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"Surely the righteous shall give thanks unto thy name". — Psalms 149:13.

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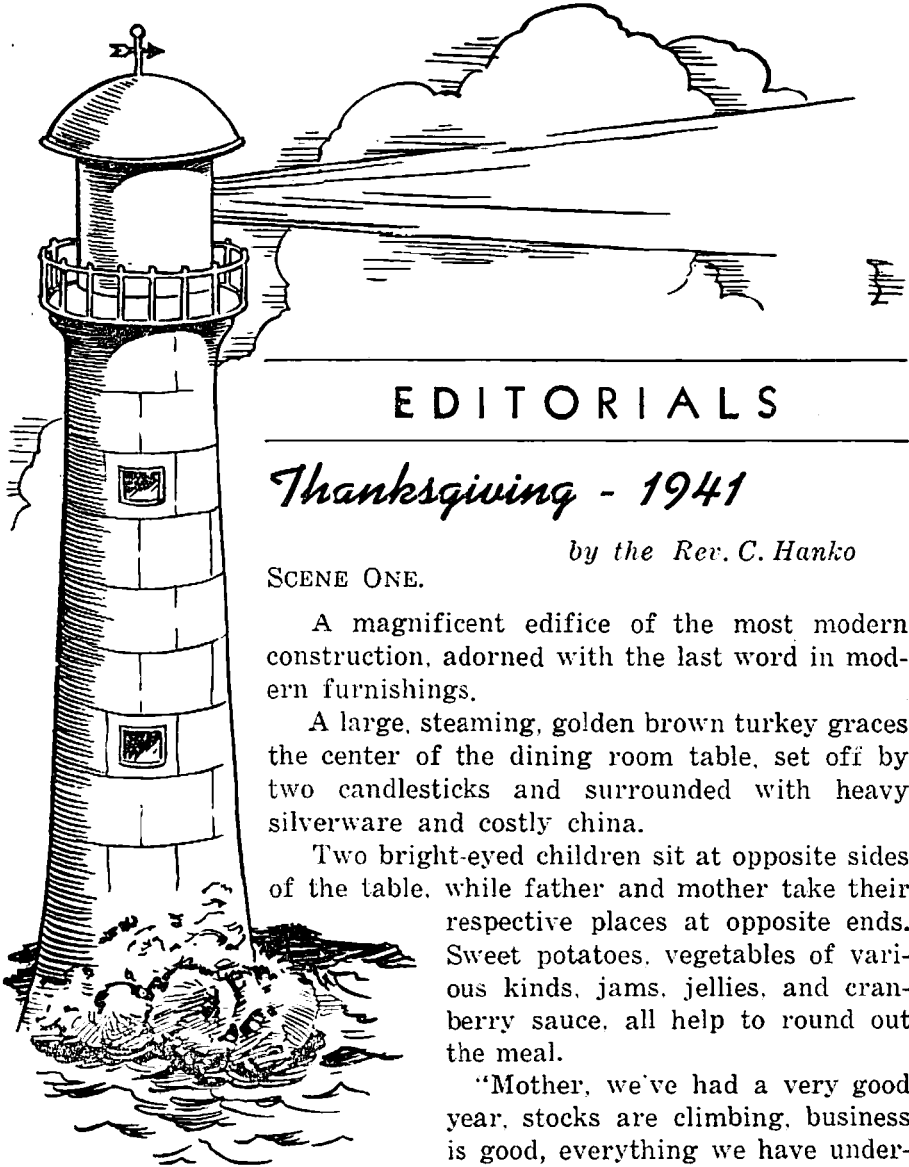
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Thanksgiving



EDITORIALS

Thanksgiving - 1941

by the Rev. C. Hanko

SCENE ONE.

A magnificent edifice of the most modern construction, adorned with the last word in modern furnishings.

A large, steaming, golden brown turkey graces the center of the dining room table, set off by two candlesticks and surrounded with heavy silverware and costly china.

Two bright-eyed children sit at opposite sides of the table, while father and mother take their respective places at opposite ends. Sweet potatoes, vegetables of various kinds, jams, jellies, and cranberry sauce, all help to round out the meal.

"Mother, we've had a very good year, stocks are climbing, business is good, everything we have under-

taken was marked by success. we have much to be thankful for."

Would it be speaking out of turn to suggest with all due reticence that Lazarus lies at the gate, cold, hungry, dirty and full of festering sores?

Thou Fool!

SCENE TWO.

A simple yet attractive home, neat and well kept, bespeaking a man of moderate means.

On the table stands a platter with the remains of a chicken or two, while the greasy faces of happy children protrude out of a towel snugly tied about their necks.

Father is speaking: "Conditions are much better than a year ago; prices may be steadily climbing but wages are also on the incline, and there is ample work for anyone who cares to work. We've acted accordingly; given to the Church, to benevolent organizations and other needy causes."

With that thought in mind he turns unto himself and says, "Lord. I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, I I I

But it remained for another to be justified rather than he.

SCENE THREE.

A small cottage which has withstood the spring rains, the drought of summer and the frost of winter for many seasons.

The threshold is worn, the door creaks on its hinges, the furnish-

ings in the room speak of years of service.

At the old, round table near the window sits an old woman, the light shining on her silvered hair, tightly drawn back from a care-worn, wrinkled face.

No abundance here; no happy feasting. Her husband has gone on before her, and left her to bide the time in her simplicity and loneliness. But man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.

Someone had very thoughtfully brought her a plate of chicken broth, which having been emptied, is now pushed aside, while she folds her hands over her Bible.

The Book lies open at the sixty-second Psalm: the silence of the room seems to take up the words:

*My soul in silence waits for God:
My Savior He has proved;
He only is my Rock and Tower;
I never shall be moved.*

As smoke from the incense, this prayer mingles with the prayers of all saints and fills the Sanctuary where angels worship.

*My honor is secure with God,
My Savior He is known;
My refuge and my Rock of
strength*

Are found in God alone

*For God has spoken o'er and o'er
And unto me has shown;
That saving power and lasting
strength*

Belong to Him alone.

It Can Be Done by the Rev. C. Hanko

That is what the Young Men's Society of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Grand Rapids, Michigan, said about a year ago, when the proposition was broached that our Churches should go "on the air". The result is that a 26-week contract has been signed with the broadcasting station WLAV, which has its outlet in Grand Rapids, and during the last few weeks the voice of Rev. H. Hoeksema has come to many of us over the air, as well as the voices of the Radio Choir and the announcer, Walter Hofman, who helped to round out the program.

It is quite an experience, no doubt, for those who participate in these programs, to place themselves before the microphone for the first time with the thought in mind that their voices were being carried to hundreds and possibly thousands of listeners. It was no less a thrilling experience for the radio committee of the Young Men's Society to see this positive fruit on all their labors. And it stirred the hearts of our people to hear these familiar voices over the air. But it also fills us with joy and gratitude that another channel has been opened whereby we can reach others with the truth of God's Sovereign Grace which God Himself has made precious to our hearts. This is but another missionary endeavor on the part of

our Protestant Reformed Churches. The more reason why we rejoice in the fact that it can be done.

It may be interesting to note that the Young Men's Society took over this project after the Classis of our Churches dropped it. One of the reasons why the Classis did not deem the time ripe for such an undertaking, was the expenses involved. Surely, other objections were also raised, but the matter of financing an undertaking of this nature helped to make it seem quite impossible. Then youthful enthusiasm stepped in, boldly faced the problem, made another thorough investigation, found a station that would consider a contract for programs of this nature, made a campaign in their own congregation for funds, and soon found that financially they had gone "over the top" and a signed contract was in their possession. Rev. Hoeksema consented to be their main speaker throughout this period, musical talent was found in the three Grand Rapids Churches, and all is off on a flying start. Which simply proves that "it can be done".

