

BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH



YEHOVAH IS OUR LIGHT AND OUR SALVATION

AUGUST - 1947

BEACON LIGHTS

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For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOLUME VII

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NUMBER 10

SPEAK - UP

By REV. S. CAMMENGA — Grand Rapids, Mich.

The imperative expression which constitutes the title of this article is a very common one. Yet, in connection with the purpose we have in mind for writing these lines, it is a very important and necessary one. For we would emphasize that the great need among Christians today is that there be more exercise of the prophetic office, which together with that of priest and king, has been given us by God to fulfill.

It is apparent that man is inclined to "take it easy", even from his earliest childhood. How often is not the teacher in school or catechism engaged in reminding the pupils to "sit up" when slumped down in their seats? How often must he not call their attention to "stand up" when reciting, etc.

It seems apparent, too, that when we have attained to the age when we may be called "young people", that even then we must constantly be reminded to "look up", to, as our title suggests, "SPEAK UP!" Must we be reminded to do this because we are lazy? In very few cases this is the reason. Is it be-

cause we are afraid? We question that reason very much since youth is characterized by fearlessness and intrepidity. What then may be the cause? We doubt we are saying too much when we maintain that the chief reason why Christians generally, why Christian youth today, fails to "speak up" is because of the lack of interest in THINGS WORTH SPEAKING ABOUT. By no means do we maintain that Christian youth doesn't speak. If only the subject of their conversation is business and industry, if it is with regard to sports and recreation youth today is by no means silent. But, should that be the subject of vigorous discussions and conversation? We know better. And the only thing we can do about this situation is that we heed the friendly reproof embodied in our topic, "SPEAK UP".

What shall we speak about, Youth? We need not search far for the answer. We are Christian youth. We are partakers of Christ and of His blessed anointing. If we then are of Christ, our speech will be characterized, as was His,

by speaking about God, His kingdom, His Word—all of Him. In Is. 62 the watchmen are commanded to speak of the Lord. Christ admonishes the healed man to "tell how great things the Lord hath done for thee." Paul, in his admonitions to the youthful Timothy, warns him to be unashamed of the testimony of our Lord.

This does not mean that the name of God must be used by us in almost every sentence or every other sentence we utter. But this does mean that we speak in connection with all the subjects of our conversation with the color of the beauty of our Lord God gracing our speech.

Shall we try that once, even when we attend the Young People's Convention this month? If you came from afar, you can speak of the wonderful time you had enjoying the scenery new to your youthful eye. You can converse about your job in the stuffy office or shop there in yonder city, or of your labors on the farm producing the food necessary for human existence. You can speak of your friends and loved ones. And in all you can, no, you **MUST** season your speech with the salt of the grace of God.

Finally, you can, as Peter tells the church of the dispensation, and in them us, "be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope

that is in you." In YOU, Christian youth, there is a hope. Do you ever think of what that really means to you? There is the hope that, while now you must struggle to live not only according to some but all the commandments of God, the future that awaits you promises the life with God in Christ wherein our service of Him will be a perfect service. I would express the truth even more strongly. In you, **PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH**, there is a hope. It is that hope of glory, yet it is such a strong hope, for it rests upon a God of Whom you have been taught from childhood, that He is sovereign, that He alone gives the victory, that it is He that is the author and finisher of your salvation. Speak up about it then, it indeed is worth while. It alone is God-glorifying.

Now the beauty of this calling of speaking up and witnessing for Christ is that one need never be in doubt as to when he must speak. He must do so **ALWAYS**. This, of course, does not mean that the Christian youth in his endeavor to glorify his Lord by his speech does not use tact and discretion when he carries on a conversation. Solomon, the wise king, spoke of the sweetness of a word spoken in season. There are certainly times and occasions in the life of Christian youth when he must guard lest in his speech he cast goodly pearls

before swine. It is even possible that his willingness and enthusiasm to speak concerning things in the light of God and His Word is motivated by sinful pride by which he would show others what really he knows and dare tell someone off. He must be wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove.

The home is usually the first, and undoubtedly the best place for Christian youth to "speak up". This also Jesus admonished the man whom He healed, "Go home, and tell thy friends. . . ."

Neither must the Christian youth forget that he has a very important place to fill in the sphere of the church in catechism and society gatherings. In the not too distant future our societies will again commence. Are you going to "speak up"? You are in the measure that you evaluate properly the spiritual things. These things become important to you in the measure that you study and prepare yourself beforehand. Not all of us will take part even much, yet we should strive to not let our Bible discussions take place among a few in the society. And to speak is not difficult. You have no trouble whatsoever speaking about natural special events that happen. You should hear the people spontaneously speak of the slight earthquake we experienced last Saturday evening. It was no effort at all. And why? It was unusual,

important. Do so also with things spiritual.

Don't forget either the part you take in singing in the public worship on Sunday and elsewhere. What a glorious opportunity to speak when we may sing the songs of Zion. How worthwhile they are!

Thus it should be plain that wherever we are, our calling never is discontinued. It remains. Fulfill it then.

How about speaking up then, as is our calling? And don't forget to listen also to worthwhile speech. This is more often easier said than done. When the radio conveys foolish and worth-nothing speech and song to us we have but to turn the dial or the contact switch if we find no better. This can hardly be done when someone is speaking to you. Yet, those speaking to us should be able to detect by our interest in their words whether or not their speak-efforts please us.

