

# BEACON

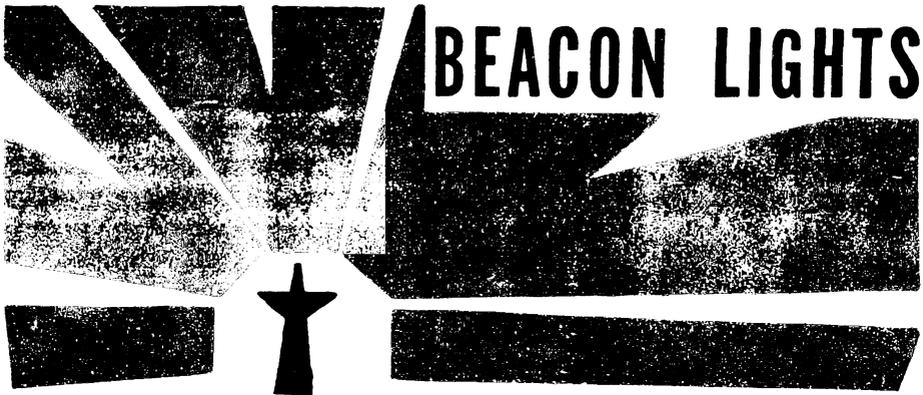
# LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH*



**APRIL, 1980**

**The Rapture  
Television—A Survey**



**VOLUME XXXIX**

**APRIL, 1980**

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c/o O. P. Bookshop  
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All material for publication should be addressed to:

Dave Moelker 1401 Su-Lew S.W.  
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504

News Editor: Linda Kaiser

3364 New Castle S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Michigan subscription dues to Grace Faber  
4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506

Subscribers outside of Michigan please forward subscription dues to

Jan Dempsey

3519 Senora S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49508

Forms 3579 should be returned to:

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# **BLESSED ARE YE . . . .**

*by David Harbach*

April is the month of Spring as well as April showers which bring May flowers. April is the month for Easter Sunday. Some churches hold a "sunrise service" on Easter Sunday. There are the worldly innovations during Easter such as the Easter bunny, chocolate coconut Easter eggs, jelly beans, and yellow baby chicks. Some baby chicks are real, while others are made out of candy to resemble baby chicks. We must not forget the colored Easter eggs, which the children sometimes gather by going on an Easter egg hunt inside the house. I wonder how long it would take a family to notice they had missed finding one of the eggs.

April is also the month we begin to think of planting the garden out back. Patiently, we wait for the day when the ground in the garden is dry enough for us to begin planting a variety of seeds for a summer harvest.

April is also the month for planning that special wedding day in May or June. April seems to be the month in which the earthly creation springs to life, not only the plants and animals, but also man himself.

Talk to any teacher and he or she will tell you the youth develop a particular restlessness in the month of March, but even more so in April. The youth seem to be, as it were, sitting on pins and needles. Often the children are staring out the window for countless minutes at a time. The teacher begins to hear complaints about recess not being long enough or the numerous days before school lets out. The teachers feel a sense of restlessness in themselves. Perhaps some of them have the same thoughts as the children.

This springing to life often makes us quickly forget what Easter is about! Yet it does not have to be that way when we remember these truths. Through the death of the Son of God on the cross, our filthy, vile sins are washed away and we are made alive unto newness of life. Through the shedding of the precious blood of the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, our sins—the sins of His people—are blotted out; they are no more. As Christ arose victorious from the grave, so we as His sheep are raised in newness of life. The newness of life is the life of the Spirit of Christ within our heart. In our daily living, there flows a life which is unmistakably the life of Jesus Christ. That life is irresistible for it is a life by the faith of the Son of God. It is a life in which our faithful Covenant God pours out upon us all the blessings of Salvation which Jesus

Christ has merited for us. It is a life of adoption, for we too are called sons of God. It is a life full of grace.

Consider the life of Jesus Christ while on earth. What a wonder! What an amazing blessed wonder from humble beginning to victorious end. Our lives must be characterized by the same wonder. Indeed, it is a wonder of God's grace to be made alive when once we were dead in trespasses and sins. Our lives are no less a wonder now, for daily we are assured of the forgiveness of our sins. Daily we taste and see that God is good. Daily Jesus Christ, by His Spirit, lives in our heart. Daily we experience the wonder, the amazing, blessed wonder of God's grace. Oh, how good is our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

To take a brief look at the blessedness of the life of Christ and our lives, consider the comparison of the blessedness of the "Beatitudes" and the life of Jesus Christ. Jesus, as you will recall went about all Galilee, teaching and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and diseases among the people. His fame went throughout all Syria so much so that great crowds of people followed Him. Because of the size of these crowds, Jesus went up into a mountain in order to teach His disciples and speak to the crowds. What He taught His disciples is known as the "Sermon on the Mount" and the first part of that sermon is known as the "Beatitudes." Notice the similarity of the Beatitudes and the life of Jesus. It is as though Jesus were speaking and telling of the blessedness of His own life, which must also characterize our lives. Not only does Jesus tell who are blessed, but also what that blessedness is. We might even consider these Beatitudes as paradoxes because these statements would be contrary to what is believed by many today, and which is contrary to our own sinful human nature.

