my new address. I really enjoy reading it very much, and thank the Prot. Ref. Young People for sending them to me.

Sincerely yours,

Pvt. Peter Koole 36411130
Co. C 7th Trng. Bn.
Shenango Persl. Repl. Depot
Greenville, Penn. Bks. T 1334

Contribution

Dear Mr. Editor:

May I reply to Mr. Edward J. Knott whose article appeared in the April issue of Beacon Lights: with its heading, Our Doctrine? A way of life.

The brother reminds his readers of the fact, that some years ago he wrote an oration in which he cited various things which he believed constituted dangers to our christian schools. The dangers were: alliance with the public school, dishonesty, and conformity. But as time goes on, the brother is of the opinion that things become worse; for not only the school but also the church goes in the wrong direction. It is the spirit of worldliness which seems to have invaded not only the school, but even the church.

At the school where the brother is student things go wrong. Some of his classmates uphold the movies, profanity is common, and the general spirituality is low. The only criterions seem to be: How can we enjoy ourselves?

Even the church has not escaped. Knowledge of the truth and interest in the church is slight. People have other interests. The church as a vital, living factor in their lives seems to be gone. And the brother asks, what is the reason?

Where can we put the blame? And he comes to the conclusion that the church itself must assume a good share of it. For in the preaching, and otherwise, the emphasis has tended to be placed on a system of doctrine.

Now I fully agree with the writer; if the doctrine is wrong people go in the wrong direction. It is an established fact that the church as a whole is worldly-minded.

However, the brother is of the opinion that also in our own church things go wrong: for we have this in common with other churches that in the preaching, and otherwise, the emphasis has tended to be placed on a system of doctrine: and under this systemisation many of the deeper spiritual joys have been lost. It is not anymore a vital living factor in the lives of the believers.

To be sure, the brother is not opposed to doctrinal preaching, but it must be practical doctrine and not too intellectual.

Now, it is my conviction that we receive just that, namely, practical doctrinal preaching. The full rich gospel of salvation. It is not man-made, but God centered. It is not intellectually dry and dead, but living and full of action. It is preached with holy zeal and en-

thusiasm.

It is the doctrine of God in Jesus Christ, who saves to the full. It is a savor of life unto life, but also a savor of death unto death. It is a power of God unto salvation; and by the grace of God it is surely applied unto the hearts of believers.

It is not a salvation army talk or a Sunday-School lesson, or a *theological* call for nothing. It is not an offer, but the gift from the Triune God, the Alpha and the Omega, the I Am.

It is the gospel of Predestination and Reprobation: the gospel of the love of God, who in Sovereign Grace predestinated a people which should serve Him for ever and ever.

It is not a nice 20 minutes talk or a political speech: but the gospel that is preached amongst us is the Bread of Life; the only comfort in life and death for the people of God.

I feel quite confident that brother Knott finds it that way in our churches.

Let us as Protestant people live our confession, and our homes will be dwellings of spiritual joy.

Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for the space allowed me.

Mr. S. De Vries,
Grand Rapids, Mich.

Editor's Desk

Receiving letters from our Men in the Service is a source of much encouragement to the Board. These letters are also very interesting for our readers in general. A soldier stationed in California may hear how a schoolmate is faring in some far-off place across the country, and be strengthened. The folks back home read and are comforted. Everyone likes to hear from "the boys".

* * * *

However, letters from the "Home Front" are also very welcome. During this past month we received letters from three individuals, each accompanied with a liberal donation. A short letter from "A Friend" read:

"I am enclosing this small gift to be used for the Service-men's Fund. I hope to see the Beacon Lights published every month during the summer."

Seymour Beibor writes:

"I sincerely hope that the Beacon Lights will continue through the summer months. I know that our boys in the service will appreciate this very much."

Miss Geraldine Bylsma writes:

"I hope that the enclosed contribution to the Servicemen's Fund may in a very small way

help to defray the expense which is of necessity connected with a project such as this. Wishing you God's blessing on this work."

The Talitha Society of the Fuller Ave. Church has made its second contribution of \$25.00 toward our Servicemen's Fund. Wilma Pastoor, secretary of this society, wrote:

"The Talitha Society thinks it is a very good idea to have these summer issues of our magazine, for we have all found the Beacon Lights to be not only interesting, but also very inspirational, and very necessary to our spiritual life."