So, Christian, Protestant Reformed Youth, speak up. Do so at the Convention, in your societies—wherever you are. But when you speak, be sure it's worth listening to. It will be when it is patterned after the Word of God in Christ.



EDITORIAL

Convention Action or Inaction

By MRS. L. KREGEL — Grand Rapids, Mich.

Once again it is August, the convention month for our Protestant Reformed young people. Our thoughts turn to the gay, happy times we shall have with our old and new friends, to the pleasant hours we shall spend, singing the beloved psalms and hymns, listening to good Christian entertainment, and enjoying the company of fellow-Christians. It is well that we think on these things, for God's children are not supposed to go around with long faces, and it is to events like this that we should look forward with joyful anticipation.

And yet, even a get-together like our convention has its serious moments, its moments for deep thought, and careful consideration. And it is to one such occasion that I would like to turn the attention especially of you who are the delegates.

When the Protestant Reformed Young People's Federation holds a convention, it does so not only for the purpose of bringing our young people together for a few days, but also in order to enact new decisions.

These decisions are to be used to further the cause and purpose of the Federation and are for the good of our young people as a whole. Many of them are to be applied during the coming fall and winter season, when our societies once again meet, and when there is no opportunity to refer any of these important questions to such a large representation of our churches. Matters of this nature are not to be passed over lightly, as if they must be hurriedly agreed upon, in order to get on with the less boring affairs such as the festivities.

At our past conventions, this has often been the case. A motion is made and seconded, and then it is passed with little or no discussion, except by one or two delegates—usually the same one or two. Sometimes the delegates will vote on the measure without even realizing what they are voting for, and certainly without giving it any consideration.

At the coming convention, various questions will arise, questions that are vital as far as the Federa-

tion is concerned. There are problems such as these: Should we revise the constitution of the Federation, and if so, how? Should the price of Beacon Lights be raised, in view of the rising costs of printing the magazine? Should we have

more mass meetings during the coming year?

The answers to these questions will affect every one of us. Have we not the right then, to demand that our delegates give a little more thought to them?

— P O E M —

By MRS. A. POORTENGA — Lansing, Ill.

Reading an article in the Beacon Lights a few weeks back
I discovered everything in it, but one thing it lacked:
I could feel pride, hatred, yes, even rejoicing.
Sorrow, to be sure, they were not voicing.

'Tis love they lack for their brethren in the Lord,
Thou shalt not hate, neither seek vengeance saith the Word of God;
They boldly say and write, time and again,
That we were the ones, that went out from them.

Forgetting that some they put out, to others left no choice,
And then they get together, and talk and rejoice;
They profess to be people of God: I sure pray they are,
But then to say boldly, we are not one of them, is going a bit too far.

Of course when they meet you and say how do you do,
You'd surely think they meant it all to be true:
But I say if they loved us as the Lord wants them to,
They couldn't talk and write as they always do.

They say they were blessed by a minister, who lies we say,
So if that's the case no wonder they are this way:
Now that he is gone you would think they'd know better,
Than to still believe him if not by word then by letter.

Now we ask of the Lord to guide us each day,
That for these brethren we always may pray:
Not speaking or boasting of ourselves or each other,
But thru our Lord Jesus Christ may love one another,
And hoping and praying though they have us wronged,
They may meet us in heaven among'st the great throng.

Fellowship In Christ

By CARL REITSMA — Grand Rapids, Mich.

"Fellowship in Christ"—that is the theme of this year's Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. Fellowship in itself is a subject which is of special interest to youth. But this is not enough. We are a particular type of young people and thus the theme*of our convention must also be of a particular type. Therefore, we have specified the medium and the basis of our fellowship, Christ. As your representatives, the convention committee has attempted to center all the activities around the complete theme, "Fellowship", yes, "Fellowship in Christ".

So that the latter portion of the theme may not be forgotten we have not provided merely periods of entertainment of indistinctive recreation. On the contrary, our aim has been the growth and edification of Protestant Reformed Youth in order that we may through communion with our God be drawn closer to Him. We feel that our conventions should have a spiritual tenor. Your committee has tried to attain this. Its final realization, however, still depends upon you!

While visiting one of the convention committee meetings, Mr. E. J. Knott, President of the Federation, made this remark which I

think should aid us in clarifying our conception of our Young People's Convention. Said he, "Delegates from Manhattan, Oskaloosa, Pella, and from many of our other churches do not come to Grand Rapids to go to outings, to go swimming, or to be amused. This they could do at home. They desire to be edified. If their desire is not fulfilled our convention will have been a failure." Well said.

Tuesday will be highlighted by the Inspirational Mass Meeting. At every previous convention Rev. H. Hoeksema has delivered the inspirational address. We will miss his presence this year, but with joy do we recognize his speedy recovery. We hope that if the Lord may continue to give him strength, his name may reappear on the program next year, and that he may fill that place which has for so long been his alone. Although Rev. H. De Wolf is really supposed to be vacationing, he has agreed to interrupt his vacation to be with us as our speaker at this opening meeting. Every one is invited to attend this meeting which will be held in the Fuller Church auditorium Tuesday evening. An excellent program has been prepared.