But this is no time to rest on any laurels. Many have already voiced the complaint that, after all, this is but a local station and does not reach nearly all of our people, nor, for that matter, many others who are of Reformed persuasion. We

would all appreciate it if these broadcasts could be made over a far more powerful station to reach a far greater audience. Some have already suggested the possibility of some Chicago station, others have spoken of a station in Des Moines, which can be heard as far West as Manhattan, Montana. There is also another suggestion that is worthy of some consideration. That is the suggestion that transcriptions be made of these programs from week to week, so that with very little added expense and effort these same programs can be reproduced from other outlets at any time in the future.

Here is a new field of activity for any active young people's society, or group of societies, which count among their members ambitious young men and women who are ready to undertake a thing and see it through. A small amount of initiative and a sufficient supply of determination will see a world of possibilities opened up by this new venture. The first thing that must be done at once, is to make recordings of all these programs, which does not run into any great expense and would be a great help toward repeating these programs from other stations. The next move is for each society to contact stations in their community to find out just which stations are the most preferable for these broadcasts. There is no reason why these programs cannot be made nationwide within

a few years.

And need it be added that this is but one field in which energetic youth can labor? Other projects may be staring you in the face at every turn, if you will but stop to take note. Other work with the purpose of Church extension may be undertaken by any society. Besides, your own congregation may need your services. You may be in need of new Psalters in the pews, new pulpit furniture, interior or exterior decorating, a new organ. But why add more? Did you ever stop to figure how much could be collected in a week if every adult member of the congregation would give one dime for a worthwhile undertaking? In a year? In two or more years?

"It can be done!", if youth gets behind it with a will.

GOD'S CALL TO WATCH

Mark 13:33-37

Things we need to watch:

1. Our Walk—"See that ye walk circumspectly" (Eph. 5:15)
2. Our Actions—"Abstain from all appearance of evil" (1 Thess. 5:22)
3. Our Time—"Redeeming the time because the days are evil" (Eph. 5:16)
4. Our Conversation—"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27)
5. Our Habits—"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed" (Rom. 12:2)

The Christian's Thanksgiving

by Rev. A. Cammenga



The forest's trees have lost their summer green and stand arrayed in gorgeous hues of the varied autumn colors. Hill and plain and dell alike, have changed from summer dress to that of harvest hues. The once tall, green corn now decks the fields in shocks of brown and yellow, while through the fields lay strewn the yellow-golden pumpkin.

Somehow, all these are emblems of abundance. They seem as letters, set into a book, leading men to see God's everlasting power and divinity. So many voices are they, blending together in a living testimony of God's care and providential keeping.

To me these fields seem as a kind reminder on my book of memorandums that Thanksgiving Day will soon be here. The harvest moon, the fields and wood, the heavy laden barns and bins, the store of fruit and grain, the cattle on a thousand hills call me to task,—my *only* task. . . . the praise, the adoration of my God and King!

A Life-Long Praise of God

No other task than this is laid

on mortal man. He may be a genius in one or more of the varied sciences, he may be prince or pauper, he may be king or subject, he has but one task—the praise and adoration of the most high and only living God. To this very task Scripture continually exhorts us all: "Kings of the earth and all people: princes, and all judges of the earth: both young men and maidens, old men and children: let them praise the name of the Lord". What other task could be theirs since "God has made all things for Himself"?

From this we may conclude that all the fruitful plains and harvest's golden grains may, however, never be more than merely voices calling us to praise. All multi-colored fruits, with which the horn of plenty has been filled, may *incite* us to praise, but never may, neither can they be the cause of true thanksgiving.

Thankfulness is not the conclusion of the satisfying inventory of earthly gifts and gains. The prelude to any thanksgiving is never

an enumeration of personal profits. Neither is true gratitude obtained by the assurance that our losses and griefs were less than those of our neighbours, as is so often done, especially in times of stress and grief. Thankfulness is not the result of studying the business and economic principles of profit and loss, but of theology. Gratitude is *theo-cen-tric*. The heart, the life, the pulse-beat and the cause as well as the purpose of thanksgiving is God.

When, therefore, we must first enumerate personal gifts and gains and thus be enabled to conclude whether or not we have reasons for praise and thanksgiving, then God is gone and so is gratitude. He that is incited to praise because his gains were sufficient to warrant such action does not bend his knee before God on the day of thanksgiving, but is a pagan worshipper of material things. Such a man is egoistic, a worshipper of self. God is entirely out of the picture and man is deified. Such praise is abominable in the eyes of Him that judgeth righteously.

Not material gifts and gains, nor man himself, but God is the focal point in true gratitude. In the Christian's thanksgiving it is God, and God alone who has any recognition. In God he rejoices. His name he lauds, His praise he sings, His glories and wondrous doings he proclaims. God is all and man and all material vanish

into nothingness.

This thankfulness is the task of every man, woman and child. For it we were created, to it we are divinely called. Therefore, a task not for one single day. Neither is it a task for special occasions. But a task all day and every day, in life and in death, amid pleasures and palaces, in tears and in grief.

How foolish, then, and utterly impossible is it to speak of a Thanksgiving *Day*. Taken in its literal sense it would mean that we store up all our praise and thanksgiving for that one certain day. It, too, would mean that we try to crowd the performance of a whole year's task into a single day. Logically it is absolutely impossible, no full year's work can be crowded into a single day. Spiritually it is unwanted, for the truly thankful heart must sing the praises of his God and Maker in undying strains, now and forever.

*"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise.
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace."*

Since thanksgiving is a life-long task and must be performed regardless of circumstances or conditions, it stands to reason that its cause can never be found in material things.

If thanksgiving is caused by the abundance of wealth and at the sight of possessions of corn and wheat and an overflowing horn of

plenty, it could only be a task for the rich and for them that rejoice in health and strength. How could the thousands upon thousands that suffer affliction and poverty, who groan in pain and agony or are overwhelmed with deep sorrow of heart, join in with songs of praise and thanksgiving? If rejoicing in things were thanksgiving, how will the thousands of Christians in war-torn Europe ever be able to praise God from day to day in the midst of death, destruction and starvation? It would be an absolute impossibility!

The truth of the matter is, however, that even from Europe's battle fields, and from homes in direst need, there must arise thanksgiving and praise of God. It cannot and may not be otherwise!

It stands to reason then, that the cause and source of true thanksgiving can be found in God only. On the other hand, it can only be found in God when the positive assurance is present that God is our God and that He is for us. For this reason thankfulness can only be found with the Christian. He only has the assurance that God is for him. For this reason, too, thanksgiving can never be national, but always personal.

This thankfulness of the Christian proceeds first of all from the consciousness of his own insignificance. It arises from the knowledge that he is totally unworthy

of the least of God's benefits, that he is a child of wrath and corruption by nature, who has defiled his ways a thousand times; and is conscious of the fact that he cannot stand before the Lord of heaven and earth if He should mark transgressions. And yet, in spite of all this, through grace he may glory that God has become for him the Source, the Fount of all good. Who forgives his sins, heals his diseases. Who delivers his life from destruction, Who crowns his years with goodness, Who establishes His covenant with him in order that he might know Him, love Him, walk with Him and be led by His hand.

Not in things, but in the possession of the Lord Himself is the source, the cause of Christian gratitude. This being the case in the life of every Christian, he can rejoice and be thankful in all circumstances of life. By faith he then believes and knows that God is God, that He alone has all things in His hand: that prosperity and adversity, joy and sorrow, life and death come from Him. Then, too, he knows that God, Who is the God of love, works all things together for the salvation of His children. Then nothing can harm us, then all things are for our sakes and we have joy and peace for evermore.

Then, when the year is crowned with God's goodness, and His paths drop fatness, and the little hills

rejoice on every side, and pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also covered with corn, and we hear their voices shouting and singing, we, too, will rejoice and sing. But our rejoicing will not be *in* them, but *with* them — in God! Voices they will be, calling us to task—the task of praising God.