And from the Pella Young People's Society:

"We are enclosing a check for \$10.00 for the servicemen's fund. We hope that our paper can continue through the summer months as planned."

* * * *

Sgt. and Mrs. Wm. Doezema dropped us a card this past week, saying:

"We enjoy every issue of the Beacon Lights and think those responsible for its publication are to be commended for keeping up the work at home."

Sgt. and Mrs. Doezema, who are both formerly from Grand Rapids, are now living at Taft, California, and very recently their home has

been made even happier with the birth of a baby girl. Congratulations.

* * * *

COMPARE

In May, 1942—Beacon Lights was mailed out to 29 men in the service. In May, 1943—Beacon Lights has on its mailing list 180 servicemen. BE SURE to send in the names of the boys as soon as they leave for service. And also send us every change of address. Keep us posted throughout the summer months.

* * * *

Watch for your next issue which will appear on June 20 and the following issue on August 20. These two additional summer issues will be mailed to all our readers free of charge. There is some talk about making Beacon Lights a 12-month Magazine. That all depends!

* * * *

We have received the following donations:—

Pvt. Henry Veltman.....	\$1.25
Pvt. John Veltman.....	1.25
Seymour Beiboer, (G. R.).....	3.00
A (Grand Rapids) donator.....	2.00
Miss Geraldine Bylsma (G. R.).....	5.00
Talitha Society, Fuller Ave.....	25.00
Pella Young People's Society.....	10.00

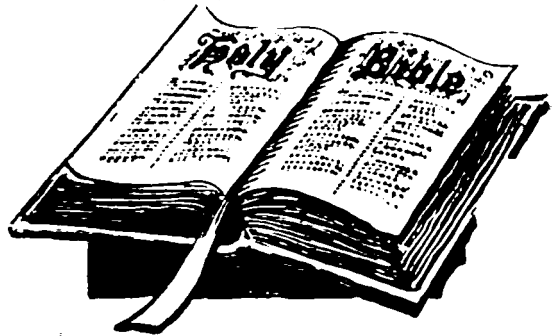
(Mail all donations to Miss A. Reitsma, 706 Franklin, S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich.)

BIBLE

OUTLINES

By the Rev. P. De Boer

Holland, Mich.



Outline XXX
**MANASSEH'S WICKEDNESS
AND REPENTANCE**
2nd week of May

II Chron. 33:11-13. — Wherefore the Lord brought upon them the captains of the host of the king of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the thorns and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon. And when he was in affliction, he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, And prayed unto him: and he was intreated of him, and heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom. Then Manasseh knew that the Lord he was God.

“Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth”. Thus Solomon the wise king enjoins youth. The vitality, enthusiasm and zeal of youth ought to be employed to the glory of God. Because of the appeal and power of sin youth may easily be tempted to stray. Youth is an important period of life, it is the time life's choices are made

—the choices which in after-life we merely live out. What is lost in youth cannot easily be regained, what is done cannot easily be undone. A wasted youth even though conversion later takes place, leaves its stamp upon one's after life. The consequences of youth's deeds follow us throughout life, e.g. an evil marriage in youth means that we will be burdened with its consequences.

The illustration of Manasseh seems to illustrate very pointedly the above assertion. It is partly with this in view that we treat of Manasseh's wickedness and his repentance.

HIS GREAT WICKEDNESS

The Bible both in the book of Kings (II Kings 21:1-18) and in the book of Chronicles (II Chron. 33) gives a description of Manasseh and his acts that declare him to have been a very wicked king during the large part of his reign. Although only twelve years old when he ascended Judah's throne, he seems at once to have departed

from the good ways of his father Hezekiah and to have gone into ways of sin. Absolutely nothing good is said of him. The whole picture of his reign from its very beginning to his conversion (which seems to have been late in his life) is that of a very godless king.

So godless was he that Scripture says, "He did that which was evil in the sight of the Lord, like unto the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord had cast out before the children of Israel." This description is most telling. It means his wickedness exceeded that of the kings of the northern kingdom who walked "in the sin of Jeroboam who made Israel to sin" (referring to the worship of the golden calves at Bethel and Dan), it exceeded that of the kings of Israel and those of his predecessors in Judah who walked in the ways of Ahab. His wickedness only compares with the sin of the heathen who inhabited Canaan before the children of Israel: in other words, it was sin in its full measure.