Wednesday morning our business meeting will be held. If all busi-

ness cannot be taken care of at this time, the remainder will be considered Thursday morning. Don't miss this meeting! Much important business including the revision of the Federation Constitution will be treated.

Wednesday afternoon and evening will be spent at Townsend Park. See Convention schedule for further details.

Thursday will be a big day. At 8:00 A.M. pancakes will be served in the church basement. Breakfast will be followed by a business meeting if necessary. Next, Rev. B. Kok will introduce the subject: "Fellowship and our Entertainments", which will be supplement-

ed by a discussion of this very timely subject.

The climax to the convention will be, of course, the convention banquet which will begin at 6:30 P.M. Thursday evening in the church basement. Rev. L. Vermeer, our afterdinner speaker, has chosen the subject, "Fellowship and our Friends".

These, in brief, are the plans for our 7th Annual Convention. Like them? The committee is looking forward to executing them. We hope you are looking forward to enjoying these Convention Days with us, and that you may really experience "Fellowship in Christ".

You're Invited

Protestant Reformed

Young Peoples

Convention

August 19-20-21



Christian

Living. . .



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

Not To The Flesh.

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die." Rom. 8:12, 13a. Once again I wish to base my remarks on these words of the apostle Paul, so directly connected with our subject of Christian living. Before we proceed, will you read them once again, carefully and prayerfully? The Word of God itself is so much more powerful and effective than anything man may say about it. It always is. Remember this, covenant friends, and read your Bible much.

In our previous discussion we touched on these elements: *that* we owe; *why* we owe; *what* we owe, namely, our entire lives; and, briefly, *to whom* we owe. We concluded by saying that we are debtors either to "the flesh" or to "the Spirit". There are no other alternatives, no other choice. Ethically there are no other masters, no other spiritual principles, than these two.

Notice, however, that even so we

have no choice, for most emphatically and unequivocally the apostle eliminates the one, when he says, "We are debtors *NOT to the flesh.*" They felt the force of it. Originally, they, too, had known no other master, no other principle, no other standard than the flesh. Accordingly they had lived in constant sin, revelry, lasciviousness, complete obedience to the lusts of the flesh. Now they were indeed saved, justified by faith, born again, sanctified unto a new and holy life, received into the covenant of God. Nevertheless, vestiges of that former servitude remained, left-overs from that previous life after the flesh. Therefore Paul speaks as he does: "ye are debtors, *not to the flesh.*"

* * *

From all this it is not difficult to see just what is our calling as Christians. From the fact that "we are debtors, not to the flesh" follows inexorably that "*we are debtors, not to live after the flesh.*" Negatively, therefore, Christian

living is a living NOT AFTER THE FLESH.

What this implies is readily seen. "The flesh", the old sinful nature, the whole of man as he stands under the influence and dominion of sin. "After" means: according to, in harmony with, according to the rule of, after the pattern or standard of. Man's "life" is man's existence, within and without. It embraces all the activities of the heart and soul and mind and will, man's thoughts and desires and motives and affections, his seeing and hearing and speaking and singing, the whole of his existence in the home and on the street, in church and in catechism, at work and in school, anywhere, everywhere, always.

"Living after the flesh" therefore, means that in this whole of our existence we make the sinful flesh, the old man, our pattern and standard. That sinful flesh is all we live and labor for. Nothing else matters. The only question in life is: how can we please the flesh, "the old man". From morning until night we have nothing else in mind. Everything, all our thinking and willing, all our seeing and hearing and speaking and singing, all our likes and dislikes, our plans and aspirations, in fact, our entire lives, from every point of view, even our church and catechetical life, centers around the "old man", yourself as you crave

and serve sin and the world. The all-determining question is: what is the pleasure of the flesh? How can we get the most out of *this* life? "Living after the flesh" is quite the same as "minding the things of the flesh", another phrase used in this same connection. The "things of the flesh" are those things that are conceived and produced by and for the flesh and that for that reason appeal to the flesh. They include, not only the things that are positively evil, but also the natural and earthly things in general, like riches, pleasures, sports, money, clothing luxuries, cars, houses, jobs, looks, etc. "To mind" these things implies, that we set our entire hearts on them, that all our time and attention is devoted to them, that we seek and cherish them and find it impossible to interest ourselves in anything else such as things spiritual and eternal.

That, my friends, is "living after the flesh". That, says Paul, is precisely what your obligation is *not*.

And yet, that is exactly what we do by nature: still do, even as children of God. Yes, indeed, that is abundant reason for the apostle to speak to us in this manner. Also in the church there is altogether too much of this "living after the flesh". That applies to our young people, too. In fact, not one of us should imagine that we should

be excluded. Too often we live as though we owed our lives to sin and the flesh, and as though we were in this world for no other reason than to have a good time and seek the satisfaction of the flesh. In our practical lives we too often make the flesh the norm of our living. Oh yes, if we have a little time or money left, and if it does not interfere with our selfish, carnal interests, we may do something for the kingdom of God too. We also go to catechism and to church once or twice each Sunday. But really, it's the flesh that concerns us. Entirely too much of our time and effort is spent on the things of the flesh, thinking what the flesh wants us to think, going where the flesh wants us to go, singing what the flesh wants us to sing, seeking the things of the earth, sport, amusement, clothes, cars, houses, etc. If only we would seek the things of God as we seek those things. We arise in the morning with those things in mind and heart; all the live-long day we pursue them more or less; when we retire at night they are still with us. Now these things are not wrong in themselves. That is not the trouble. Amusements and sports as such are not necessarily evil. We may be mindful of our looks and wearing apparel. We may possess and enjoy our homes and cars. But, these are good only as means to an end. The moment we

make of any of these things an end in itself, we sin. And that is precisely what we do a great share of the time.