“Thy bountiful care what tongue can recite?

It breathes in the air, it shines in the light:

It streams from the hills, it descends to the plain,

And sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.”

ITS ONLY POSSIBILITY

It is evident that thanksgiving cannot be legislated and thus become a national grace. Thanksgiving is purely an act of divine grace. Natural man is unthankful! So unthankful is he that even the greatest abundance of riches will never atune his heart to true gratitude. At best the joy and praise of natural man, on his day of thanksgiving, is nothing but pagan worship of material things and self. He does not rejoice in God, but he rejoices only in things which he possesses apart from the fellowship and communion with God. His praise is nothing but priding himself on his own skill and success.

The only way to true gratitude is

by learning the depth of our own misery and the glory of our redemption in Christ. This is only possible by grace. When touched and changed by that grace all sinful pride will vanish. When, by the regenerating power of that grace, our minds have been enlightened we shall clearly see that we have nothing to boast and have every reason for shame. Then we shall see that we have only been successful in corrupting and polluting our ways before God and making ourselves the just objects of His wrath and holy indignation. Then, too, we shall clearly understand that the many material gifts, which we receive day by day, are not grace, but are a curse, since by their receipt we prove before God and all the world that we are totally depraved and use all things in the service of sin and in enmity against God.

Thus having learned our misery, and then having found grace in the blood of Christ, our boasting will be in God only. God is then for us the Source and Fount of all blessings. It is His grace that turns all things to our profit. It is He who gives life through death.

To Him shall be our praise!

His glories we shall sing!

For us every day will be Thanksgiving Day, even throughout the endless ages of eternity.

Colonial Echoes

by Wilfred G. Rottschafer

Certain days and certain seasons of the year serve to remind us in a special way of particular events of history. And so, too, Thanksgiving Day has its special signification and reminds us among other things of those early Pilgrims who came to the shores of the New World seeking the right of free worship of God according to their convictions.

It is not, however, our purpose to review once more the history of the sufferings and hardships of these early settlers. Rather we would retrace our thoughts to that period of history immediately following the coming of the Pilgrims, and catch a few glimpses of the habits and customs prevalent during the colonial era in general—echoes, as it were, of a way of life utterly foreign to our own times. And in order to remain within definite bounds we will limit ourselves to a few random thoughts and observations of life in the colonies on the Sabbath day.

Strange. Distinctly different. So would a colonial Sabbath appear to modern America. All work was strictly taboo. Hardly a sound disturbed the quiet of the day. Danc-



ing, card playing, racing, bowling, riding, and boating were forbidden pleasures. All travel, unless strictly necessary, was forbidden. Violators of those regulations were promptly punished. New York City punished Sabbath desecrators by locking them up in a cage in City Hall Park. In other communities violators were committed to the stocks, and in some sections it cost colonial boys and girls five shillings (\$1.21) to smile during church services.

Many and varied were the means used to summon the colonists to worship. The peel of a bell, the rattle of drums, the blast of a horn, or the waving of a flag, all were employed by the colonists. As the hour of worship drew near all avenues of approach teemed with worshippers. Some came on foot, others rode on hard, lumbering wagons, and if the meeting house happened to be in the vicinity of a

stream, boats were used also. Few of the families assembling for worship failed to bring their dogs. In some communities the young women of the congregation had a special duty to perform before entering the church. They would remove old footwear and put on their best shoes, which had been carried to the meeting house to avoid unnecessary wear.

As one entered the meeting house, particularly in New England, he would frequently find the walls of the edifice littered with copies of laws, sales reports, notices of lost or impounded swine, marriage announcements, and the like. Oftentimes gun powder was stored away in the churches. If a thunder shower broke during the time of worship, the congregation would leave their powder laden house of prayer and stand at a safe distance until the storm passed. A church in the Connecticut valley, located in a township where the smoking of tobacco was prohibited on public streets, used its church loft to store and dry tobacco. When cured and ready for use it was sold to the "ungodly Dutch".

By the time the service opened the dingy, dark interior of the meeting house was usually well filled. Dingy and dark because windows were small and few in number, while the use of paint was considered extravagant and vainglorious. And well filled because anyone absenting himself from a service of

worship without valid excuse would inevitably be fined.

The winter season found these houses of worship extremely cold and uncomfortable. Heavy overcoats, fur caps and mittens were standard equipment. Both men and women carried muffs. Foot stoves were common, and here and there a dog lay at his master's feet, supplying grateful warmth to cold digits. Frequently the water in the baptism fount would freeze so that the ice had to be broken before baptism could be administered.

In New York the Dutch smoked their elongated pipes to supply warmth. A custom quite necessary, for until 1802 New Yorkers insisted on keeping church doors open even in winter, with the result that snow frequently drifted up the aisles. Yet with the advent of stoves a "heated" controversy ensued, and many a colonist yearned for the good old days when the sacred fire of love, rather than a stove, supplied needed warmth.

However, despite the bleak discomfort of these surroundings, the colonists usually awaited the services with eager anticipation. As the minister entered the church he would ascend a steep staircase which led to the pulpit far above his audience. In some communities the deaf of the congregation shared the pulpit with their pastor, frequently adjusting their great tin ear trumpets directly before the minister's face, to the great

annoyance of the latter.

The service usually opened with a prayer thirty minutes in length. Then the proctor, whose only qualification for the job was a strong voice, mounted the pulpit stairway, announced the psalm, tuned it with his pine pitch pipe, and began singing. The congregation followed, slowly and discordantly. The dogs in and about the meeting house, distressed by the strange and melancholy sound, would set up a mournful howling. That the singing was poor can be gathered from a quotation in the Old Bay Psalm Book widely used in New England which spoke of singing "without squeaking above or grumbling below". Yet with the advent of organs and other musical accompaniment the colonists were loathe to accept these improvements. An organ was termed a "box of whistles" or a "tooting tub". In one place, where a clarinet was introduced, an objector brought a fish horn to the meeting, which was blown loud and long in competition with the choir and the clarinet. Thus did this dissenter blow his disapproval.

At the completion of the first song the minister would offer another long prayer. Then followed the setting of the hour glass by the church sexton and the sermon would begin. After the first hour the sexton again set the hour glass. Frequently weary heads would nod visibly, but not for long. The ever-

present sexton armed with a long staff heavily knobbed at one end, would mercilessly rap the heads of nodding men and restless boys, while sleep loving women and girls were tickled into startled wakefulness by a rabbit's foot suspended from the other end of this staff of order. Should the minister fail to conclude his sermon by the end of the second hour, many congregations empowered their sexton to give the pulpit three sharp raps of warning with his staff, thus automatically terminating the sermon. Where no restrictions were in force, however, sermons preached in early colonial times sometimes reached the astounding length of four or five hours, and prayers too were lengthy. One zealous and strong lunged parson is said to have prayed for three hours over a sick Indian papoose in competition with a medicine man. The latter finally jumped into the river to cool his heated blood. The colonists, however, desired long sermons and prayers. They wanted them, despite the attendant inconveniences of penetrating cold in winter, suffocating heat in summer, and hard, uncomfortable benches at all times.

At some point during the service an offering would be received. Black velvet bags attached to the end of a long stick were used for this purpose. Bells were attached below the bags to give warning of the deacon's coming. One church

is said to have placed a bell in the bottom of the bag where it would sound only if a contribution was made.

At the completion of the morning service many a colonial congregation, particularly in rural sections, would retire in a body to the "noonhouse", a combined horse stable, restaurant, and lobby. During the winter season hands and feet, numb with cold after a session in a fireless church, would be warmed before the great open fireplace. As they ate their meals the parishioners would discuss the sermon or exchange such other bits of gossip as might be of interest. In some localities the "wretched boys" would have a sermon read to them to keep them out of mischief. Sharing the noonhouse with the worshippers were their horses. They had been schooled to cope with any and all inconveniences. After dining the colonists returned to the church for the second service of the day.