The Bible informs us wherein this great wickedness consisted. It tells us: a. That he rebuilt the high places Hezekiah had broken down and reared up altars for Baalim, and rebuilt the groves. b. He also introduced the worship of the host of heaven, perhaps star-worship. c. What no king before him had dared to do, he did: he built altars for the host of heaven in the very

temple of God itself. d. Besides, he caused his children to pass thru the fire (Moloch worship), which means that he sacrificed some of his children to Moloch. e. Further, he observed times, enchantments and all sorts of witchcraft, against which God has so emphatically warned Israel. f. Yes, he even set up a carved image, an idol, in the house of God. g. Add to this that the book of Kings says that he filled Jerusalem with the blood of the saints, from one end to another. Tradition says Isaiah was sawn asunder by this king. What an array of godlessness!

Neither can any excuse be offered for this wickedness. First of all, Manasseh must have known the way of God very well. Hezekiah had opposed all idolatry and sought the Lord with all his heart. Manasseh deliberately changed the religious policies of Judah's royal house. When he became king everything was in his favor to fear God and continue the good work of his God-fearing father. It would have been only deliberate wickedness that motivated Manasseh to turn Judah to sin. Secondly, vs. 10 and 18 of II Chron. 33 clearly state that Manasseh was repeatedly warned by the prophets of God. These warnings left him the more without excuse. The accusing prophets he silenced with execution. From all this it is evident that knowledge is not virtue, and that

it is not enough to know the way. One must desire it and love it, which Manasseh did not.

HIS SINCERE REPENTANCE

Manasseh was surely an elect child of God, a vessel of mercy, dained unto life. We gather this from the fact that God brought Manasseh to repentance. God brings his own to repentance in the day of His power. The Lord brought this wicked king to his knees. However, it was a hard and bitter way in which the Lord led him. In cases of gross wickedness, in cases where covenant children depart from the Lord and walk in great sin, it is usually along a hard and difficult way that they are brought to repentance. God brought this man in fetters to Babylon. Why the Assyrian king came against him and led him away at this time is hard to say, but God's purpose is quite evident. Neither do we know how long this king was in captivity, whether for a few months or even years, but we do know that in captivity Manasseh came to himself and humbled himself deeply before his God.

That Manasseh's repentance was sincere. I take it, is evident from the following: 1. He humbled himself deeply before the God of his fathers. In captivity his early training (God of *his fathers*) lived before his mind as never before and took on a new meaning. He

humbled himself *before his God*. There was sorrow after God, and such sorrow is true and lasting repentance. 2. His prayer shows sincere repentance. True repentance issues in prayer, it seeks God, implores His mercy and asks forgiveness. Manasseh thus prayed "for God was intreated of him". God does not hear the prayer of the wicked and unrepentant. 3. His after-life proves it. True repentance implies a change of heart and life, it brings forth fruits of gratitude and newness of life. Manasseh's after-life as king in Jerusalem shows an earnest attempt to undo what he had done and to do what was pleasing in God's eyes. Read vss. 15-17.

ITS PERMANENT SIGNIFICANCE

There is, first of all, a profound warning here. A warning to seek God early. The lesson is not at all, as some would imply, that everyone must experience such a shocking conversion as Manasseh experienced. David did not, Timothy did not. Neither is it by any means ideal. To grow up from childhood in the fear of God is the norm in the sphere of the covenant, and the ideal. The case of Manasseh is a warning to seek God early. His way was far from desirable. It was a terrible way in which he was brought to his knees. And it is quite evident that what Manasseh had so long done evilly

he was unable after his conversion to undo and mend. His son Amon was a wicked king from the outset, and was very likely brought up before Manasseh's conversion. When Manasseh was converted it was too late to train his children in the right way. Besides, Judah had been led on the wrong way so far, that Manasseh's few remaining years as king could not right what had been done. As a matter of fact the Scripture lets the emphasis fall upon the wickedness of his reign—the large part of his life had been amiss. Manasseh's helplessness to undo what he had so deliberately done must have been a source of deep sorrow and grief for him. But isn't this often the case with those who lead lives of forthright wickedness for a long time? The evil they have done brings consequences that remain to the end. What a warning to seek God early.

However, there is here also a glorious testimony to God's great grace. Certainly God's grace is able to change the most wicked. And he does. He does it in grace, and grace alone. By grace Manasseh was saved, not of works.

