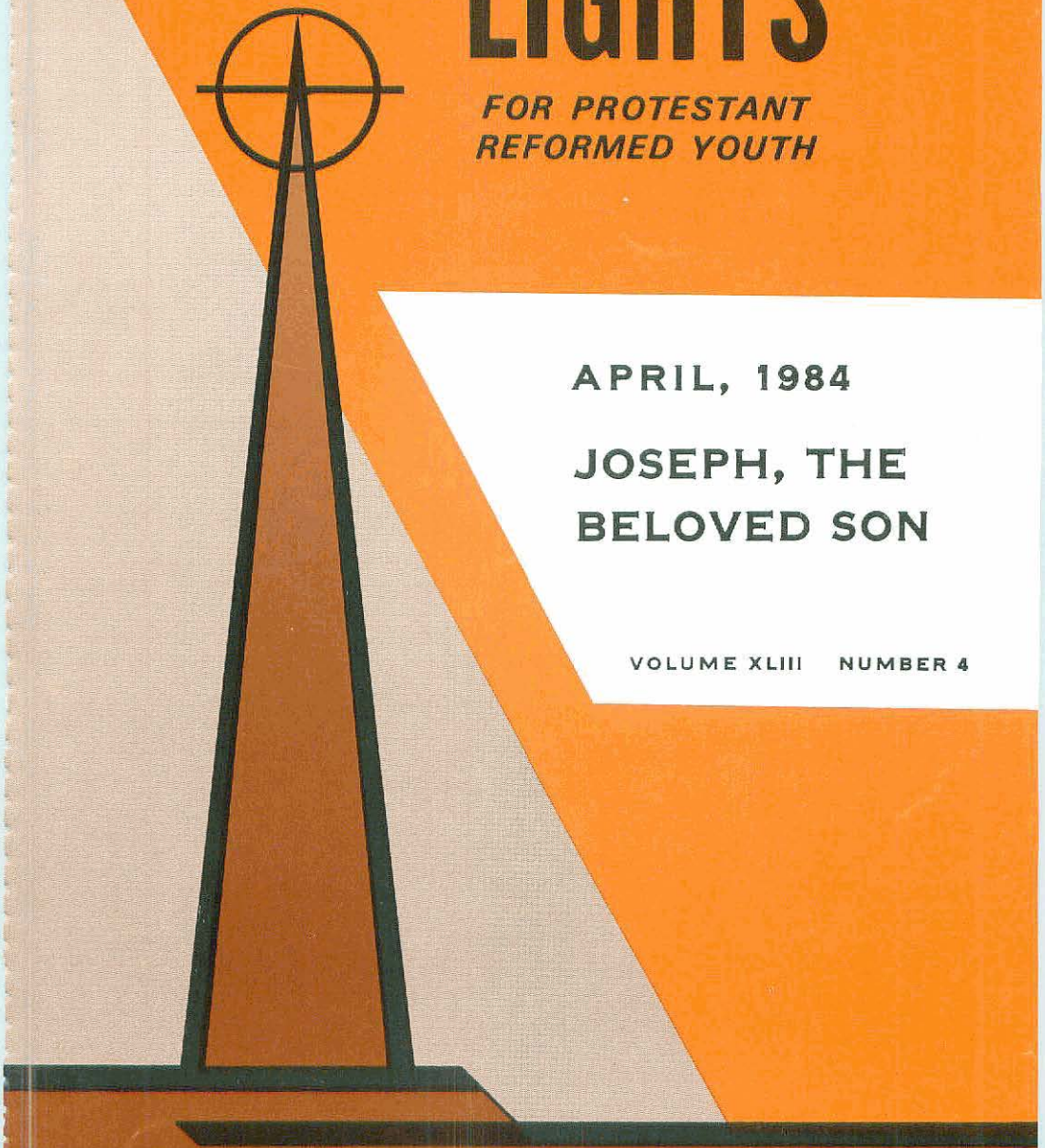
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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CONTENTS