At the conclusion of the day's services the colonists would return to their homes and the family cooks would prepare and serve the best meal of the week. Following the repast the young folks would separate into groups unhampered by parental restraints, and children played games. Those more advanced in years among the men present would discuss theology, politics, or crops, while the women would exchange thoughts regard-

ing their varied domestic duties, as well as the perennially feminine subject of clothes.

And so our Sunday in the colonies comes to an end. The question might be asked, after reading an article of this kind, "Were the colonists not inclined to make mockery of things holy by the actions and customs they followed on the Lord's Day?" The answer must be an emphatic no. They were a frontiers people and, therefore, cared very little for the politeness of thought and action which characterizes our present time. Hence you see them solving their problem of order in church with the knobbed staff of the church warden, something which would be a constant source of amusement in our own times. The colonists, however, never regarded the work of their church warden in any other light than that of a solemn obligation to maintain order in the house of God.

To keep the Sabbath Day holy was the spirit that pervaded all their actions on that day, and as we say good-bye to our friends of the yesteryears may we not forget even as we smile at some of the ideas and customs they embraced, to strive to emulate their unstinted loyalty and devotion to the cause of Christ, and their evident willingness to endure hardships as good soldiers in Christ's army—qualities that are sorely need in this Thanksgiving season of 1941.

Our Day by Peter R. Zuidema

Religious Freedom in Russia

During his press conference Oct. 2, President Roosevelt astounded the people of our country, but also many people in other countries by his statement concerning religious freedom in Soviet Russia. During the past month this remark has aroused considerable comment and criticism by many church leaders in our country and also abroad. The remark was made to strengthen the administrations policy of extending aid to Communistic Russia and many of the correspondents present seemed to be somewhat surprised by the President's declaration.

Russian Constitution on Religious Freedom

When questioned later by the newsmen the President referred them to Articles 124 and 125 of the constitution of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics. These articles read as follows: (Italics mine. P.R.Z.).

124—"In order to insure to every citizen the freedom of conscience, the church of the U.S.S.R. is separated from the state *and the school from the church. Freedom of religious worship and freedom of anti-religious propoganda is recognized for all citizens.*"

125—"Citizens are guaranteed

freedom of speech, press, and assembly *on condition that the citizens use them to strengthen the Communistic System.*"

Article I of the Amendments of the Constitution of the United States reads:

Constitution of the U. S. Compared

"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, or to petition the government for a redress of grievances."

President Roosevelt's remark was based on the similarity to be found between the above cited articles of the constitutions of the United States and Russia. He implied that the meaning of the Soviet's Constitution was similar to Article I of the Amendments of the Constitution of the United States regarding the rights of its citizens.

Similarities Analyzed

Some critics have granted a similarity in the articles which they describe as superficial and tricky in the use of similar words in each, but hasten to add that the Soviet Reegime has cynically, systematically and steadfastly flaunted such guarantees as were given.

In analyzing article 124 they deny that it actually grants freedom of religion. This is correct, for, while it guarantees "the freedom to perform religious rites", at the same time, it specifically forbids religious education and does not grant the right to propagate religion, although the same article emphatically grants, "freedom of anti-religious propaganda".

Godless education alone can exist. Seminaries are forbidden and therefore ministers of religion cannot be trained to lead the people in their religious worship. While during its entire existence the government, itself has subsidized militant atheistic propaganda of the vilest sort.

Program Of Communists

In addition, the program of the Communistic Internationale (leading Communistic organization in Russia) includes that, "Among the tasks of the cultural revolution which must embrace the greater masses, special importance is given to the struggles against the opium of the people, RELIGION; a struggle which must be conducted in a systematic manner and without flinching". This program has been followed to the present time in such a manner in the Soviet Regime and will be advanced in any other country where Communism gains a foothold.

Stalin's Attitude

Stalin, himself, has repeatedly

insisted on the extirpation of religion by State action, not only in Russia but in every land to which Communism spreads. During his rule hundreds of priests were reported to have been killed, imprisoned, or otherwise to have disappeared. Many of the churches have been closed, demolished, or converted to profane uses on slight pretexts or no pretext at all.

In spite of all these publicly known facts and actions of the Communistic forces and leaders in Russia, President Roosevelt attempts to justify aid to Russia upon the condition that the citizens of the Soviet Union have religious freedom similar to that granted the citizens of the United States. Let me add in passing that if our leaders find it possible to give the same interpretation to these few articles cited from the Constitution of Russia and the United States our own liberties of freedom of religion, speech, the press, and assembly have a very shaky and feeble foundation. They are decaying rapidly and will grant us no rights whatever if our government decides to interpret them to fit its own personal whims and fancies.

President Roosevelt also tried to get Russia to promise a change in its present policy and grant more religious liberties to its citizens in exchange for Lend Lease Aid from the United States.

(Continued on page 17)

Protective Coloration

by Clarence De Boer

"The laws of nature are but the thoughts and agencies of God—the modes in which He works and carries out the designs of His providence and will".

—TYRON EDWARDS.

Have you ever seen a walking-stick? A measuring worm? If you have, undoubtedly, you have spent some time in close observation to determine whether the insect or the larva was actually a living creature because of its resemblance in shape and color to its surroundings. In nature we find many beautiful and striking examples of protective coloration or protective mimicry.

What is really understood by these two terms—protective coloration and mimicry, you may ask? In explaining their meaning, one must view them as evidences of the great Designer, who in His providential care of even the most insignificant creatures has provided many species of insects, birds and animals with coloration which blends in with their natural habitat. Thus, you will find a remarkable similarity to other plants and animals or to natural objects upon which they live. Because of this likeness, they have a natural protection against their enemies.

However, there is a distinction in use of these two phrases which most interest the reader. When

referring to this coloration among animals we designate it as "protective coloration", while the term "protective mimicry" is restricted to insects.

One might be surprised, while traveling in the Arctic region, to discover that a seemingly stationary object in the vast landscape is actually a living creature. In this cold bleak land of ice and snow the polar bear and snowy owl blend perfectly with the blanket of white. How remarkably does the tiger and the leopard harmonize with the shadows of jungle glades and foliage! Nor would one detect certain animals in the dry, hot desert area, for they are colored like the sand and rocks. Another interesting example can be found in the bamboo forests of the Orient, where the bango's striped body makes an indistinguishable blending with its immediate environment.

However, it is not necessary to search in such distant parts of the world for vivid examples. Certainly, we've all at some time seen evidences of it in our own neighborhood. Frogs and other grass animals are usually colored green to shield them from their natural opponents. Many birds, too, as the quail, are sheltered by their close resemblance to the place selected to build the nest.

Most interesting of all, perhaps,

is the small lizard-like chameleon, which will instantaneously change the color of its entire body to match whatever object upon which it rests.. Because of this sudden transformation, it is kept as a pet by some individuals.

Another form of protective coloration is seasonal, that is, the animal varies in appearance during different times of the year. Some common species of rabbits and members of the weasel family exchange their summer coats of brown for a winter garment of white. The little walking stick is green in summer, but, as fall advances, it is transformed into a brown insect.

Why is a fish dark above and light below? Have you ever thought of it as having definite form of protection? Imagine, the enemies of the fish looking up toward it from the depths below. Not so easily will they be able to distinguish it from the light filtering through the water. On the other hand, the adversary when approaching from above and looking down into the water finds it difficult to observe a darker object as the light grows less intense.