And what about the spiritual things, the kingdom of God, the Word of God, reading, church, Christian conversation, prayer? Well, they are of secondary importance. We have no time for them, no desire, no money. We have no time to study our catechism lesson; no time to read edifying literature like the Standard Bearer and Beacon Lights. We need our time for other things. We can't afford them either. We need our money for other things, cars, houses, clothes, and we may add: sports, bowling, smokes, skating, basketball and football games, malted-milks, gas, oil, etc. Paul says: we may not live that way! We are debtors, *NOT to live after the flesh.*

* * *

The apostle adds a most earnest warning: "For if we live after the flesh, ye shall die."

That is plain language. The reward of such living is death, eternal desolation. And remember, this is an inexorable law. It is not true that we can live after the flesh and be saved, rejoice in the hope of everlasting life, even though we are called covenant children. But, you say, a child of God cannot die. That's true, but they that truly live after the flesh are not children

of God. The latter are principally delivered from this bondage of corruption. Yet, even God's children, in the measure they still make too much of this present world, will experience in their consciousness the truth of this inexorable law: they that live after the flesh SHALL DIE. Instead of joy and blessed assurance, doubt and confusion will be their spiritual experience.

In as far, therefore, as we still

walk in this evil way and "live after the flesh", let us repent and turn to the living God.

Grand Rapids Subscribers!!!

Inasmuch as we now have a new Associate Business Manager, please send your subscription dues to:

Miss Josie Lanting
354 Diamond Ave., S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan.

G O D ' S H O U S E

By MRS. WM. DOEZEMA — Grand Rapids, Mich.

Thy courts of worship I've entered today
To give to Thy name a portion of praise,
To take from Thy hand a measure of grace,
To pray for Thy guidance the length of my days.

Thou gavest me comfort and shelter alone,
Others cared not for my life or my lot,
Thou didst feed me with bread which perisheth not,
And hast shown me the way to heavenly home.

My path was in darkness, my load hard to bear,
My eyes Thou did'st lift to see Jesus, my God.
My heart was drawn close to Thy beauty most fair,
My feet moved in light where once blindness they trod.

O, dwelling of peace. O house of the Lord,
May Thy holy Occupant always be mine,
May I always in reverence to Him praise accord,
May Thy courts stand secure thru the ages of time!

Attention Young People!

The following program has been scheduled for the Young People's Convention, to be held at Grand Rapids, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, August 19, 20, 21.

TUESDAY — AUGUST 19

- 1:00 Registration and lodging assignment.
- 6:00 Supper at places of lodging.
- 8:00 Inspirational Mass meeting in First Church.

WEDNESDAY — AUGUST 20

- 9:00 Business meeting at church.
- 11:00 Busses leave for Townsend Park.
- 12:00 Lunch.
- 1:00 Activities.
- 6:30 Supper.
- 7:45 Hymn Sing.
- 10:00 Busses leave for Church.

THURSDAY — AUGUST 21

- 8:00 Pancake breakfast at church.
- 9:30 Business meeting.
- 12:00 Lunch at places of lodging.
- 6:30 Banquet at First Church.

List of Churches Planning To Be Represented are:

First Church	Kalamazoo, Michigan
Second Church	Oak Lawn, Illinois
Creston	South Holland, Illinois
Fourth Church	Oskaloose, Iowa
Holland, Michigan	Pella, Iowa
Hope, Michigan	Manhattan, Montana
Hudsonville, Michigan	

Up From The Ranks

BY REV. M. SCHIPPER — SOUTH HOLLAND, ILL.

Until a short while ago, the Young People's Society of South Holland was led by the minister of the church who was and still is its president. We could say that as that leadership was, so was the caliber of the meetings, and to a certain extent also of the society.

This arrangement was nice so long as the president did his work well, and the members needed the guidance of a more experienced leader.

But there was something wrong with this set-up that became very evident as time went on. The president noticed that his young people were developing mentally and spiritually. They began to assert themselves. Thru debating and speeches and other agenda on the program, they began to speak more freely and give expression to their own thoughts. The president noticed that gradually his young people were becoming leaders.

And why should this marked progress be impeded with the cut and dried policy that the minister should be president? Why should not especially the young men be given an opportunity to develop still more in the art of leadership? Are they not the future leaders of

the church? Will they not presently fill the places of their fathers in the seat of office-bearers? Will perhaps some of them not be future ministers of our churches?

These questions prompted the president to suggest that the young people be given an occasional turn at presiding. So up from the ranks of those who were being led, our young people are promoting themselves to the enviable position of leaders.

We thought the idea was good enough to mention and pass on to other societies. And rest assured that if the idea is pressed into action, it remains not only an idea, but it works!