Editor's Notes - Dave Harbach 1
EDITORIAL
A Wondering Letter To My Grandchildren - John M. Faber 1
TRUTH VS. ERROR
God's Sovereignty - Rev. R. C. Harbach 5
Blessedness For The Persecuted -Rev. J. A. Heys 8
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY
Joseph, The Beloved Son - Rev. D. Kuiper 11
The Power of Christ's Resurrection In Our Life - Rev. W. Bekkering 14
As A Father Pitieth - Rev. D. Engelsma 16
CRITIQUE
Social Security - Ben Wigger 18
Unto The Hills - Sue Porte 21
DISCUSSION OUTLINES OF I SAMUEL
Chapters 15 & 16 - Rev. R. Hanko 23
What's Happening - Paula Faber 25

EDITOR'S NOTES

by Dave Harbach

First of all the *Beacon Lights* staff gives a heartfelt thank you to Rev. G. Lubbers for his many years of edifying articles in the rubric "From the Pastor's Study." The last article Rev. Lubbers wrote in the *Beacon Lights* was "Honoring the Hoary Head." In that issue he writes, "Many years of toil and labor, the enduring the afflictions of Christ is mirrored on that face of the godly old man. It is the face of the man of God, who has seen the face of God, which face shines upon him. This gives him great peace, a peace which passes all understanding. Yes, such a hoary head is an adornment of righteousness. It is the crown of a fruitful life of godliness." Again, Rev. Lubbers, we thank you for your many years of toil and labor.

Rev. Dale Kuiper is now filling the gap left by Rev. Lubbers in "From the Pastor's Study." We welcome Rev. Kuiper as a contributing editor. He is beginning his writings with a study of the life of Joseph.

A poem by Miss Sue Porte was sent to me by Rev. Koole. In his letter to me, Rev. Koole writes, "Miss Sue Porte is a charter member of our Redlands Congregation and is over 80 years of age. Not only does she write good poetry, but the night of the Anniversary she recited it entirely from memory, all 53 verses, of which I sent you 13 . . . . The opening Psalm selection is appropriate . . . for Redlands.

Editorial

A WONDERING LETTER TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

In this letter I am going to ask you to sit next to me, and we will think about some things of which we do not usually think. First, let us think of the Creation Story, and remember the first sentence,

"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth". We all know about that, but I wonder (that is thinking, too) how much we know about the things in the "heaven" mentioned there. We know quite a lot about the earthly creation, the dry land and the seas. We know about the Plant World: potatoes, carrots, spinach, pansies, roses and the big corn stalks. But did you ever wonder about all the plants in the waters of the lakes, seas and oceans? There is a lot of that kind of growth under the water, you know.

Then there is the Animal World of which we know quite a bit. Horses, cows, dogs, cats, rats, mice, giraffes and others too numerous to mention. Do you ever think and wonder about some of the individual animals and their peculiar qualities? Think of elephants who draw up water in their trunks (noses) in order to drink. If we should try that we would drown!

Then there is the Human World. That is another world all by itself. We are so accustomed to all the people that we do not wonder so much about that World. But, my, oh my, what a great field of wondering is open to the use of our imagination regarding the wonders in that World.

But today we are going to think of another world to which we pay so little attention, and therefore we miss so very, very much. That is the Spirit World. In this letter we will sit down together and think and wonder about the inhabitants of that little known World. I wonder when God created all those hundreds and thousands of spirits? We know them as angels. There are now two kinds of angels, good and bad. But "in the beginning" they were all created good. Those celestial (heavenly) beings were created a little higher in dignity than Adam and Eve. I often wonder just what that means; my, it almost makes by head whirl! When I think of the word, "being", I think of another person, but we know there are "beings" other than people. Whereas Adam was also made a living soul and had a spirit; he was made with a body that took up space, and was solid. Those spirits which we call angels have no solid body and do not take up space. I have read books which speak of ghosts and were described as wisps of misty material, and sometimes had the vague shape of a person. But ghosts are the imagination of people who do not know the Bible. All these are but caricatures (funny pictures) of angels. Angels can come and go (distance means nothing to them) in a moment. And the wonder of that is no one can see them unless they take on an appearance. There are many instances of that in the Bible, and we will mention some of those appearances in my next letter when we think of the good angels.