In the realm of insects, there are very striking and unusual examples of protective mimicry. The large orange-red, black-striped Monarch butterfly which is commonly found on milkweeds is very distasteful to its enemies—the birds, while the Viceroy butterfly, which is nearly identical in color

and shape is a treat to them. However, birds do not attack them so readily because they appear to be one of those unsavory Monarchs. There are certain beetles which resemble caterpillars undesirable to birds. How greedy would be these birds if they detected them as the beetles that they actually are, but they avoid them, as they are deceived by their form of protective mimicry.

A few more interesting examples can be mentioned among insect life. Because of its "twiggy" appearance, the walking stick is very difficult to discern. Its body is about the size of a matchstick with six tooth-pick-like legs projecting from it, making it practically impossible to distinguish it from the scrubby oak on which it is so frequently found.

A large brown measuring worm, when frightened or in danger, straightens its body and gives the appearance of a broken twig. While certain tropical butterflies will fold their wings in an upright position when at rest, exposing the underside of the wing, which is a perfect pattern of a leaf, even including veins. Some moths are not detected on the leaves on which they live, because they appear as a normal leaf-spot, while cocoons often resemble broken twigs, and thus can continue their life cycle without being molested.

How fascinating it is to observe these things in nature round about

us! If only we study these minute, but wonderful forms of God's greatness. And then let man say there is no design and purpose in this universe? No creator?

Rather let us exclaim, "How manifold are Thy works in all the earth. . . the whole world is filled with Thy glory." What a comfort it is for a Christian to realize how perfectly God takes care of His creation from day to day. With what assurance we may sing.

*"My life in all its perfect plan—
Was ordered ere my days began."*



OUR DAY

(Continued from page 14)

Welles' Viewpoint

On June 23, Under Secretary Welles stated: "This government has often stated and in many public statements the President has declared that the United States maintains that freedom to worship God as their consciences dictate is the great fundamental right of the people.* This right has been denied to their people by both the Nazi and Soviet governments. To

* President Roosevelt referred to this in his speech to the American Youth Congress in February 1940.

the people of the United States this and other principles and doctrines of communistic dictatorship are as intolerable as are the principles and doctrines of Nazi Dictatorship."

At the outbreak of the struggle between these great dictators Mr. Welles assumed that the President considered the U.S.S.R. to be anti-religious.

Russia's Reply

What was Russia's attitude regarding President Roosevelt's prize which he wished to employ to coerce the Russian government to grant religious freedom to its people. On October 4, S. A. Lovzovsky, official spokesman for the Soviet Government announced that no modification would be made in the treatment of religious liberty in Russia. His statement to the press attributed the controversy in America to pro-German influence and waved the big rumpus aside as, "Much Ado About Nothing".

Russia cast the proposal of President Roosevelt to the winds. They solicit much of our materials to aid them to defeat Germany but do not intend to change their communistic teachings and beliefs to secure the help they want. Their atheistic, anti-religious beliefs are to be propagated wherever possible.

Why Should We Read?

by Mrs. L. Doezema



The lives of most young people today are so overcrowded with duties and pleasures that, they will say, there is simply *no* time just to sit down peaceably to read. And if occasionally there are just a few unoccupied moments, they are too tired, and "Ho Hum!" I guess I'll go to bed early tonight for once!" is usually the end of that. Life today is too crowded, too busy, too fast for quiet, leisurely enjoyment of books. Even we Christians, who do not (or *do* we?) busy ourselves with the things of this world as the children of the world do, are caught in that swift current, and we rush maddeningly along, scarcely able to catch a breath. You know how it is.

Then, too, the lightmindedness and frivolity of the world is so very contagious. "Eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die", says the world, and soon without realizing it, we are repeating it after them, perhaps in a more pious way, but saying the same thing. Action, fun, a good time! But what is a *good* time? Did you ever have a good time with books?

We *should* take time to read. Why? Because by reading we learn; and we must never stop learning. When we have graduated from school, and have gone through all the catechism classes and Sunday School classes, then our education has just begun, the foundation has been laid for further study. That schooling has aided us in understanding the preaching of the Word, has equipped us for our tasks in life, has made us able to join in discussions in our societies, but it has also prepared us for personal study through reading.

There must, however, be a dominating purpose in our reading and in our choice of reading material, and if that purpose is there, much difficulty in choosing the right books and magazines will be eliminated, for then a book will be worth reading in so far as it serves that purpose. The chief reason why a Christian even learns to read is that he must use the medium of the printed page to learn

to know God. God has made Himself known to us in the Word, in Holy Writ, and in order to know what God has written, we must read. It follows from this that the most important reading material for us is therefore the Bible, and that it is very important that we read God's Word personally, for by God's grace, we learn to know Him through His Word. Our church periodicals teach us how to read God's Word and guide us in the reading of it. So you see that this kind of reading material is vital to a Christian's growth in the knowledge of God. Ideally then, we first read books and magazines that have a direct bearing on our chief purpose in reading, and then if there is time left, material that has a more indirect bearing.

It is not difficult to find books and magazines of the first type (those that have a direct bearing on our main purpose in reading, for we have books written by leaders of the church from the early church down to this present time: and semi-monthly and weekly magazines are published by ministers of our own church. But a problem presents itself when we choose reading material which has a more or less indirect bearing on our main purpose.

Indirectly we learn to know more of God by reading history, and we should have that purpose in mind when we do read history. But, you say, practically all history

books are written by unbelievers who do not see God behind all the events which have taken place. That is true, and it is not ideal, but we as Christians can read those books and say, "How wonderful is the unfolding of God's plan throughout the ages!" Our eyes have been opened and we *really* can read the history of the world. God has revealed Himself to us in nature, and the more we know about the earth on which we live, the more we see the Creator. But, you object, almost all books about nature are written by evolutionists. Sad to say, they are. But we can read those things subjectively, remembering that "the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." The same should be true of our reading of current events. Authors of articles and books written about the present world tumult do not know that God is shaking the earth, but when we read their writings, we say to ourselves, "The Lord is hastening His coming!" When we read autobiographies, character studies, novels, we keep before us the inherent sinfulness of man and the perfection of our God.

We naturally become better critics, too, when we read every word of man in the light of God's most holy Word. And in order to do that, we must know the Bible, and so we come back to our starting point—it is above all necessary to

read the Word of God, to become truly educated in it. And, remember—ignorant Christians are not the best Christians.

BOOK REVIEW

Reaching For The Stars, by Nora Waln. Little, Brown, and Company, Boston.

This is not a novel, as the title would perhaps lead you into surmising. It is more like a travelogue than a novel, but it isn't exactly that either. The author's husband went to Germany in 1934 to study music and she accompanied him to make a home for him there for four years. In the meantime she visited for days and sometimes weeks at a time with different sorts of people in order to learn to know the German people, to become acquainted with their customs and work, and to find out what the people actually thought about Hitler and about the National Socialist Party. She spent the Christmas holidays with a rather wealthy family, and the weeks of the grape harvest in the country. Later she visited a forester's family. By living with these German families and learning to love them, she was able to bring into her book a very personal touch which is lacking in so many books of this kind. The author writes lucidly, with an

attractive style, which makes the book very easy reading.

A false idealism becomes apparent, however, as one reads farther into the book. The author was brought up as a Quaker in Pennsylvania, and this influences her writing. Especially in the closing chapters of the book, when she and her husband visit in Austria and later when she writes about the destruction of Czechoslovakia, this becomes more evident. She believes that some day humanity will save itself by erasing the barriers of "nationalism which have so corrupted society", not taking into account the corruption of humanity and God's purpose with humanity.

The value for us in reading the book is that it gives a fairly clear and honest description of conditions in Germany under the Nazi rule. The author gives us both sides of the story.

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Other reading from Eerdman's Publishing Co. Any of the following can be had for \$1.00.

"THO HE SLAY ME" — L. Noller.

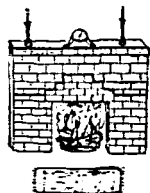
"GLORY ROAD" — L. Krupps.