QUESTIONS: How old was Manasseh when he became king? Does his youth excuse his wickedness? Mention various evils of which Scripture says Manasseh was guilty? Does repentance mean that the consequences of former sins do

not follow in later life? Prove that Manasseh's conversion was sincere and true repentance?

Outline XXXI
THE CONVERSION OF LYDIA
3rd week of May

Acts 16: 14, 15. — And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul.

And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

“The Lord our God builds up His church. He seeks her wandering sons.” Thus one of our Psalter numbers so beautifully says, and thus it is indeed. This fact receives emphasis also in the book of Acts, for Luke there emphasizes what Christ from heaven continued to do for His church and in His church through His servants the apostles and by His Spirit. It is the Son of God who builds up His Church and gathers her sons and daughters.

Paul must have realized this very well. For, first of all, while it had been his intention to visit the churches established on his first journey in Asia Minor and seek to

strengthen them by further labors in the vicinity of those churches, the Lord did not allow it. When Paul assayed to go into Bythnia, the Spirit forbade it. Finally Paul and his company came to Troas on the sea, and everywhere the Spirit had made it known to Paul that he might not labor there. Yet Paul had intended to. Now he had come to the coast of Asia Minor, and was at a loss what to do. Then the Lord sent him the vision of the Macedonian man with the injunction, "Come over into Macedonia and help us". Paul correctly understood that God called him to cross the sea and invade the continent of Europe with the gospel of Christ. While he had intended to labor closer at home, God wanted him to go farther away. It was in Europe that the Lord wanted Paul to labor—man proposes, but God disposes. And Paul went.

Furthermore, that the Lord builds up His church and seeks His wandering sons, is made clear by the conversion, first of Lydia and later of the jailor, the two families that became the nucleus of the strong church at Philippi, the first Christian church in Europe.

It is Lydia's conversion that interests us in this outline.

THE CHARACTER OF HER CONVERSION

It was Paul's adopted custom

always to begin his labors among the Jews first, and so in this instance he had gone to the river-side where the few Jews of that city were gathered. It seems there were not enough Jews in this colonial city to possess a synagogue, for the gathering was held here at the riverside. Paul only found a group of women gathered there, and he sat down in their midst and informally reasoned with them preaching Jesus the Christ. This seemingly unimportant little gathering was the most important meeting ever held in Europe, for it was the beginning of the Christian church there.

Among these women was a certain Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God. This latter clause, "which worshipped God" means that she was a proselyte, i. e. a heathen that had embraced the fear of God. She hailed from Thyatira, a city of Asia Minor, which was the center of the cloth dyeing industry. A seller of purple she was, comparable to a seller of rich fur garments in our day. Undoubtedly a widow making her own living, and apparently a successful business woman since she constrained Paul and his company to live off her hospitality as long as they labored in Philippi. Had she been a poor woman the apostle and his company certainly would not have burdened her by accept-

ing her hospitality.

This woman, this woman alone, was converted under the preaching of Paul that day.

How must we view her conversion? What kind of a conversion was it? We can speak of temporary faith, and apparent conversion, and of a genuine conversion in a narrower or in a broader sense. In a broader sense it includes the process of sanctification that continues all our life, while in the narrower sense it refers to the breaking through of the new life into more or less clear consciousness for the first time. But we may also speak of conversion from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Such a conversion is not found today. During the days of Christ's sojourn on earth and immediately after, there were God-fearing Jews who lived as though the Christ had not yet come. They feared God as in the Old Testament, without knowing that the promise of God had been fulfilled. At the time of Pentecost many of such Jews became converted to the Christ and from the Old Testament to the New Testament fulness. It is undoubtedly in the latter sense that Lydia's conversion must be construed. The text mentions that she worshipped God prior to her conversion, this means she was a proselyte and feared God without yet knowing the Christ prior to Paul's preaching. That day

she embraced Jesus as the promised Messiah, and so vs. 15 speaks of "being faithful to the Lord," i. e. to the Christ.

THE MANNER OF HER CONVERSION

Notice, "whose heart the Lord opened." In these words Luke ascribes all the glory to God. He does not say, "Paul convinced her," or even simply, "she believed," but specifically, "whose heart the Lord opened." Luke sees the Christ gathering the sons and daughters of his church.