Another source of wondering (thinking) is that God created them all good, some of them turned against God their Creator. The highest and most powerful, called, Satan, led the rebellion against God's rule, and many thousands followed that wicked leader for ever. Because there are now two totally different kinds of angels, and there is so much to wonder about both kinds of them, you and I will, in this letter, think about the bad fallen angels with Satan as their head. Next time, as I hinted, I will ask you to help me think about the good angels with Michael as their head, and how God uses them. I promise.

I wonder why Satan wanted to usurp God's throne and be king of the Spirit World. I wonder if he was not happy in his God-given state of bliss. And don't you wonder how he was able to enlist so many fellow spirits to join him. And right here I introduce to you a real big "wonder". Don't you wonder why God allowed him to exist after that great rebellion? How come God did not cast him and his followers into hell at the very next moment? Maybe if we think about that puzzle awhile we can

come to a satisfactory answer by the time we come to the end of this wondering letter. Let's see.

I wonder how long Adam and Eve enjoyed that close fellowship with God in that Garden? A day? a week? a month? or possibly a year? You can wonder as much as you want to but we cannot know, for the Bible does not tell us. Anyway, you know the story how the Serpent tempted Eve to eat of the fruit of the tree that God had told Adam was off limits. That Serpent was Satan in the form of a snake. He had to take some form because as a spirit he would not be visible to Eve. Imagine (that is still another form of wondering) Eve actually listened to, and answered a snake! I wonder if Eve wondered how it was possible for a snake to talk in man's language! And then the snake slyly questioned God's motive for restricting their diet of fruit by showing them that one tree in the center of the Garden was not for them. Satan said, "Sure, God said that if you eat of that tree you shall die, but God knows that should you eat of it you shall become like God. But I tell you that you will not die, far from it. You and your husband will then be able to decide for yourself what is good and what is bad." Whew! I wonder how Eve could even listen for a moment to such a bold lie! I wonder why Eve did not refer that Serpent to Adam who was the king of that Garden. You see, Eve already sinned when she listened to that slanderous statement. She should have called Adam to chase that bad snake out of the Garden! I wonder why she didn't. But she didn't, and she looked at that fruit, and it did indeed look good to eat; then she reached up to the lowest branch, plucked a fruit down, bit into it, and said to the snake, "My, that **is** good!" After having eaten it she took another one along to bring to Adam to taste. She said to Adam, "Look, look at this delicious fruit I took off from that Tree in the center of the Garden. The Serpent told me all about that Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. He told me that if we would eat of that fruit we should be as God, and could decide for ourselves what is good or evil like God does. I ate one and it's super! Try it for yourself. Hurry, we'll be like God!" I really do not know that she said all that, but I imagine that she did. But I wonder why Adam did not question her about that conversation she said she had with a snake. I wonder why he did not think of the rules that God had told him of when he and God were walking in the Garden in the cool of the day. He knew then that God was his Friend! And now he seems to forget all that, and listens to his wife say bad things about his Friend. He took the fruit from his wife's outstretched hand, put it to his mouth, and took a bite.

Looking back at that sorry tale I wonder how soon Eve knew that she was now a fallen human being. Did that fruit really taste so much better than all the others? Did she want her husband to enjoy the fruit with her? Or did she now want her husband to be a co-worker of evil? Did she not want to be the only law breaker? I wonder. I think that as soon as she disobeyed God she know she would never be the same again; and that was her reason for giving one to Adam that they might share the guilt and punishment for disobeying their Maker. What do you think?

Many people who do not fully understand the Scriptures very well think that it was not fair of God that we should share that punishment with Adam. They think it unfair of God that we are under the curse God placed upon Adam. Such wondering is sin. You and I do not wonder about that because we know that Adam is our head. If President Reagan should declare war on Russia, we, you and I, would be at war with Russia. Our president is the head of the nation and represents us in making war. Somewhat like Adam's headship over us.