"CYRUS THE PERSIAN" — S. Nagel.

"OUT OF THE MIST" — P. Allison.

"GO WITH HIM TWAIN" — B. Moore.

Fireside Chats by Walter Hofman, President



To my mind there is in every society a triumvirate; three distinct yet unified individuals whose duty and aim it must be to guarantee the success of each meeting. All three are essential. Perhaps one of the three may have duties of broader scope than the others, but it is essential that they must all work together in a spirit of true and earnest cooperation in order to accomplish the proper end. If I were to name them in order of rank it would be thus: YOU, each individual member. Your officers, and Your Leader.

The leaders must be ever conscious of the responsibility of their position. They have been called of God to the place they hold and are strictly responsible to Him for the manner in which they execute their office. Their very name characterizes them—leaders. They lead, not in the sense that they go on ahead and that we straggle after them, but in the sense that they guide us along the way. Of course, they must be aware that they are guiding covenant youth. Then they will realize that we must always be led along that straight and narrow path and be kept far and away from that broad road of the world. This is true not only of our Bible study periods but also of our social activities and the entire procedure

and conduct of our meetings. Theirs is a great responsibility for they must set the course by being themselves, first of all, a brilliant example. No leader may or can expect that the quality of his society will be greater than the ideal and example which is set before it.

Along the way, these, our leaders, must exercise patience and diligence. They should know the society; its abilities and virtues but also its many shortcomings. So too, they should know the individual members so that none shall be slighted and all may be given an equal opportunity to express himself freely. Finally, they must also realize that they are only leaders, that is, that we as members are also present. Although I greatly doubt its existence, there may be an instance in which the leader seeks to monopolize the society. We all, not only our leaders but each one of us, must remember that a society is a joint project and not an individual enterprise.

To our officers we have delegated the authority of the management of the business of our meetings. We have thus expressed confidence in their particular ability, whether it be as treasurer, secretary, lib-

rarian or some other function. They should conduct themselves always conscious of our trust in them, striving to perform their various duties expediently. This does not mean that they should assume a passive attitude towards their duties but let them be happy for the honor accorded them. Their tasks should be a pleasure both for themselves and for the societies. It is just as easy for the treasurer to make the collection and expenditure of monies a pleasant procedure as to do so grudgingly. Exactness and honesty, of course, are his sterling qualities. The secretary should write concise and interesting minutes which otherwise may soon become so boring. If it is his duty to hand out the Beacon Lights it should be a welcome obligation. Be anxious to see that each member gets a copy promptly, feeling as though you were really giving something worthwhile, which you are. Be pleasant about your duties.

Finally, we come to YOU; the first ranking factor of any society. After all, the society, even though it may not have been organized by you, certainly was organized for you. It is your society. Each individual should feel this personally and consciously. It does not belong to and is not run by your officers or leaders or perhaps some smart (?) clique. It is yours individually as a cooperating unit to make it a whole joint project.

Knowing this, you will all, of course, assume a personal interest in its welfare. You must.

The group is made up, naturally, of various individuals. Individuals are the components of any group; happily so. Even though we must remain as individuals, we must all do our best. Every one doing his part to make the joint enterprise a success from every angle. This includes our Bible study, our after-recess program and any project which the society as a whole may sponsor. Perhaps you may object that you do not have the ability; that there are others who are "greater", who know so much more. Nevertheless, once again remember it is also YOUR society. You, too, have your particular talents and gifts, as does everyone in God's kingdom, from the smallest to the greatest. Remember, too, that those who so often appear to be great to us, may be the smallest, and those who are of no account, the greatest in the spiritual kingdom.

If you are shy or timid, you should exercise yourself to express whatever you may have to say, no matter how insignificant it may seem. The more general a discussion becomes, the more lively your society will be. Although you may have heard hundreds of times the expression "the more you put into a thing the more you will get out of it", it certainly is the truth, and is worthy of repetition here also.

The first essential, of course, is that you are thoroughly prepared. This will build your confidence, which is of primary importance, if you are to enter into the discussion. If then you still feel too shy to talk determine before each meeting to say something. Perhaps you might prepare a few questions which you could ask, or pick out a point and, if necessary, memorize a statement or two, which you will present. After a few times you will find that it will become easier, and your pleasure will increase greatly.

On the other hand, there may be those who have no trouble at all to speak. In fact, they may call for the floor incessantly. A word of warning is in order—don't be overbearing. Give everyone a chance. Think and act kindly towards those who may be a bit more hesitant. Encourage them in their endeavors, and above all refrain from rebuking them too sharply. A kindly word of reproof, if something is said that is perhaps a little off the line, is much more effective than a sharp tongue. No one should monopolize the discussion! Let's all do our part in the proper manner.

Beacon Lights is here to help you all. Use it! Let it be your guide in preparation for Bible discussion. Become instructed from the many worth while and educational departments and features by a careful perusal of the entire paper.

The variety of the contents of Beacon Lights is purposed not only to make it universal in appeal and interest, but to broaden the minds of its readers. Thus you will gain confidence in preparation for your Society not only but also in your social contacts.

Let's all cooperate to make each society an integral part of our lives. Do your bit to make your group one that your leader delights to guide; that your officers are happy to serve and that you won't want to miss. Above all strive to make it an organization upon which God may send His blessing. We must conduct ourselves in all things as worthy of our high calling. God must be pre-eminent in our lives both as old and young. So doing we may be assured of His careful guidance and richest blessings.

Perhaps you have read all this and found nothing that appeals to you, whether you are young or old, because you do not attend any society. Because membership is voluntary I can only suggest a few things to you. Remember that God has also established Societies to be used as means to study His Word and enjoy Christian fellowship. Especially in our day we must be "thoroughly equipped". We certainly must take advantage of every opportunity we have to increase and strengthen our armor. By all means, if at all possible, also use your society to this end. It was

(Continued on page 32)

*Bible Study. . .**by the Rev. Peter De Boer*

Outline V

THE MUSTARD SEED

1st week of Nov.

Matt. 13:31, 32:—

Before you go on with this outline, you ought to read, besides the above mentioned passage, also Mk. 4:30-32 and Lk. 13: 8, 9. These two passages also give the parable of the mustard seed. The various writers give the story in slightly different words due to the fact that each narrator freely quotes the story without giving the exact words of Jesus.

FEATURES OF THE PARABLE

This parable is called the parable of the mustard seed, since it speaks of that kind of a seed. The point of resemblance and comparison does not lie in other properties the mustard seed may have but merely in its size. This the text suggests when it speaks of the mustard seed as the smallest of all seeds. Of all the commonly used seeds of Palestine, the mustard was the smallest. It was idiomatic to speak of something as small as a mustard seed. It is this point of smallness that the parable empha-



sizes. Another feature of the story is that it speaks of the tremendous possibilities of that small seed—the seed in one season's time produces a plant comparable in size to a small tree. Bible dictionaries state that mustard plants often attained a growth to ten or twelve feet high. Hence, the smallest of the commonly used seeds produced the tallest of plants.

QUESTIONS: What objections do you have to seeking for other points of comparison, say the use to which mustard plants are put? How do you explain that vs. 32 says "which indeed is the least of all seeds" whereas there are seeds (e.g. poppy-seed) which are even smaller than mustard seed? Why did Jesus on another occasion (Matt. 17:20) speak of having a faith as a grain of mustard seed?

THE MAIN LESSON

There can be no doubt but the one chief lesson of the parable is that the kingdom of heaven from an insignificant beginning grows to a tremendous size. The point of view of the parable is the external

growth of the cause of the Lord as represented in his church. Its small beginning in the days of Christ on earth, insignificant as it appeared at the time, was a seed destined as the mustard seed to become exceeding great. The parable of the leaven calls attention to the secret, spiritual growth of the kingdom; this parable stresses rather the external, numerical growth. The church that began in its New Testament form with a handful of disciples became on Pentecost a church numbering five thousand. After that it grew not only in Jerusalem but in all Judea, from there it spread out to Samaria and all the world. Today its branches extend all over the world. Let no one despise the day of little things, Zech. 4:10. The little stone cut out of the mountain becomes a mighty mountain filling all the earth, Dan. 2:35. The seed of the kingdom has tremendous propensities of growth. The church in heaven will consist of a multitude no man can number, saved out of all people, tongues and climes.