Jesus was indeed poor in spirit not because He lacked an amount of the spirit, not because He lacked an inner zealousness, but because He who was God was born of a virgin, the son of a carpenter, without wealth. Jesus had a humble birth and life. We too must be humble and content for we must declare that God is great and we are mean, that He is holy and we are sinful. We must be poor in spirit, not boastful or proud. Our happiness is in our being brought into the glory of the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus mourned a great deal while here on earth. He mourned for His disciples daily because of their lack of understanding; He mourned for Peter; He mourned for us on the cross. Jesus mourned because of the sins of His people. We too must mourn because of our daily sins. Jesus was comforted because He did the will of His Father in heaven, we too must be comforted when we obey God and have a sincere sorrow over sin. Jesus was meek in that He humbled Himself. In all of the life of Jesus and especially during the days that preceded His death, Jesus was submissive. Submissive to the world—no, submissive to the will of His Father in heaven. So we too must be submissive to the will of our Father in heaven. Our inheritance is a blessed life on earth and the promise of the land of Canaan, heaven.

The righteousness that we hunger and thirst after is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We seek to bear the image of God which is true righteousness

and holiness. We are not simply desiring these things as we would a piece of cake, but we desire them because without them we would die, spiritually. We are in so great a need that we must have the righteousness of Jesus Christ for without righteousness we die. God then fills us with the blessing that we continue to even more hunger and thirst after righteousness.

Jesus was merciful for He was compassionate, not only with the disciples, but with the lost sheep of Israel. His compassion is seen when He utters the words, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." Great is the compassion of our Lord for us as He bore our sins on the cross. Indeed, *we* did receive mercy who deserved no mercy.

Jesus was pure in heart being God and very man. He was without sin. He was Immanuel, God with us. We are pure in heart because our hearts are regenerated, because the spirit of Christ dwells in our hearts. Our hearts are pure because Jesus Christ has died and shed His blood for our sins. We are made alive by the redeeming grace of our Lord and only Savior Jesus Christ. By faith, the faith of the Son of God, we now see God. Our spiritual eyes enable us to see God. We believe we shall see God in Christ Jesus in heaven. What a blessing!

Jesus was the great Peace-Maker. Jesus made it possible for us to be at peace with God, for Jesus took away all our sins. He bore the terrible penalty for our heinous sins. He bore the wrath of God for our sins. Now we are made partakers of that peace which only Jesus, very God and very man, could merit for us. Indeed, we are called the children of God because of a full atonement.

Jesus knew persecution as no other man will know it. Jesus knew persecution all His life from the moment He was born. Many reviled Jesus, even calling Him a devil. Many spoke against Jesus and accused Him falsely, especially during His trial before the high priests and Pontius Pilate. During all of this, Jesus spoke only the truth and in a humble manner. We too must suffer the same kind of persecution. We too must speak only the truth in a humble manner. We must not be surprised at being persecuted, for they persecuted our righteous Master, how much more will we be persecuted for righteousness' sake. Yet we must be glad and rejoice even in terrible persecution for in denying ourselves, we receive life everlasting. "He who shall lose his life for my sake shall find it," says Jesus.

Yet, underlying the Beatitudes is the shadow of the cross, that horrible cross. The poor in spirit, they that mourn, the meek, they which hunger and thirst after righteousness, the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers, they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake, all characterize those who walk that narrow road bearing their cross. All of these characterize the life of Christ as He lived under the shadow of the cross. Jesus' life was a life of suffering, unknowable suffering and shame. It was a life of deepest humility. It was a life of inexpressable anguish and terror of the soul. It was all of those things because of the greatness of the sins of His people. Yet through all of that horror Jesus was obedient to His Father in heaven. So we too are assured of God's blessing even in the midst of a life of suffering and shame for

righteousness' sake. Jesus was forsaken that we might never be forsaken.

All of the Beatitudes are blessings because of Jesus Christ and His death on the cross. The Beatitudes are made possible through the way of the cross of Jesus. Yes, we are blessed for Jesus' sake.

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## Current Events and Comments

*by Randy Groenendyk*

### “Protestant Reformed Teachers Walk Off Jobs

*Teachers in the Protestant Reformed schools walked off their jobs yesterday, demanding higher salaries and more benefits.*

*A spokesman for the teachers commented, 'We have families and children to support. They have to eat, too, you know.'*

*Another angry educator shouted, 'We won't go back to work until they give us the raises we deserve!'* ”

No, this isn't a quote from a recent edition of the *Grand Rapids Press*. Teachers in our Protestant Reformed schools have not walked off their jobs in the past, and they will probably not do so in the future, either. Thus, it's not likely that you will ever see the above headline in your local newspaper.

However, if you paid any attention at all to the news in 1979, you know that many teachers *did* trade in their chalk and rulers for picket signs. All one has to do is substitute “Wyoming,” “Jenison,” or any number of names for “Protestant Reformed,” and the headline and comments above would be accurate.

Most of us—myself included—strongly disagreed with the striking teachers and condemned their highly-disruptive actions. But before we go any further in this discussion, maybe we should look at their motives for walking off the job.

I would suspect that one word sums up why so many teachers went on strike in 1979: inflation. You don't have to have a Ph.D in Economics to realize that inflation is running wild these days.

Take gas, for example. The price of gas is so high that, well, if you own a car, you *know* how high the price of gas is.

The cost of housing is also up dramatically. Most of us young people haven't really looked into buying a house yet, but as any recent home-buyer will tell you, the price of housing today is enough to cause a person to seriously consider moving back in with Mom and Dad.

So is it really fair for us to criticize striking teachers for wanting more money? Should we expect them to work for wages that are admittedly lower than what many workers in other professions receive? Can we blame them for trying to keep up with inflation?

I think all of us would agree that teachers should be paid respectably, and no one would suggest that they be treated unfairly. But does that give them the right to strike if they do not get what they want?

Our Protestant Reformed teachers have correctly responded to that question with a definite "No" answer.