Ever since the temptation of Eve, the

devil and his army of demons never give up their goal of trying to tempt God's people to sin. I wonder what satisfaction Satan gets out of that. But we needn't wonder too long about that because Satan wants so desperately to thwart God's plan of salvation. He wants to prevent God from having anyone reach the heavenly glory of the New Paradise. Satan's extreme effort toward that end was when he tempted our Lord three times to do what he suggested, even quoting the Old Testament Scriptures to prove that it would be alright to God if He would do the simple acts that Satan required. Satan knew that if Jesus would die for our sins and thereby pay for them, releasing us from the guilt of sin, then Satan would lose his battle against God. But in his blind-hatred of God he did not understand Jesus' power over the demons in the demon-possessed men in Jesus' day. He showed that He had ultimate power over Satan as well. All Jesus said was, "Come out of him" and the demons came out!

Now back to the puzzle we were thinking about in the early part of this letter. Remember, we were thinking and wondering why the Holy Ghost did not immediately cast Satan and his hosts directly into hell, the place prepared for them to suffer eternal punishment. But I think you can realize with me that God's plan of salvation was to be realized through sin and grace. God did not want, methinks, people who were mere robots who could not choose the right and reject the wrong. No, He wants people who can always say "no" to the devil and say "yes" to God. You remember your catechism lessons which told of The Fall, the sending of God's Son into our human world to take upon Himself our curse upon the Cross; to die and be buried, and to rise again for our justification. Oh, it includes all that and many more details. Oh no, Satan could not be immediately sent to hell; that must wait till Judgment Day, because he must (though unwillingly) serve to execute God's Counsel. Yes indeed, God rules over all!

I wonder how much influence the devil and his demons have over us, you and me. I think that whenever we sin it is through his tempting us. Temptation is not so bad. Jesus also was tempted. No that's not the trouble. The big trouble comes when we yield to temptation. I can remember, long ago when earth was still young - I mean when I was a young boy, that we used to sing a song of which the first line was: "Yield not to temptation for yielding is sin".

Now after all that thinking and wondering about those members of that sinful spirit world; how they are mortal enemies of ours; and how their portion will be the place of torment reserved for them; what do you think we should do when we are tempted to sin against any one of the Ten Commandments? What about swearing, gossiping, desecration of the Lord's Day, theft, adultery and disobeying our parents and teachers? What do you think? . . . I knew you would think that!

Love Gramps.

P.S. I can hardly wait to join you in wondering about the good spirits, the angels, and how on many occasions God sent them to give direct help and comfort to his people. G.

"Christian teachers are servants. They are servants of snot-nosed children, of uneducated parents, and of God; and they are servants of God by being servants of parents and children. Therefore, teachers are lowly, very lowly. But according to the law of the Kingdom, exactly in this lowliness they are very great, so great that sufficient honor cannot be given them."

The Protestant Reformed Teacher, Rev. David Engelsma

Truth vs. Error

REV. R. C. HARBACH

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

"All the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and He doeth according to His will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth, and none can stay His hand, or say unto Him, 'What doest Thou?'" Dn. 4:35

By comparison to the Most High God, the absolute Sovereign of heaven and earth, men, including their rulers and dignitaries, are nothing. What are they in their substance, riches, duration and glory, as compared to God in His eternity, infinity and all His excellencies! What is a speck of dust over against God? (Isa. 40:15-18). What are men as compared to God's sovereign grace to choose them to eternal life? They are reputed as nothing as compared to their costly redemption in Christ Jesus; nothing as compared to their justification from eternity (Rom. 8:30); absolutely nothing in their regeneration, since God does it all (as in the work of creation, Eph. 2:10). Is not the elect child of God nothing in all his salvation from first to last, which is all of grace, and not of works? (Even our **good** works He produces in us to will and to do them. Phil. 2:13).