QUESTIONS: What comfort was there in this parable for the disciples? Does this parable mean to teach that every local church can expect such remarkable growth? Is it wrong to strive for increase in numerical growth? If not, how only may we strive for it? How do worldly movements usually attempt to begin, from a small beginning or with a flourish?

THE BIRDS

The parable speaks of the birds of the air nesting in the mustard tree. What is implied in this? According to some interpreters the birds refer to men of the world, who although they do not believe and form no part of the church, do receive temporal benefits from the church, as men receive protection from the hot sun in the shade of a tree. So, they tell us, in the so-called Christian countries the wicked receive benefits of civilization, education, etc., none of which are found in heathen countries and are to be accounted for only by the presence of the church. In other words, there are common grace blessings for the world of wicked men flowing forth from the church. On the other hand, other interpreters emphasize that in every parable there are elements that belong to the drapery of the story and which may not be spiritualized. This then is the case with the birds nesting in the plant, since it does not belong to the main lesson of the plant. We leave the question for your discussion.

QUESTIONS: Are there benefits for the world flowing forth from the presence of the church? If there are, are these grace on the part of God toward the wicked? Does the parable when it speaks of the birds do so to show how much good the birds get out of it or to show how large the plant becomes?

Outline VI

THE LEAVEN

2nd week of November

The text of this parable is Matt. 13:33. It is also well to read the version of the parable found in Lk. 13:20, 21.

GROWTH FROM WITHIN

The parable of the leaven speaks of the growth of the kingdom as does the parable of the mustard seed. However, there is an evident difference between the parables and the lesson taught. While a mustard seed is a plant above ground before the eyes of all, leaven works from within, secretly enlarging the mass of dough in which it was hidden. Consequently, while the mustard seed teaches *external* growth (size, numbers), the leaven teaches *internal*, spiritual growth. The former parable points to the external manifestation of the church, this points to the secret, internal operations of the Spirit in the church.

LEAVEN

The leaven of Jesus' day consisted of a left over portion of the dough of a previous baking. Instead of the compressed yeasts of today, a piece of the leavened dough was preserved as a starter for the next baking. Only a small amount of leaven is needed to leaven a large mass of dough. Given due time, leaven hidden in the dough will

under proper conditions multiply and finally leaven the entire mass. As a result the heavy dough becomes a light mass fit to be baked and producing light, palatable bread. Dough not leavened never becomes good, palatable, pleasing bread. On the contrary, unleavened bread is repulsive.

WHAT IT REPRESENTS

Leaven refers in Scripture to doctrines and practises, and usually occurs in the evil sense. For example, Jesus warned the disciples against the leaven of the Pharisees, by which he meant their doctrines (Luke 12:1). Paul exhorts the church in I Cor. 5:6 to purge out the old leaven, by which he means the sinful teachings and practises belonging to the believer's life before their conversion. It is evident that the leaven of this parable cannot be understood in an evil sense, as referring to false doctrines. On the contrary, it must be understood in the good sense as representing the doctrines of truth as implanted in the heart. Still more exactly, it refers to what we call the internal calling, to God's grace subjectively bestowed in the heart. The preaching of the gospel applied by the Spirit of God to the heart is the leaven which must and does leaven the whole lump. God's grace works secretly, from within out, but surely permeates the whole man and all of life. It leaves nothing untouched. Spiritual life grows

from within. Grace leavens the whole lump.

Undoubtedly three measures of meal are mentioned because three was a common amount of measures for one baking, cf. Gen. 18:6.

QUESTIONS: What is the chief lesson of the parable? There are those that take leaven in the evil sense of false doctrines and make the parable a warning. What objections do you have? Why should we expect Christians to grow in grace as they grow older? Does this parable mean to teach that the church is the leaven that will leaven the whole life of the world, so that ultimately the world through this process will be rid of all evil? Prove that it is impossible to be a Christian on Sunday and merely a worldly business man or laborer the rest of the week? In application of the lesson of the parable should we stress that the grace of God must permeate all our lives or that the grace of God will permeate the Christian's whole life? When will the time come for the church of God that the whole is entirely leavened, and that all sin is banished?

Outline VII

THE HID TREASURE AND THE MERCHANTMAN

3rd week in November

Read Matt. 13:44-46.

Both these parables present the kingdom of God as valuable above

all else, as worthy of being sought and above all else.

THE PRICELESS VALUE OF THE KINGDOM

In the first parable the kingdom is compared to a treasure hid in the field. It was customary in those days to secrete one's treasure in the earth. Compare Joshua 8:20, 21; Matt. 25:18. The second parable compares the kingdom to a pearl of great price. Pearls in Scripture denote something precious, e.g. in Matt. 7:6; compare also Rev. 21:21. Both these comparisons emphasize that the things of God's kingdom are of inestimable value. How could it be otherwise since they deal with the fear of God which is not merely the highest but the only good for man who was created in God's image!

QUESTIONS: Why was it necessary for Christ to emphasize the supreme value of the kingdom? Prove that there is continual need of emphasizing this fact. Just why is the kingdom of such great value?

SACRIFICE NECESSARY

Both parables emphasize that the acquisition of the kingdom demands sacrifice. In each instance the man sold what he had, *all* that he had, to secure the treasures. Certainly all of God's Word stresses the need of sacrifice. One cannot obtain possession of the heavenly things while at the same

time seeking to hold on to earthly things. Yes, the kingdom demands that we shall sacrifice all things to obtain it. The Christian must endure persecution, Matt. 5:10-12: must deny himself, Matt. 16:24: deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. Titus 2:12; seek the things above, not the things on earth, Col. 3:1. The Christian must be ready to take up his cross, to lose his life, to give up the friendship of the world and of evil companions, etc.

QUESTIONS: How does the parable teach that a Christian must sell all that he has to obtain the eternal things? Does sacrifice for God's sake merit for us the kingdom? Would it be right if a man found a treasure hid in a field, to keep it quiet from the owner and then buy the land? Does Jesus mean to approve deceit in the parable of the hid treasure?

SACRIFICE "WITH JOY"

Both parables include the idea that the selling of all takes place with joy. It is stated in so many words that the sacrifice is "with joy" in vs. 44. As a matter of fact in both instances the idea of *sacrificing*, in the strict sense of the word, something is entirely absent. The man who buys the field in which the hid treasure is feels no pain at parting with all that he has. Neither does the merchantman who buys the pearl of great price. In both instances they sell all they have gladly, joyously. They know they are getting far more

than they had before, hence, there is no feeling of sacrifice. Certainly if the Christian rightly evaluates the priceless benefits of God's Kingdom, he can part with all things for the sake of the kingdom "with joy". In Acts 5:41 we read of Peter and John that they departed from the council rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for "His name". Paul in Rom. 8:18 says that he reckons all the sufferings of this present time not worthy to be compared to the glory that shall be revealed in us. Every sacrifice is insignificant in comparison to the great benefits of God's kingdom. If the Christian views things aright, he not only must but he will "with joy" part with all to obtain the kingdom. He only trades tinsel for sparkling gold, present and corruptible things for eternal and incorruptible life.

QUESTIONS: How does the parable teach sacrifice? Prove that Christ presents the fear of God as an only good and not merely as one of many goods. If a Christian hesitatingly sacrifices present things, what is wrong with his esteem of the heavenly things? Do you deem that Christians in general have need today of anew realizing the priceless value of the spiritual things? Prove your point.