— GIFTS —

FOR BEACON LIGHTS

Talitha Society (Fuller Ave.)\$25.00
Adult Bible Class (Grand Haven)	5.00
Young People's Society (Redlands)	10.00

Note:—Gifts and donations are appreciated very much. Send yours to Miss Winifred Dykema, 354 Diamond Ave. S.E. Grand Rapids 6, Michigan.

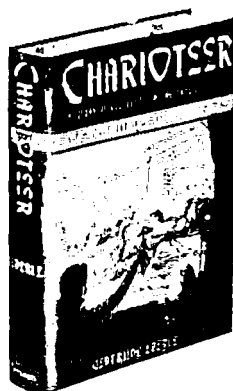
CHARIOTEER

A Story of Old Egypt in the Days of Joseph

By GERTRUDE EBERLE

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Grand Rapids, Michigan



"Ah, 'tis the vengeance of Ishtar," Egiba exclaimed. "He was cut down by a bolt from the sky." The merchantmen nodded and jabbered.

Raanah was no less amazed than the others. He had not touched the man. He glanced about, but could see nothing unusual. Although armed, the slaves were standing by passively. Raanah looked at his hands, suspecting them of some mesmeric power, then, by way of experiment, reached out toward the fallen man.

But the Ammonite was only partially stunned. He had heard Egiba's remark about the vengeance of Ishtar. He, too, believed in the chicanery of gods, so when Raanah made a second pass at him he crouched back. Seeing his fear, Raanah pressed his advantage and made a fierce lunge at him. With a frightened yell the man rolled over like a ball, then bounded to his feet and ran. The other herdsmen, catching his panic, followed him. They could stand up to the brawn of any man, but not against a tricky god.

Raanah took after them, whooping with

delight, hurling stones and sending the dogs after them to increase their speed.

When he returned, elated and breathless, the merchantmen were still laughing over the encounter and discussing the astounding intervention of Ishtar. After a night of feasting no one cared for breakfast, so the slaves broke camp, for it was desirable to get away quickly.

Although elated over his victory, a puzzled expression lurked in Raanah's eyes. He looked at his hands again, but could see nothing unusual about them. Deep in thought, he sauntered over to Uruk. He glanced about furtively. No one was looking his way. He raised both hands and made a pass at Uruk, just as he had done at the Ammonite. The donkey flopped one long ear at him, but paid no further attention. Raanah made another pass at him, a fiercer one, curling his fingers and screwing up his face.

Uruk switched his tail a couple of times but was otherwise so stolidly unmoved that he did not even blink an eye.

Then Accid-Adab called, and Raanah was obliged to give up his experiment,

but a happy thought struck him. Nothing had happened to Uruk when he tried to befuddle him because the donkey had not menaced him. Only when it was necessary to protect him would Ishtar exert her power. Satisfied with his reasoning, he ran to assist his master.

Soon the caravan began to stretch itself into the roadway, and Raanah and Joseph stepped ahead of it briskly.

"I missed you for a spell," Raanah said casually.

"Yes," Joseph's voice was constrained, "but I was not far away."

"Did you see the Ammonite when I sprang at him?" Raanah chuckled.

Joseph looked embarrassed. Evidently something troubled him. "You must believe me—I did not realize—." He began in such a faltering way that Raanah stared in surprise. "But I must confess," Joseph stammered, "that it was I—not Ishtar—who downed the Ammonite."

"You?" Raanah's laugh rang out heartily. "But—."

"You see," Joseph explained, relieved by Raanah's mirth, "when I saw the herdsmen fuming for a tussle: I, like you, wanted to help our party, but I knew those burly men were too heavy for you or me to handle in a fight. There must be other ways to deal with them, so I made for the rise by the camp, where I could both see what was happening and have room to whirl my sling."

"It was a fine shot," Raanah declared, "and it came just in the nick of time."

Joseph looked grateful, yet troubled. "I had not thought that anyone would credit Ishtar with the bolt."

"Oh, but I do not doubt my goddess, even now. I feel that you were the instrument of her power. Of course, I know that you are an excellent shot." Raanah added courteously, "but shots foul easily. And in such an emergency Ishtar's hand must have guided yours."

Joseph did not reply. It was such a splendid faith the Chaldean youth professed, even though the object of that faith was a false god, and he must be wise in trying to win this soul for the true religion.

For a time they trudged along in silence, each deep in thought. Then Raanah chuckled. Joseph's confession had cleared up the mystery where Uruk was concerned.

Although Joseph's muscles were hardening to the trail, there were days when his troubles pressed heavily upon him. After the caravan passed Beersheba and snaked out of the Jordan Valley, he left behind all that was dearest to him. That night Raanah was aroused by a slight sound. He put a hand in sympathy on Joseph's pallet and found it empty. He raised himself and looked about. Joseph was kneeling a short distance away with head bowed.

Raanah partly arose, then fell back, for Joseph raised his head. Raanah knew that he was praying and caught his closing words.

"Cherish and sustain me by thy love and grace, and be with me always, O Lord God, and give comfort to my father's sorrowing heart. Amen."

Raanah turned over quickly, so when

Joseph returned to his pallet, he would not know that he, too, had been awake.

But several days later, Raanah's curiosity got the better of him. "To whom do you pray?" he asked as they scuffed along a dusty road.