"He doeth according to His will," according to His decree, counsel and purpose; for His power is irresistible, and His sovereignty invincible. Whatever He pleases He does. Whatever He plans He performs. He is sovereign "in the army of heaven." His will is perfectly done in heaven. The "army of heaven" fights for the cause of the church of God. Part of that army apostatized to be cast down to hell, none of those fallen being shown any mercy. The rest, elect, were preserved in Christ their Head—all this according to His sovereign will.

"Among the inhabitants of the earth," He does as He pleases politically, removing rulers to set up other rulers (Dn.

2:21). He does as He pleases economically, creating conditions of inflation, recession, depression or prosperity. He does as He pleases spiritually (soteriologically, i.e., as to salvation), for He loves whom He will, chooses whom He will, redeems out of every kindred, tongue, tribe and nation whom He pleases. "Of His own will He begot us." He does what He will with His own. "He hath mercy on whom He will, and whom He will He hardeneth."

"And none can stay His hand." Who was there? — to attempt staying His hand in creation? Was it, and is it, any different in providence? He does what He pleases about the weather, and no man can do anything about either the weather or what God pleases to do with it! God's hand (doing) cannot be hindered; His purposes cannot be annulled. His work in the world and in the churches, no matter how much opposition they meet, can not be stopped. The one so foolish as to say to Him, "What doest Thou?" shows he does not know that "He giveth no account of His matters" (Job 33:13).

The word **sovereignty** (or sovereign) is not found in the Bible (no more than is the word "absolute"). Yet the great truth of the absolute sovereignty of God is what the Bible is all about. Therefore, every Reformed believer ought to have on his reading agenda such books as: A. W. Pink's "The Sovereignty of God," H. H. Meeter's "The Fundamental Principle of Calvinism," H. Hoeksema's "God's Eternal Good Pleasure," and C. H. Spurgeon's "Sermons on Sovereignty." It was the latter who said of this truth, "Woe be to the people where the pulpit gives no utterance to the deep things of God; they will grow lean from want of nourishment, and sad from lack of comfort."

Our **Reformed Dogmatics** says, "Only He that is Self-existent and absolutely independent is at the same time absolute Lord. For absolute sovereignty is not merely supreme, or highest lordship; it is that virtue according to which God is sovereign in Himself. His is the only sovereignty; and there is no sovereignty anywhere but it is derived from His Lordship. His is the sole prerogative to establish the law for all the universe, to judge the creature, and to execute His will. There is no criterion above or next to God, whereby He can be measured or judged. . ." (p. 69; for details, be sure to read pp. 70, 71). On the subject, the Westminster Confession states, "The light of nature showeth that there is a God who hath lordship and sovereignty over all (Rom. 1:20); is good, and doeth good unto all; and is therefore to be loved, feared, praised, called upon, trusted in and served with all the heart, and with all the soul and with all the might." (Chap. XXI; see also chap. II, sec. II).

William Sykes (1861-1930), a prominent Orangeman and first president of the Sovereign Grace Union, believed that the first and most elementary truth which a regenerated child of God begins to learn is the absolute sovereignty of God. Elisha Coles, "hot on the trail of the Arminian controversy at the Synod of Dort, 1618-19, and of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, 1643-49," wrote his "God's Sovereignty," in which he states that "this high and tremendous attribute" is a bottomless, shoreless ocean. He sees this truth as the ground of election, so that sovereign election is founded, not on man, his work, or his "free will," but on the rock of divine sovereignty, on which it rests with all its weight.

God is indisputably sovereign. What may be said of a human despot may even more be said of our sovereign God, "He doeth whatsoever pleaseth Him . . . and who may (has the right to) say unto Him, 'What doest Thou?' " (Eccles. 8:4). When "He taketh away, who can hinder Him?" Who will be so bold as to "say unto Him, 'What doest Thou?' " (Job 9:12). "Who art thou, O man, that repliest against God?" (Rom. 9:20). Man, a potsherd, may

strive with the potsherd of the earth, but not with his Maker. (Isa. 45:9). God will be neither mocked nor censured. Man is responsible to God, God to no one.