However, hundreds of public school instructors have shouted a loud and forceful "Yes!" Many have walked off their jobs when their demands were not met by school administrators.

The question to be answered is, Why do so many public school teachers believe that it is perfectly proper and acceptable to strike if they do not get what they want, while teachers in Protestant Reformed schools would not even consider walking off their jobs if they wanted more money?

Well, to begin with, teachers in Protestant Reformed schools are, of course, members of the Protestant Reformed Church, which has taken a strong stand against unions and the strike. Obviously, few teachers outside the Protestant Reformed Church agree with that position.

But I think that there is another important—and somewhat overlooked—reason for the difference of opinion between our Christian school teachers and public school teachers on the issue of striking. I think that Protestant Reformed teachers cling to a philosophy of teaching that is radically different than the one held by secular instructors.

What I mean is this: most public school teachers view their jobs only as a means of making a living, and nothing more.

Oh, I'm sure that many of them enjoy teaching and believe that it is very necessary and important. I'm sure that many of them like working with children and truly care about them. I'm also sure that many of them would rather do nothing else than teach.

But for most of them, teaching is still only a job, a way of making a living. They teach for themselves, really, for their own earthly benefit. As is true of all unbelievers, their god is their belly, and their concern is only for the things of this world.

In contrast, teachers of the Protestant Reformed schools teach in order that they might serve God. Their purpose in teaching is to use the talents that God has given them to build up the Kingdom of God by grounding His covenant youth in the knowledge and love of their Creator and Saviour.

Their concern extends beyond making a living and beyond merely teaching their students the three R's—they are, above all, concerned with their pupils' spiritual welfare. Nothing must stand in the way of the proper upbringing of the covenant seed.

Now we can readily understand why Christian school teachers have rejected the idea of striking for more money. To allow their material wants and

desires to interfere with their sacred calling of caring for the children of the covenant is out of the question.

In a very real sense, their striking would be a rebellion against God and His Church. In effect, they would be saying, "Sure, we will labor in Thy Kingdom as teachers of Thy children, but only if the price is right. Our money demands must be met before we do anything." Can you imagine any true believer having such an attitude?

Very clearly, our Christian school teachers have no spiritual right to strike, and we should thank God that, to date, our teachers have always considered the welfare of the children of the Church to be more important than their own material gain. We must pray that they will continue to do so in the future.

On the other hand, public school teachers, as we mentioned earlier, teach not for the sake of God and His Kingdom, but only for their own selfish interests.

Thus, their actions in the past several months should not surprise us, nor should we be shocked when, undoubtedly sometime in the near future, the public schools of America are again paralyzed by teacher strikes.

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## TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Which book was written to "the elect lady"?
2. The theme of which book is summed up in the words "Vanity of vanities; all is vanity"?
3. The life of King Saul is told in which book?
4. In which of the minor prophets was it prophesied that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem?
5. In which book is the verse "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding"?
6. In what book does Paul say, "I have fought a good fight"?
7. Which two books of the Bible begin with the words "In the beginning"?
8. What book tells of a young man's dream in which the sun, moon and stars bowed down to him?
9. In which book is the verse, "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands"?
10. In which book is the account of Naaman's healing from leprosy?

### ANSWERS

1. II John 2. Ecclesiastes 3. I Samuel 4. Micah 5. Proverbs 6. II Timothy 7. Genesis & John 8. Genesis 9. Psalms 10. II Kings.

# THE RAPTURE

*by Rev. John A. Heys*

The word “rapture” is seldom used or heard in our communion of churches. And when it is used, it is employed usually to designate a doctrinal position which our churches do not believe is Scriptural.

However, we do well to ask whether this is correct, and whether we ought not use the word increasingly as we rush to the end of time. The word, as used today means extreme delight or pleasure; ecstasy; enthusiasm. It means to be thrilled, to have a wonderful experience. If I may use the expression, it means to be “on cloud nine”. And we do exactly expect rapture when Christ returns upon the clouds of heaven. Should we then avoid the word?

As to its basic idea the word means to be transported; to be lifted up. The present use of the word does not do violence to that idea. It amplifies it and presents rapture as being transported, carried to a higher degree of joy and blessedness. And we certainly can use it as referring to our translation to the glories of heaven when Christ returns for us at the end of the ages.

Why, then, do not our churches use the word? What is wrong with stirring men’s minds and hearts with the hope of such ecstasy, such bliss and future joy? We believe Christ is coming. We believe that He brings with Him joys and blessedness beyond anything the world has ever seen, glory above what Adam and Eve knew in paradise. Why not preach the rapture and sing of it?

The reason is that there is a wrong use of the word which we do not want to encourage or introduce into the minds of our people. Let me explain. The word rapture, which does not appear in Holy Writ, is a word given by Premillennialists to what they believe will take place any day now. It is that which immediately precedes the millenium, and is a temporary blessedness which only *some* of the believers will enjoy for a thousand years before the end of time has been reached. We disagree with this on the basis of several passages of Holy Writ, because we believe that the Word of God teaches us that there will be only one coming of Christ to resurrect His people and bring them to glory, and therefore also only one resurrection day coming. The Premillennial position is that Revelation 20 speaks of a literal one thousand years before which—and that is the meaning of the pre or before in Premillennialism—Christ will come for *some* of the believers. After the thousand years He will come for another group of believers; and thus there are two

different groups that receive their resurrections one thousand years apart.