"To the Lord God of my fathers," Joseph replied simply.

"Do you care to show me his image?"

"I would, but He has no image."

"No image—But how do you know about Him if you cannot see Him?"

"I do not need to see Him, because I know Him in my heart. But really, I do see Him in the grass, in the trees, and in my own breath on a frosty morning, for my God is Life. So for protection I pray Him to be with me always. Besides," Joseph's eyes lighted, "I can hear His voice in my heart."

"Why, it must be wonderful to have him talk to you."

"It is," Joseph agreed.

"Does he always tell you what to do when you ask him?"

"He tells me always, whether I ask Him or not. But sometimes, I am ashamed to say, I do not listen to Him. You know how that is. When people are determined on a course, they turn deaf ears to any voice that says 'no'. And usually they get into trouble because of their stubbornness."

Does he destroy your enemies as Ishtar destroys mine?"

"My God is terrible in His judgments; but He is also full of compassion, and He heals men of their hurts."

"You mean that your God heals me when I do not even pray to him?"

"Yes, without the help of my God, your wounds would never heal."

"H'mm, I guess I have always taken the healing for granted. I have never thought of it as being a miracle of some god." A thoughtful pucker deepened between Raanah's eyes.

* * *

CHAPTER FOUR

As the dragon crawled along from day to day, swaying with its burdens and snarling over them, the summer sun beat mercilessly upon it. Finally it reached the Brook of Egypt, a broad, full-flowing stream from the Badietel Tin mountains, which marked the boundary between fruitful Caanan and the Wilderness of Shur. Its banks were shaded in simple beauty by tamarisk and spreading cedar.

As the company stretched along the river, the slaves chattered like magpies and argued over locations until Calah settled their dispute or cuffed them into silence. Many dropped their cares and frocks on the bank and plunged into the stream, ducking and wallowing luxuriously, and with shouts of laughter splashing those who followed them.

Raanah and Joseph laughed at their antics and would have liked to join them, but something was brewing, for the merchantmen had dismounted to gaze intently across the stream to the low hills and rocky wastes beyond. Kedar had just told them that its primitive ruggedness was matched in spirit by the fierce

desert nomads who made it their stronghold.

"You mean they are robbers?" Dahmru cried.

"Indeed," Egiba chaffed, wrinkling his bulbous nose, which was redder than usual. "Most of the villains were chased out of Egypt, and now in Shur they know no law but their own greed. They will steal the hide off your donkey and the clothes off your back if they catch you."

Dahmru's squinting eyes above his dark beard held the shiftiness of a scared animal. "Then it seems we need a company of foot soldiers to protect us."

Raanah's impulsive laugh broke the tension, and they all joined in.

"How do the outlaws carry out their attacks?" Dungri asked.

"By surprise, if possible," Asaph volunteered. "They will seldom stand to fight, but charge and yell like wild men to stampede the pack animals. Then off go the profits of a year of trading."

"Since we shall need a scout," Egiba's waggish eyes twinkled, "I nominate Dahmru."

A smothered laugh flickered over the group. Dahmru reddened through his desert tan.

"My black boy, Shobal, could scout," Kihai-Del offered seriously. "He has a nimble mind and limber legs."

"No!" A gleam that struck suspicion in the others shot from Accid-Adab's yellow eyes, "Raanah will scout."

"It is not fair to thrust the lad into such danger," Isme-Dagan protested. "He has had no training like some of the older men, whereby to save himself."

"Have you forgotten that he has Ish-tar to protect him?" Kihai-Del whispered with a sinister snicker.

Raanah did not hear this, and the love of adventure spurred him to speak in his own behalf. "I should like to outmarch if you will trust me."

Joseph's brooding eyes darkened. He raised his voice so he could be heard by all. "Then I shall go out with you, Raanah."

A babble of voices arose. "No, Joseph, no!" Raanah cried sharply.

Accid-Adab scowled. "You will stay until I bid you go." Evidently he had not forgotten the twenty pieces of silver he had paid for this slave.

"Nevertheless," Joseph answered respectfully enough, though braving his masters' displeasure, "if Raanah outmarches, I shall go with him."

At such flagrant revolt Accid-Adab's irascibility exploded. He raised his fist to strike Joseph. Raanah jumped between them.

"Don't be a fool, Adab," Isme-Dagan caught his arm. "The lad's do you no harm. Their spirit is worthy of their breeding."

Accid-Adab's face grew apoplectic. He had come dangerously close to striking Raanah. "Faugh!" He spat disgustedly at finding himself so brazenly outwitted, then strode off in ruffled dignity.

A hearty laugh from Egiba cleared the atmosphere. "Huh, the scalawags have their master broke to harness already. Such a bold charge, Adab, deserves a braver retreat," he called after him tantalizingly.

With the matter settled, Raanah and Joseph set out to requisition Calah for their long bows and two full quivers of arrows. They made a careful selection and carried their weapons over to their sleeping place beside the men's tent. They sat on the ground chatting companionably, and Joseph became fired by Raanah's enthusiasm.

Before darkness fell they had restrung their bows with new ox-gut strings and feathered both packages of arrows, besides repairing some leather guards for their wrists and fingers.