WHY TWO PARABLES

In general these two parables are very much alike, so much so that one is inclined to ask, Is there any fundamental difference at all?

Did Jesus merely add the second parable to repeat the lesson of the former? Or is there indeed a difference between the two? I am inclined to think there is. First of all, because there is a definite advancement in idea throughout this chapter from parable to parable. Hence, we would also expect it here. Secondly, if we carefully consider the parables, it cannot escape us that there is a noteworthy difference. In the case of the parable of the hid treasure, the treasure was hidden in the field and the man merely stumbled upon it—he found what he was not at all looking for. In the case of the parable of the merchantman it is otherwise. This man was seeking for pearls. It is true he found something more priceless than he was seeking, but he was nonetheless seeking for pearls.

Notice further that the parables occur in exactly this order: first a man finds who is not seeking, then a man finds who is seeking. Indeed, there is a spiritual counterpart in this. For, first of all, it ever remains a truth that God is found of them that sought not after him, Is. 65:1. The kingdom does not become a man's possession by his own first seeking; it is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth, it is of the Father's drawing. But remember when once the sinner is found of God and regenerated, then he by the operations of God's Spirit certainly be-

comes a seeker after God, Matt. 6:33, Matt. 7:13.

QUESTIONS: What view do you hold in respect to the relation of these two parables? Give your reasons. Do you believe that it is sufficient to teach that the kingdom is found by seeking? Does anyone find without seeking? How does the Spirit operate in the sinner's heart making him find salvation; mention the steps?

Outline VIII

THE DRAGNET

4th week of November

The Scripture passage of this outline is Matt. 13:47-50.

In this parable Jesus sounds a note of warning. He had spoken of the great external growth of the church (mustard seed), of the sure internal growth (leaven); furthermore, he had spoken of citizens of the kingdom in their joy in finding the kingdom. This parable sounds a note of warning. Not all those that are in the church will be such citizens ready to sacrifice all for the things of God's kingdom. The net of the kingdom, the Master warns, gathers and will gather into the fold of the visible church the bad as well as the good, and the bad will not be finally separated from the good until the culmination of the kingdom in the day of judgment.

Although there is similarity between the parable of the tares and

this parable of the draw-net, they should not be completely identified. We believe there is a fundamental difference in the lesson. The parable of the tares speaks of the wicked as coming *from without*, as being the work of an enemy; in this Jesus emphasizes that the very method of fishing itself brings the bad as well as the good into the midst of the net of the kingdom. Just how this is taught and what this implies will become more evident in the sequence.

THE NET AND THE SEA

The sea in Scripture often represents the turbulent world of fallen men. Is. 57:20; 60:6; Ps. 65:7; Rev. 13:1. Through this sea of mankind the net is drawn. The net spoken of is not a small casting net, but a seine, a large draw-net. Such a net catches in its meshes all that comes in the way as it is drawn along the bottom toward shore. The latter is not the case with a hook and line, nor with a small casting net, but the draw-net always catches all that comes before it.

WHAT IS THE NET?

Just what does the net represent? Many simply answer: the preaching of the gospel. But this can hardly be, for although the gospel is to be promiscuously preached, the gospel purely preached never catches the bad. On the contrary it declares to the bad,

i.e. the unbelievers, that they have no part in the kingdom of Christ. It does not include them, but it excludes them. For this reason the net cannot be the preaching of the gospel.

But what is the net then? The only interpretation that does justice to the parable and to Scripture in general sees in the net which gathers the good and the bad a reference to the manner in which God draws the net of his church and covenant through the sea of mankind. God's church is a continued church, a church that goes on in the line of generations. The church as the net gathers into its bosom not merely the good but also the bad, and that because it receives into its midst families, houses, generations. God has willed that the whole line of generations bear the sign and seal of his covenant. So it was in the Old Testament. All that was born of Abraham received the sign and the seal of the covenant—it was in the net of the church visible. Yet not all were Israel that were of Israel. There were children of the kingdom that should be cast out. Thus it was from Abraham to Christ, but it is none other from Pentecost on, even as the net caught the whole line of generations from Seth to Abraham. After Pentecost the path of the net can be easily traced from Judea to Samaria, through Asia into Europe, through Europe and into America. And always the

net of the church visible receives into its midst the believers and their seed. But not are all Israel that are of Israel.

Evidently it is a fact that God gathers his church in the line of generations, and that whole generations are received into the bosom of the church visible. Of course, the purpose is not to make of the reprobate bad good fish, nor to show grace to the reprobate for a time. The fact that they are in the net, in the net because God draws the net so that families are in it, is evident to every one. The bad as well as the good are born in the church. They have the same ministers and elders, the same signs and seals of the covenant, the same obligations. Although they are not all of Israel, they must be treated alike.

THE DIFFICULTIES

Naturally this fact that the church receives into its bosom whole families, the bad as well as the good, brings the battle within the very bosom of the church. The church has a battle to wage over against the world within. The bad fish corrupt everything. They desecrate God's Sabbaths, they corrupt the truth and holy offices of the church. They often become ministers and elders, the natural seed, the seed of the flesh, frequently gains the upper hand. Then there is need of reformation in the visible

church. This creates a new denomination in the midst of the church visible—the fish seek a new corner in the net away from the bad. But again from their own loins the believers bring forth the children after the flesh as well as the elect children of God. Never in this world does the *final and complete separation*, and deliverance from the bad fish take place.

QUESTIONS: What does the sea represent? Why is it impossible for the net to refer to the preaching of the gospel? What is the net? Can the church on earth ever be pure in this sense that there are no bad fish in it? Why are reformations necessary so often in the history of the church?

THE SHORE AND THE SEPARATION

The shore represents the day of judgment. Then the net will be full. The church will have brought forth all its children, both those after the flesh and those after the Spirit. The net will have passed through the entire sea of mankind and gathered into the midst of the church visible all those God is pleased to bring into her midst. Then what no discipline and no reformation could permanently effect, God will finally effect by His holy angels. Note, they will sever the wicked from the righteous, not vice-versa. The church will be saved, and the wicked cast out.

THE DESTRUCTION OF
THE WICKED

Notice that the parable does not speak of the salvation of the righteous, but only of the damnation of the wicked. They will be cast into "the furnace of fire", that is, into hell. There shall be "wailing and gnashing of teeth", that is, untold agony.

QUESTIONS: Why should the angels separate the bad; why cannot the righteous themselves do this? What do the Russelites (Jehovah's Witnesses) teach in regard to the destruction of the wicked? How does this parable disprove their claim? How does this parable deny the claim of some, that all men will ultimately be saved?



FIRESIDE CHATS
(Continued from page 23)

organized for *you*. The benefits you will derive are too numerous to include here. Essentially it means that you will grow in the knowledge of God and of His kingdom and that you will realize the fellowship of God's people as they "seek the things above". Your joining a society should be an indication of the incentive that caused David to sing: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go unto the house of Jehovah".

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

by *Homer G. Kuiper*

This issue presents a new writer to the readers of Beacon Lights. We have reference to Mr. Wilfred Rottschafer, author of "*Colonial Echoes*", who in former days played an active part in the affairs of the Fuller Ave. Young Men's Society.

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For the cover cut of this issue we wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the Christian Reformed Publishing House.

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Be sure to read the first of a series of "*Fireside Chats*" by various members of the Executive Board of the PRYPF. The first is by Mr. W. Hofman, President of the PRYPF.

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Our next issue of Beacon Lights will feature special articles on Christmas topics by Rev. R. Veldman and Rev. L. Vermeer.

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In our next issue we will also present a report of the convention committee by Miss Wilhelmina Rutgers of Oak Lawn, Ill.

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We regret to announce that due to lack of space, Mr. Piersma's comments on current publications has been omitted. However we hope to have him with us in future issues.