The rapture, according to this doctrinal position, precedes even the first coming of Christ, and is usually presented (for Premillennialists do not agree on all the details of their position of a coming before the one thousand year period) as taking place seven years before the coming of Christ in what they call the revelation, and which ushers in the beginning of the Millennium. To explain the first resurrection in Revelation 20 they go back to Matthew 24:40 and 41. Now to let Scripture interpret Scripture is proper and our calling. But in this instance the interpretation is incorrect. In Matthew 24:40 and 41 we read, "Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left." That this refers to the coming of Christ cannot be denied, for the whole section from the beginning of the chapter deals with Christ's return, and was spoken in answer to the question of the disciples as to when the end of the world would come, and what the signs were of His coming. But the passage does not say that some are going to be caught up into a rapture, a blessed life in the air while others remain behind here on this earth and time goes on and the world enters a period of time wherein there are mass conversions because Satan is bound so that he cannot tempt man into sin. One shall be taken and the other left *here upon this earth* is not what the text states. One is taken to glory, and the other is not taken to glory is the idea. For the verses immediately preceding this statement clearly indicate that the end of the world comes right after these are taken to glory, and that the world does not continue for another one thousand years. We read in verses 36-42, "But of the day and the hour knoweth no man, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only. But as in the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. And knew not until the flood came, and took them away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken and the other left." There is no idea here of some escaping that destruction that comes, when Christ returns, to live another thousand years. Nor is there any idea here of some caught up into the air with glorified bodies that somehow are for a thousand years waiting for the new earth which is promised to the believers. See Matthew 5:5 and Revelation 21:1-3.

The plain teaching in Matthew 24:1-41 is that when Christ comes there will be destruction and judgment like at the flood. The end of the world will have come even as the end of the first world came when God sent the flood. What is more, in I Thessalonians 4:13-17, which contains the expression the Premillennialists use to describe the rapture, namely, "Shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, and so shall we meet the Lord in the air", also teaches us that there is one resurrection day and not two. Paul speaks of those being caught up *after* Christ returns, and not before His bodily visible coming to end time, and with the shout of the archangel. The Premillennial view

is that He comes quietly without being seen or heard, and all we know of His coming is that we miss people who were taken while others were left in the field or at the mill. In I Thessalonians 4:16, 17 we read, "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord." You will note that this matter of being caught up to meet the Lord in the air follows the resurrection of the dead, and that it also comes after a powerful display of Christ's return. There is not the slightest thought here of people any day now being caught up and missed while the world goes on without them. Instead there is Christ's shout of victory and the voice of the archangel and the trumpet of God. And you may be sure that *God's* trumpet can make itself heard around the world. Christ will not come to catch us up into the air in a silent coming; nor will He do this before the resurrection of the dead.

Now it is true that in Revelation 20 we read of two resurrections, but these are not two groups of people being resurrected a thousand years apart from each other. Instead it is two resurrections of the same people, one of the soul to enter heaven's glory, and one of the body after the millenium. For note that Revelation 20:5 says, "This is the first resurrection." And that word *this* refers back to verse 4 where John sees the Old Testament saints in glory with their *souls*. The Premillennialists always want to take things literally in the book of Revelation. Let them then take note that this verse speaks of souls and not of bodies. The passage also speaks of a second *death* which these will not experience. And that refers to the eternal death of hell which the bodies and souls of those already in glory with their souls shall not know. That death hath no power over them.

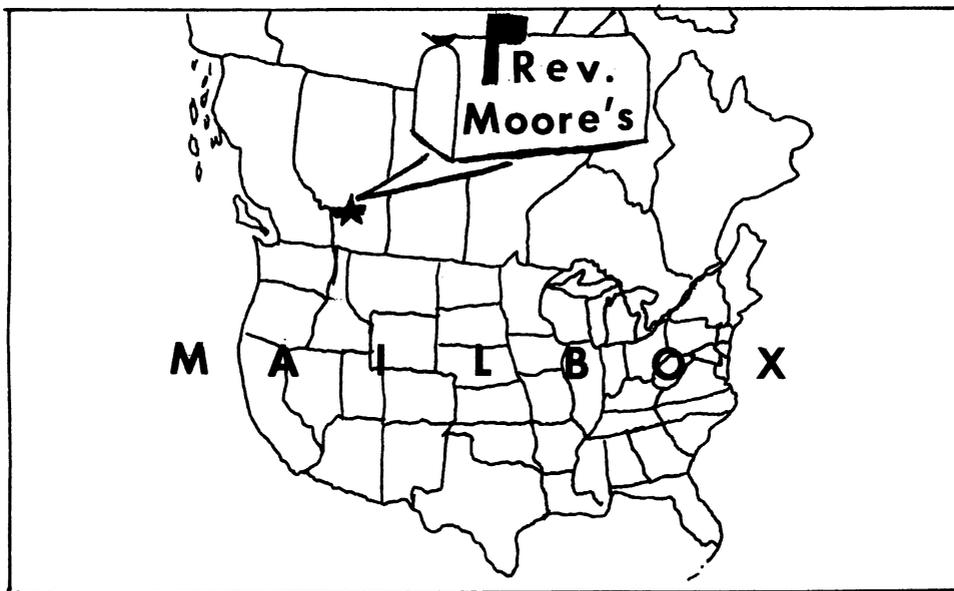
There are many other related matters which room does not allow. I was asked to write about the rapture. But there are the related matters of the binding of Satan, the separation of the Jewish believers from the Gentile believers, the reign of the Jews with Christ in Palestine, that all belong to the Premillennial picture and could profitably be treated in *Beacon Lights* in future articles. For in these the danger of the position of the Premillennialists comes to the fore more than in the mere expectation of some being caught up into glory with body and soul a thousand years before Christ returns and brings this world to an end. There is also for example the text in I John 2:18 that it is the last time, or as the Greek has it, "the last hour". A millenium, a new time, a new hour after this present one is finished there just is not.