As they finished, Raanah gave a happy sigh. "I hope one of us will nip the old robber chief himself." He reached for bow, swung it before him, and taking the stance that Zerah had taught him, sighted it. "Ha! See that! I put a shaft right through his dastardly heart."

"You only spotted his ghost," Joseph warned. "Wait till the freebooter himself charges you, then see how true your aim will be."

"That will make no difference," Raanah assured him with a smile. "But I must find Calah. I need some straps for my quiver."

"And I shall go to sleep," Joseph warned, lying back on his pallet.

By that time most of the camp had followed Joseph's example. Stillness reigned except for the distant piping of Shobal's flute and the gurgle of the river. The moon had spread a sheen of silver over the desert, but the shadows under the trees had deepened.

Raanah whistled softly as he swung along. After getting the straps from

Calah, he returned slowly, delighted with the beauty of the night. He paused for a moment by the ford, watching the water ripple over the stones, then knelt on the grassy bank and cupped his hands to drink. As he arose, a shadowy form glided toward him. It was Bashia. She had heard his whistle as he passed and slipped out of the women's tent to meet him. His heart fluttered at the sight of her.

"You are a very reckless young man," she greeted him with mock censure. "You have kept me in a dither over your safety ever since I have known you. Tomorrow you are stepping out into a new danger, and I cannot sleep for thinking about it," she admitted frankly.

His eyes swept over her admiringly. There was so much that was charming about Bashia, and he was immensely pleased over her concern for him. "But my recklessness may save the caravan. Surely, you would not have me—"

She gave a slightly impatient gesture. "You are like a small boy," she accused, "who, through curiosity, walks heedlessly into danger. Once I remember, you defied a rabid dog—" Now he knew she was teasing him, though a note of earnestness still shaded her voice.

"And saved you from the brute," he interposed brazenly. "And another time when you claimed to have worried about me, I was only bringing you honey." They both laughed. Then his mood changed. He stepped closer and looked down at her seriously. "Before I go out this time, Bashia, I would ask a favor."

She gave him a startled glance. His

manner was so different from his usual nonchalance.

Seeing her agitation, he grew bolder. He caught her shoulders and turned her so that the moon's rays fell full upon her face. She saw the fire leap into his eyes and grow with compelling force. His manner became demanding. "Bashia", he announced, "I am going to kiss you."

"Oh, no," she gasped, putting up a protesting hand.

But with masculine determination he drew her firmly to him. Through the light folds of her dress, he could feel her tremble, but she made no further protest. She was full of life and warmth, and in this throbbing night her nearness was a thing to stir the heart.

Youth is always a little mad when the moon is round. Their lips met. She rested her head on his shoulder while his arms tightened around her. The night grew very still, a thousand stars peeped down upon them. Shobal's flute wailed a ditty, and the crunch of chewing camels was audible, but wrapped in the ecstasy of a first kiss they did not hear them.

Presently her drooping lips fluttered. She withdrew from his embrace with soft reluctance, and they stood apart in slight embarrassment. "You will not soon forget me now," Raanah essayed half-teasingly, though his voice was not quite steady.

Bashia misunderstood his meaning and grasped his sleeve. "Raanah," she cried, "you will come back! You will. . . ." A sob checked her.

"Surely!" he boasted, and his voice

carried a ring of gladness that left her trembling. She searched his face with a puzzled look. "I—I think I hear my amah calling," she stammered, and fled.

Raanah stared after her, musing over the strange deportment of women. But just thinking about Bashia made him feel good. He wanted to sing, but dared not. When he reached his pallet, wide-eyed and stimulated, he found Joseph asleep.

The next morning, when Calah gave command for the caravan to swing into the roadway, its aspect was distinctly militant. The slaves were bristling with weapons, and its fore and side runners were ready to scout ahead.

Raanah and Joseph were cautioned to keep a sharp outlook about them and not to advance beyond the sight of Calah; who, while he also traveled ahead, would stay within sight of the caravan to keep lines of communication open.

The youths stepped forward briskly in the invigorating air. Their eyes were snappy and searching. They carried their bows ready in hand. Their quivers were packed with steel-pointed arrows, and the srips over their left shoulders were filled with smooth stones, just the size for their slings. They had left the dogs behind and in the excitement of the adventure spoke only in low voices. When they had gained some distance over Calah, they left the road, and climbing a hill, scanned the country eagerly. They were hoping rather than fearing that somewhere beyond the rocks and hills a band of fierce raiders awaited the caravan.

But hours of tramping passed with no sign of raiders in ambush. Then some

distance ahead, a vulture arose from a heap of carrion, flapping its black wings as it soared skyward. Impulsively Raanah raised his bow and drilled its body. It was a beautiful shot. But before the bird had struck the earth, both lads realized the mistake and dropped to the ground. After a second, they cautiously raised their heads.

"See that!" Joseph pointed to two men on asses who were galloping toward a range of hills. Evidently it had been their approach that had disturbed the bird. "They cannot be travelers", Joseph whispered, "or they would stick to the road. They must have seen the vulture fall. Perhaps they are scouts and are galloping off to appraise their band of our approach."

Raanah felt too contrite for speech. They signalled to Calah. It was growing late, and he beckoned them in. But when Calah reported the mysterious riders he failed to mention the vulture.