Note the following: a. The Lord opened her *heart*, the heart from which are the spiritual issues of life. b. He *opened* her heart, which implies that it was closed and needed as the word suggests, to be "cracked open." c. The *Lord* did it. i. e. the Christ. d. Opened *her* heart, i. e. not of all but hers, free sovereign grace.

Perhaps you ask, but if Lydia really feared God as an Old Testament believer prior to her conversion here, was not her heart already opened? The answer must be a simple yes. But as far as the fulfillment of the gospel is concerned, that Jesus is the Christ, her heart needed to be opened to it. After all, God must always every time anew open our hearts to receive the Word that is preached.

The effect of this inner spirit-

ual operation was "that she attended to the things Paul spake." This does not mean that God opened Lydia's heart, and now Lydia on her part did not resist it and set this operation at naught. That is Arminianism. It means that due to those operations she willingly, by reason of them listened and received the Word of the Christ spoken by Paul. Whoever heeds the Word of God does so because of the inner saving operations of the spirit of the Risen Lord.

SIGNIFICANCE

What was the significance of this conversion?

For Lydia, that she and her household received the sign and seal of baptism, and salvation in all its New Testament glory came to her and her house.

For Paul, that God established his church in Europe. It is true it was as yet only one family, but soon the second family (the jailer and his household) were added. Paul rejoiced in the Lord, for the Lord had given him an open door.

Questions: Who was Lydia? How did Paul happen to go to Europe? What does it mean that Lydia "worshipped God?" What does Arminianism teach as to man's conversion? What is the sound Reformed view? Seeing only one woman was converted, was Paul's work worthwhile that day?

Outline XXXII REDEEMING THE TIME 4th Week of May

Eph. 5:15, 16—See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil.

REDEEM—WHAT?

This passage speaks of redeeming the time. We are children of time, hemmed in on every side by time, and each fleeting moment brings its opportunity to utilize it to the highest possible end. The word used here for time is translated in Gal. 6:10 "opportunity," and it is from that viewpoint that the apostle views time. Time carries us all on to the shores of eternity, but in the meantime it gives us opportunities of church attendance, catechism attendance, Bible reading, letting our light shine, etc.

Those opportunities must be *redeemed*, i. e. bought out, made full use of, used to the best possible advantage. In the days of childhood and youth there are opportunities to build for true manhood and we must not let them slip by. On the Sabbath as long as we are at home we have the opportunity of using the means of grace, and we must take full advantage of them. When society meets, there is an opportunity to study God's

Word and to profit thereby.

REDEEMED—HOW?

How must we redeem the time? Paul answers, Walk circumspectly. Our walk comprises our entire life in relation to God's commandments. It includes our inner life of thoughts and aspirations, our external deportment and behavior. It includes our speech and conduct, our seeing and hearing: in short, all our life. This must all be lived as before God's face. Circumspectly means: exactly, carefully, strictly. We must not stumble along, be dragged along, but walk carefully, filling our allotted time as God would have us, seeking the things above.

Therefore the apostle also adds, "not as fools' but as wise." Wisdom is the ability to seek the highest end and pursue the best possible ways and means to that end. The business man, e. g., organizes his shop the best he knows how to attain success. The farmer sows when it is time, where the seed will grow best, cultivates it when it is best, harvests at the right time, and knows when to sell. The fool always does the wrong thing, and labors at the

wrong time. Spiritual wisdom is from above, and takes God and eternity into account, and utilizes the opportunities of life with God in view. It is to such spiritual wisdom that the apostle exhorts us. We are so often foolish, wasting precious moments and opportunities. The foolish man uses his time foolishly, in the service of sin to his own destruction: the believer is only too often yet so foolish—he ought to be wise.

REDEEM—WHY?

"The days are evil." That could be taken to mean that the best of this life is sorrow and trouble. The meaning, however, is a bit other. The apostle suggests that the days are spiritually evil, i. e. the world in which we move from day to day is filled with bitter enemies that would destroy our soul, the days are filled with temptations. How true that is today! How well some of you realize it!

You must be armed, armed to the teeth. Redeem the time. Walk circumspectly, and make the best possible use of your opportunities and time. Serve God, put on the whole armor of God that you may stand. Don't be caught off guard.

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SERVICE MEN!! — WRITE US A LETTER!!