Expect rapture when Christ comes in the sense that beauty and glory come which eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, and has never entered into the heart of man. But expect this when Christ comes with a shout, not silently only for some. Expect this to come when He comes to save His whole Church and to bring this present world to its end, as the flood brought the first world to an end.

And undoubtedly we could speak more, and think more, and sing more of

that coming of Christ. The prosperity, the affluence, the high standard of living of today also affect you, young people, to turn your thoughts away from that rapture which we shall have, and to cause you to seek the things below and live for this life and your flesh. But listen to Paul in Titus 2:13, "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Do that, young people. Let your life be one of looking for that glory and the salvation that brings it. Watch the signs of the times all around you; and be listening for that shout of victory when He returns.

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Send questions to:  
Rev. Richard G. Moore  
12324 - 134th St.  
Edmonton, Alta. T5L 1T9

Dear Rev. Moore,

What is your opinion of girls wearing pants to church rather than dresses?

To this question we will direct our attention for a short space. This type of question could cause one to get himself into trouble in anyway one chooses to answer it. Hence, I will not give you a straight answer, it is good or it is evil. Rather, we shall look at some of the principles of Scripture as they concern the question. In the second place, be mindful that we need not limit this question to girls, but also ask the same question concerning the boys who wear sport shirts and slacks to church, rather than suits and ties.

In the first place, we must not become guilty of laying precept upon precept, to look to our works, in this case what we wear, for the determination of our salvation. This would lead us to the same house of the Pharisees, whom Christ reproves and condemns in their sin. If we were to set a strict code for dress for worship then we too would come under the condemnation of Jesus like unto that found in Matthew 15:7-9, "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophecy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouths, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." Thus we must not make our commandments, doctrines in the church.

In the second place, we confess together the truth that God has not respect of men, see James 2:1-7. And if there comes into your midst one who is poor and cannot afford a nice dress or suit for Sunday worship, this person is no less to be received into our fellowship and communion. Be he a child of God he is a fellow member of the one body of Christ. Thus here we see that clothes are not the essential thing in our worship.

However, in the third place, while our clothes that we wear to church belongs to our Christian liberty, they may not be occasion for our sin. The apostle Paul warns of this in a text as found in Galatians 5:13, "For brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."

In this connection let us remember our outward appearance reflects our inner spiritual attitude. It can be no other way. God's children cannot hide the light of God which lightens them. We may not keep our confession back. Also it is true that our dress reflects our attitude to the worship of God.

If one is careless in his dress or unkept in his dress when he comes to worship God, it reflects the esteem he holds the God he worships. The Scripture exhorts us again and again to honor and glorify and respect the living God we serve. Then we may ask a simple question which will reflect also upon our dress for worship. If you had an audience with the President of the U.S. or the Queen of England what would you wear? Or if you have a dinner engagement to go to the fanciest and most plush restaurant in town, what would you wear? Then when you come before God ought we not wear our finest, does not this reflect the importance of the worship service to us who are sinners and have such great need of God's saving Word? Surely it is necessary in all things to prepare for our worship services, where we come into the presence of our living God in Christ.



# CONTRIBUTION

Dear Editor:

Since correspondence and debate on important issues are encouraged, welcome and have been appearing in our magazines, some other of your readers and I thought it would be nice to print this letter in the *Beacon Lights*. The letter was written by John Newton (1725-1807) and speaks for itself. We shortened and reworded it slightly for easier reading.

Dear Sir,

Since you are likely to be engaged in controversy, and your love of truth is joined with a natural warmth of temper, my friendship makes me want to write to you. I am not anxious for the event of battle; but I would have you more than a conqueror, and to triumph not only over your adversary, but over yourself....For method's sake, I may reduce my advice to three heads, respecting your opponent, the public, and yourself.

As to your opponent, I wish, that before you set your pen to write against him, and during the whole time you are preparing your answer, you may commend him by earnest prayer to the Lord's teaching and blessing. If you account him a believer, though greatly mistaken in the subject of debate between you, the words of David to Joab, concerning Absalom are very applicable: "Deal gently with him for my sake." The Lord loves him and bears with him; therefore you must not despise him, or treat him harshly. The Lord bears with you too, and expects that you should show tenderness to others, from a sense of the much forgiveness you need yourself. In a little while you will meet in heaven; he will then be dearer to you than your nearest friend on earth is to you now. But if you look upon him as an unconverted person, in a state of enmity against God and his grace (a supposition which, without good evidence you should be very unwilling to admit), he is a more proper object of your compassion than of your anger. But you know who has made you differ. If God, in his sovereign pleasure, had so appointed, you might have been as he is now; and he, instead of you, might have been set for the defense of the Gospel. You were both equally blind by nature. If you attend to this, you will not reproach or hate him, because the Lord has been pleased to open your eyes, and not his.

By printing you will appeal to the public; where your readers may be ranged under three divisions. First, those that differ from you in principle. Concerning these I refer you to what I have already said. Though you have your eye upon one person chiefly, there are many like-minded with him; and the same reasoning will hold, whether as to one or to a million. Second, there will be many who pay too little regard to religion to have any settled system of their own. These are very incompetent judges of doctrines; but they can form a good judgment of a writer's spirit. They know that meekness, humility, and love, are the characteristics of a Christian temperment. Since we profess these principles, they always expect us to correspond with these precepts of the gospel. They are quick to discern when we are inconsistent with such a spirit, and use that to justify their contempt of our arguments. The Scriptural maxim that "the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God," is verified by daily observation. If our zeal is embittered by expressions of anger, or invective, or scorn, we may think we are doing service to the cause of truth, when really we shall only bring it into discredit.