At the waking signal, the two young scouts arose sleepily the next morning. They were stiff and sore from having traveled many more miles than the caravan the day before. The wind was chilly. They shivered and ate their breakfast hurriedly.

As they took the lead, Raanah was unable to command the thrill that scouting had imparted the day before. When they had gained some distance over the caravan Calah told them to push ahead, and they quickened their stride in silence.

The sun poured its burning rays down upon them when they reached the summit of a hill and threw themselves down

to rest. They would press on again soon, but their stiffened muscles bothered them and their breath was short from climbing the hill.

For a moment they lay exhausted. Then Raanah raised his cautiously. The next instant he clutched Joseph's arm with a low "P-s-s-s-t," and pointed to the base of the hill below them.

There a lone rider waited, hidden from the roadway. Evidently he had been scouting ahead for his party, for they were riding toward him not more than five hundred yards behind. All were heavily armed, and at their head rode the two men whom Raanah and Joseph had seen the day before.

The boys had made no sound, but the lone rider was alert. Before they could duck, he glanced up and saw them. With a fiendish yell to appraise his followers that their ambush had been discovered, he urged his mount up the hill toward the boys. Its steepness gave them a good start as they sprang to their feet and slid down on their sides amid loose sand and rolling stones. There was no need now for secrecy. They yelled to Calah. He paused only long enough to wave both arms in answer, then ran howling back to the caravan with a speed that would have done credit to a younger man.

The lone rider soon reached the crest of the hill and came crashing down after the boys. They could tell by the sounds that he was gaining on them. They knew they could not outrun his mount, but they wished to reach a more level stretch of ground before taking a stand against him.

Such open country afforded no protection. But if they could dispose of this man quickly, they might be able to reach the caravan before the band of cutthroats could trap them. Now and then an arrow whizzed past them, but, thought Raanah, Ishtar must have parried the shafts, for his luck held good for both of them.

When the raider reached the base of the hill he gained on them so rapidly they dared no longer ignore him. Besides they were badly winded. As they turned to face him, Raanah gave a gasp of surprise. The fellow was no different from the usual dirty, bronzed, desert ranger, savage and cruel in combat; however, he was astride, not a mincing ass, but a horse. Raanah could scarcely believe his eyes. It was a poor creature—lean, rangy and not much larger than a donkey, but there was no mistaking it, for it had small pointed ears, a straggling mane, and a hairy tail.

Raanah's eyes glistened. He was determined to have that horse. All fear for himself and Joseph was swept aside by his desire for the animal. Now, Ishtar save them while he battled for it! Joseph raised his bow, but Raanah clutched his arm. "Hold! It's a horse—we must take it!"

Out of deference to Raanah's wishes Joseph held his shot. He would take no chances on wounding the animal.

Seeing they were only youths, the raider yelled fiendishly and drew his sword to cut them down as he rode past them. But with an audacity that compelled success Raanah raised his bow and, aiming high, pierced the raider through the

shoulder. The saber clattered to the ground, and with a howl of rage and pain the man tumbled after it, apparently dazed.

Following the habit of desert fighters to prevent their steeds from galloping off if the rider should be dismounted, he had tied the reins to his wrist. As he fell, the little horse plunged and tugged, but was unable to free himself.

Raanah dashed forward, cut the reins, wrapped them around his own hands, and held on determinedly to the rearing, excited animal. He was so intent on securing this prize that he failed to notice the man had revived, had snatched up his saber, and was creeping upon him. A cry from Joseph warned him.

Although wounded, the raider was a seasoned fighter. There was wild passion in his eyes, and his teeth gleamed white against his dark skin, like the fangs of a ferocious animal.

With both hands holding on to the plunging horse, Raanah was defenseless. The range was too close for a bow, so Joseph hurled a rock at the man's shoulder, from which the shaft of the arrow protruded. It struck with a thud. The man dropped the saber with a cry and clutched his shoulder. Joseph grabbed the sword.

The raider stirred himself into a blind rage because two youths had tricked him. He crouched before them, his cruel mouth open: his rapacious, hairy face tightened with hatred. Drawing a long dirk from his belt, he made a lunge at Raanah.

Joseph cleaved the air between them sharply, but missed the raider. Again

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BEACON LIGHTS

the man charged his defenseless enemy, for Raanah would not let go of the horse. Joseph grew desperate. The sword was extremely heavy, but he brought it down again with all his might between them. The raider was powerful but slow, and the blade ripped his knee. His leg buckled under him, and he sprawled at Raanah's feet.

Excited by the skirmish the horse reared and plunged, but even with his hands wrapped with the reins Raanah was not entirely defenseless. Before the fellow could recover, with a movement almost as quick as the flash of Ishtar's gems, Raanah kicked him under the chin. The

man gasped, closed his eyes, and lay rigid as though dead.

The next instant a rising wave of sound came over the hill. The scouts looked at each other with growing concern. Would the band of Shur outlaws swing around the road, or scale the hill after them? They glued their eyes to its crest and listened. But their good fortune held. A moment later it was evident that the predatory band had left their scout to deal with the caravan's outmarchers. They were after booty, and in their type of warfare must strike quickly.

(To be continued)

**THREE
IMPORTANT
DAYS!**

AUGUST 1947						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
—	—	—	—	—	1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
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31	—	—	—	—	—	—

Prot. Ref. Y. P. Convention