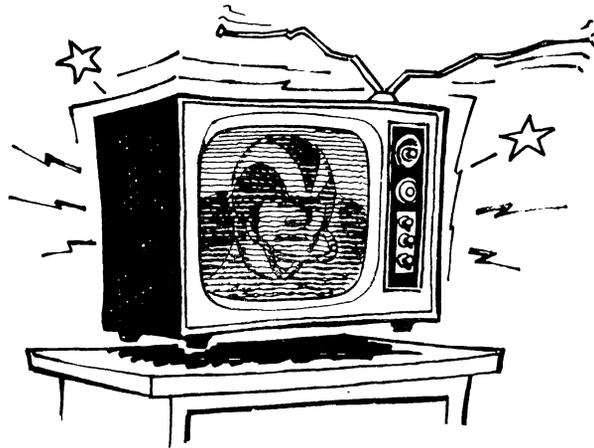
You will have a third class of readers, who will agree with you, and will readily approve of what you say. You may edify them if the law of kindness as well as of truth regulates your pen, otherwise you may do them harm. There is a principle of self, which makes us despise those who differ from us; and we are often under its influence, when we think we are only showing a zeal in the cause of God. I readily believe that the leading points of Arminianism spring from, and are nourished by, the pride of the human heart; but I should be glad if the reverse was always true; and that to embrace what are called the Calvinistic doctrines was an infallible sign of a humble mind. I hope your works will show of a spirit of true humility, and be a means of promoting it in others.

This leads me, in the last place, to consider your own concern in your present undertaking. It seems a laudable service to defend the faith once delivered to the saints; we are commanded to contend earnestly for it, and to convince gainsayers. If ever such defenses were necessary, they appear to be so in our day, when errors abound on all sides, and every truth of the Gospel is either directly denied, or grossly misrepresented. But what good will it do a man if he gains his cause, and silences his adversary, if at the same time he loses that humble tender frame of spirit that the Lord delights in? Your aim, I doubt not, is good; but you have need to watch and pray, for you will find Satan at your right hand to resist you: he will try to debase your views; and even though you start out in defense of the cause of God, if you are not continually looking to the Lord to keep you, it may become your own cause, and awaken in you those tempers which are inconsistent with true peace of mind, and will surely obstruct communion with God. Be upon your guard against admitting anything personal into the debate. If you think you have been illtreated, you will have an opportunity of showing that you are a disciple of Jesus, who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; and when he suffered, he threatened not." This is our pattern, thus we are to speak and write for God, "not rendering railing for railing, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that hereunto

we are called." If we act in a wrong spirit, we shall bring little glory to God, and do little good to our fellow-creatures. If you can be content with showing your wit, and gaining the laugh on your side, you have an easy task; but I hope you have a far nobler aim than obtaining the empty applause of thousands. Go forth therefore, in the name and strength of the Lord of Hosts, speaking the truth in love; and may he give you a witness in many hearts, that you are taught of God, and favoured with the unction of his Holy Spirit.

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## TELEVISION—A SURVEY



*by Rev. G. Van Baren*

I was requested to write on the subject of "television". I have done so repeatedly in the past. Others have too. Still, the subject constantly re-occurs. Even then, whatever is said or written seems to have little effect on our habits in the use of television. So perhaps a slightly different approach might be required. Today there are taken all kinds of surveys. There are opinion polls. These suggest the "general" mind of the populace. Perhaps a survey of our own habits, attitudes and practices might give us a clear insight into our own situation.

*How do you judge the quality of television programming?*

Television has been called, by non-religious critics, a "vast wasteland". If

such is the evaluation of non-Christian critics, ought our standards to be *lower*? So, why do you watch television? For its educational value? For its artistic content? And: do you evaluate programs each time these are aired (good, bad, etc.)? Do you watch programs where God's Name is profaned, where His laws are ignored? Does it bother you at all when such occurs? Do you turn off the television whenever inappropriate and evil programs are broadcast? How often have you turned off your television set for such a reason? Are there any kinds of restrictions in your home as to the type of program that may be watched? Are you the master of your television set—or its slave? Evaluate your own practices in light of the above questions.

*What are your reasons for watching television?*

Perhaps you never gave this a thought. Is television viewing for you only a matter of entertainment? Or of relaxation? You find it to be entertaining when you observe programs where God's laws are broken? You can relax when there is cursing, killing, stealing, kidnapping? Or do you watch television because everyone else does? Your friends view television. They come to school and talk about what they have seen the night before. If you don't keep up, you won't be able to join in on their conversations?

Or do you watch television programs because it is a good substitute for movie attendance? You are not allowed to go to movies. Big deal! You can see much the same thing right in your homes on television. Is that why you watch?

Do you watch television because it instills into your life some sort of excitement? You can't wait til the next episode of the program appears—to see what is going to happen? Or the quiz programs satisfy your sense of greed?

Or do you watch television because there are ways in which it promotes your faith? You believe that after watching, you can be a better child of God? It assists you in seeking the kingdom of heaven and its righteousness?

*Do you consider the time spent watching television?*

Few people admit that they watch television much. Most insist that they can take it or leave it. But think once: if you watch television only an hour a day, for just five days a week, that amounts to about two years of 24-hour-a-day viewing; or, about six years of our lives of viewing 8 hours a day every day! That represents quite a chunk of a life-time! But most people, if they add up the time, find that they view television far more than 5 hours a week!

But consider all of this in another perspective. Do you spend more time with television than you do in reading the *Standard Bearer* and *Beacon Lights*? Do you spend more time watching television than you do reading and studying Scripture? Do you spend more time viewing television than you do for preparing for society? Do you spend more time watching television than you do in helping and encouraging fellow children of God? Or even do you spend more time with television than you do with all of the above put together? Do you, who watch television, find so often that you must tell the catechism teacher, the society leader, the school teacher—that you did not have time to finish the required assignments? Do you have not enough time to help your parents around the home? Does television serve merely to grant a little time of

relaxation from regular and necessary labors—or does it infringe upon necessary labors?

*Is there sin involved in viewing certain programs?*

It is not difficult for one to evaluate television programs—claiming one is bad and another is good. We might even concede that it would be better if we were not to watch the “bad” programs. But do we *sin* before God in viewing certain things? Is there a deliberate act of rebellion on our part in looking at that which represents transgressions of God’s law? Can we watch anything we please—without sinning? Or does it not matter to us if we sin in doing a thing? Do we seek holiness of life also in our viewing of television?

*What do we get out of television?*

Usually a person could ask: what do I get out of this thing? But the question must be faced especially with television. After we see a program, do we ask ourselves the question: what benefit has this program been for me? Is this a program from which I have learned something—and can apply to my spiritual life? But, so you ask, you don’t do this with respect to other things. Yet, ought not that to be what we always do? Ought we not to question whatever we do that we may be sure that we can glorify God in it and profit ourselves spiritually? Does not Scripture itself testify that what is not to the glory of God, out of true faith, is sin? Must we not apply that standard to our television viewing too?

*So—what is the answer to our survey?*

Often surveys are summarized in terms of percentages. Conceivably, one could design some sort of test which might give us a percentage: 0 equals that which is utterly bad to 100 which would be perfectly good. Yes, it would be very difficult to do that. We can, however, turn to Scripture and give a general rating in light of what Scripture declares. On the bottom end of the scale Scripture presents the man of sin: (Rom. 1:32) “Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.” Then there is the opposite: “Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” (Phil 4:8). Then: where do you stand?

*What to do about television?*

Some have suggested ridding one’s self of every television set. Others suggest that it be stored in the closet to be taken out only on special occasions for certain important and special presentations. Still others suggest that Christian liberty allows one to use it as he pleases. Certainly the last suggestion is wrong. But there must be control, absolute control. On top of each set one could well place the Scriptural text: “Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God.” How one exercises that control is a matter of Christian liberty. But let us not become indifferent nor careless with this wonderful but dangerous invention. It is a matter of our spiritual health.

# LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

*by Truett Hugg*

It is the duty of all Christians to love fellow saints. Christ loved them and gave Himself for them. Can we do any less? Of course, our love toward one another is not perfect as Christ's love is toward us. Nevertheless, this is not an excuse; rather a call to strive toward that greater love toward one another. Christ commanded that we love one another as He loved us; and that by doing so, we are known to be His disciples. Love is the distinguishing mark that characterizes the Christian. Therefore, we do well to understand our responsibility to strive toward that calling to love one another.

I'd like us to think about loving our neighbor from these points:

- A. What is love?
- B. Who is love from?
- C. Who is love to?

The question, what is love, is certainly no new question. There have been many answers to this question from philosophers and theologians. Their writings about love can become very confusing to one. Our attention toward any topic or question must lead us to the Scriptures, which is the truth concerning all things.

I John 4:8 tells us that God is love. Therefore, it is impossible to know what love is unless we have an understanding of God.

The Arminian, in his doctrine of God, reflects his view of love. The Reformed person with his view of God reflects his view of love. I strongly insist that the Reformed view of God has the most perfect understanding of God and His glory. The Reformed view of God is expressed in its doctrine. Therefore, we as Reformed people must reflect love toward our neighbor.

The problem of loving our neighbor may lie with us. Perhaps we do not know the Reformed view of God, or maybe that knowledge is not affecting our lives. We are to be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

A person cannot give a statement and sum up the definition of what the love of God is. At least I cannot. We are learning all of our lives what God's love is; and when we die, we will have only a beginning of understanding His love. If a person wants to begin to understand what love is, let him study who God is through the Scriptures and the Reformed confessions.

We must come to a conclusion that love comes out of God. There is no

creature that can love out of himself. The human being can not love; he can only hate. People show hatred toward others through various means. Hatred is not only shown by outward expressions, such as murder, lies, etc. Some of the most fateful sins are committed silently within our hearts.

When we see that love is only out of God, then we begin to understand how great that love is. I John 4:10-11 states, "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another."

The greatness of God's love can never be measured. When God loves us, there is nothing that can separate us from that love. Romans 8:31-39 tells us that there is no power whatsoever that is able to separate us from God's love.

God's love is first of all to His Son, Jesus. God loves the Triune God; and the covenant expressed between the Triune God is an expression of His love. That expression of His love reaches down to His people. Proof of that love is that He sent His son into a sinful world to die for His people. Think of that! God coming to earth, leaving all His glory, to dwell among us in our flesh. We deserve not His love; rather, His condemnation.

As we consider what love is, the question arises what our responsibility is in loving our neighbor. The key to loving our neighbor is remembering that God loved us, miserable sinners that we are. We must bear in mind that one is not superior to another; that one deserves God's love and not the other. The criteria of God's love does not lie in nationality, culture or race; only according to His grace.

The purpose of all our loving is a Spiritual one. We have the purest manifestation of the Scriptures. We must not only guard that Truth and love it, but we must love to see it grow in the lives of our fellow saints. This is not accomplished when our heart's desire is set upon material gain or earthly pleasures. We must first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

The purpose of Christ loving us was to bring us into His likeness. The purpose of our loving the fellow saints is to see them grow into the likeness of Christ. Our love for our neighbor tells us how we love Christ. If we are seeking our neighbor's demise, then we are seeking Christ's demise. If we are seeking harm for our neighbor, we are seeking harm to Christ.

We ought to memorize Matthew 25:34-46 and live those Scriptures every day. As we clothe, feed, give drink to and visit our fellow saints, we do it to Christ. Do good to the household of faith, thereby we do good to Christ.

If there were a system whereby we could measure our love for our neighbor, perhaps we would be more conscious of doing it. But measuring our love might lead to self-righteousness. There is a sure measure which we must follow: How much do we love Christ? By that measure the fellow saints are loved in our words and deeds toward them.

I have only touched upon the idea of love toward the neighbor. I would like to conclude by saying that having the Truth and knowing it is only the beginning, the right beginning! Love is action in our lives. God said He loved His people and He performed the works for their redemption.

If we love God, we will also love God's people and care for them as He does. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends!

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## **NEWS** From, For, and About Our Churches

*by Linda Kaiser*

### **BIRTHS**

On January 11 Rev. & Mrs. Joostens of First were blessed with the birth of a baby boy, Paul Alan.

Mr. & Mrs. Larry Looyenga of First rejoice in the birth of a baby girl, Melanie Lynn, on March 6.

### **CONFESSION OF FAITH**

Janet Haak of South Holland made public confession of her faith on February 24.

On February 3, Debra Kuiper, Darcy Tomlenson, Daniel Kiel, and Philip Woudenberg made public profession of their faith in our Kalamazoo Church.

Miss Norma Westra made public confession of faith on February 3 in Faith Church.

### **MARRIAGES**

On December 27, Randy Hendricks and Nancy Van Meeteren were joined in marriage at the Highland Avenue Christian Reformed Church.

### **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of Mr. & Mrs. John Wierenga and their two baptized sons were received in our Edmonton Church.

Hull has received the membership papers of Mr. John Keizer from the First Reformed Church of Doon and also Mrs. Deb Hoksbergen from our Doon Church.

Our Edgerton Church has sent the baptism papers of Merlin Driesen to our Hull Church.

Our Redlands Church has received the membership papers of Miss Laurel Buiter from Loveland.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

A singspiration was held on February 17 in First Church. A men's quartet and a ladies' octet were the special music and Mr. R. Petersen was the song leader.

A Talent Program was held on February 24 at Hudsonville. Each area church was represented.

On February 28 a Spaghetti Supper was sponsored by the Federation Board at Hope School.

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# 1980 CONVENTION

## July 21-25, 1980

What is a good time? It can not be going with our friends into the world and hiding our light under a bushel. It can not be sinning. What is it? It is, that we, as Christian young people need fellowship with other Christian young people in a spiritual atmosphere. This is truly a good Christian time.

Just as our body requires physical exercise, so do we require spiritual exercise. We can not become spiritually inactive and expect to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord. We must work *hard* at it. The purpose of our convention is to provide a time, place, and instruction to help us to exercise our spiritual muscles. Our sole purpose on this earth is to glorify our God. How can we do this unless we grow spiritually? That is why you should be planning to attend the 1980 P.R.Y.P. Convention.

A few plans for the convention are definite enough to inform you of them. We have four speakers to speak on the theme: "APPRECIATION FOR THE REFORMED TRUTH". The topics are : "Our Reformed Foundation", "Developing The Truth", "The Admonition And How It Is Preached", and "Our Walk In The Reformed Faith".

The 1980 Convention will be held at Hope College, in Holland, Michigan. They have a beautiful chapel there that seats 1200 people. We hope that as many people as possible come and enjoy these speeches. The conventioners will be staying in the dorms at Hope College. Their fine facilities include tennis, bowling, ping-pong, pool, racketball, a gymnasium, and a swimming pool.

Inflation has hit the cost of holding a convention. The projected cost of this one is around seventeen thousand dollars. Because of this, registration fees are

going up to thirty dollars for the week. We felt conventioners should share part of this financial burden rather than having the adults in our congregations taking this entire burden.

As hosts of the 1980 P.R.Y.P. Convention, we urge you not to miss the spiritual fellowship and the closeness of the convention. Plan now to attend. We ask for your prayers as we plan the convention that we may glorify our God at the convention as we learn about appreciation for the Reformed truth.

The Hope P.R.Y.P.S. Steering Committee

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“When you think, when you speak, when you read, when you write,  
When you sing, when you walk, when you seek for delight,  
To be kept from all wrong when at home or abroad,  
Live always as under the eyes of the Lord!

What ever you think, never think what you feel  
You would blush in the presence of God to reveal;  
Whatever you speak, in a whisper or clear,  
Say nothing that you would not like Jesus to hear!

Whatever you write, though in haste or in heed,  
Write nothing you would not like Jesus to read;  
Whatever you sing, in the midst of your glees,  
Sing nothing His listening ear would displease.

Wherever you go, never go where you fear,  
Lest the great God should ask you, ‘How camest thou here?’  
Turn away from each pleasure you’d shrink from pursuing,  
If God should look down and say, ‘What are you doing?’ ”

# Leaving Father And Mother



**Rev. Cornelius Hanks**

**Dedicated to the covenant youth  
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holy marriage in the Lord.**

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*Courtship*  
*Wedding Plans*  
*And they shall be one flesh*

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