God is sovereign in choosing some people and in rejecting others. Three hundred years ago theologians pointed to the savage peoples of Africa and native to our own American continents as examples of vast differences God has sovereignly made between us and them. Today, the great difference between American Christians and American Indians, who have never left their Animism and sun-worship, still exists. But today in Africa there are probably more Christians and churches with regenerated membership than in these United States. Ours is called a Christian nation. Nominally, perhaps, it was. But paganism, humanism and the sins of Romans One more characterize our nation. Africa today seems more a Christian country than ours.

God did not choose the Greeks nor the Romans, but only a very small remnant out of both (cp. Rom. & I, II Cor.). God has rejected the Iranians, the Afghans and the Islamic nations. He chose His people out of the very small nation of the Jews. Read Psalm 147:19, 20. Why did the Lord choose them and since then His church? Because He loved them. Why did He love them? Because it was the sovereign good pleasure of His will to love them. (Dt. 7:7, 8; Eph. 1:4, 5, 9). The churches of Asia Minor, as Christ Himself warned, have been removed (Rev. 2:5). That country now, with a different name, is a bitter enemy of both our nation and everything Christian. The Latinistic and European captive nations fatally imagine they have the means of grace, but in their national churches have neither the pure preaching of the Word nor the proper administration of the sacraments as instituted by Christ. God is sovereign in continuing these nations while depriving them of the biblical, effectual means of grace, in giving them up to superstitions (idolatry, invocation of deceased saints, angels or other creatures, image-worship, sorcery, gambling) and in abandoning them to both political and ecclesiastical tyranny and hierarchy.

God in His sovereignty has ordained to save His people by grace (undeserved favor) alone, through faith (which attributes all of salvation to God and none of it to man), and therefore not by works of imagined "righteousness" which we have done (Tit. 3:5). This, however, is rejected in detestation by the self-righteous sinner, who, like Owen Wister's **Virginian**, says, "As for salvation, I have got this far. Somebody (sweeping his arm at the sunset and the mountains) must have made all that, I know. But I know one more thing I would tell Him to His face: if I can't do nothing long enough and good enough to earn eternal happiness, I can't do nothing long enough and bad enough to be damned. I reckon He plays a square game with us, if He plays at all, and I ain't botherin' my haid about other worlds." (Chap XVIII). There are people today who speak like that right to God's face! They say, "We are lords! (Heb., We have dominion!)." This means, We have broken loose from subjection or submission to any power or authority. "We will come no more unto Thee" (Jer. 2:31). This is the Pelagian rejection of the sovereignty of God and the doctrine that God made all men little sovereigns.

Why do we believe the doctrine of God's absolute universal sovereignty? Because it is revealed in the Bible (no other book in the world does this), and also because our faith to believe it is the gift of God to us. God's gracious sovereignty makes us able and willing to believe it (Jn. 3:27; Ps. 110:3). It is all because the Lord our God has brought us up out of the Egypt and the bondage of our own thoughts (Isa. 55:7-9) to the liberty of His thoughts to think them after Him!

Blessedness For The Persecuted

by Rev. John A. Heys

They will do it!

You may be sure, Young People, that they will do it.

To what do I refer? Well, we considered the seven Beatitudes and saw that in them we have a seven-fold picture of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. They are poor in spirit, mourn over sin, are meek, and hunger and thirst for righteousness, are merciful, pure in heart and peacemakers. And you can be sure that the citizens of the kingdom of darkness, who are the spiritual offspring of Satan, will persecute the citizens of the kingdom of heaven. As surely as a cat will pounce on a mouse, an eagle will swoop down on the rabbit in the open field, and the wolf will seize the sheep that wanders away from the fold, the world will persecute the Church.

This persecution will not always come in the form of bodily injury and death. But, as Jesus puts it, they will "revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." All this reviling and accusing falsely may lead to bodily injury and even death; but in the present age it is more likely to assume the form of name calling, sarcasm, ridicule, ostracizing, tormenting, shunning, denying work and the like.

Indeed there were times when the citizens of Satan's kingdom did persecute with bloodshed and death. Look at Genesis 4:8 in the light of I John 3:12. Cain killed Abel, and why? Because Abel was poor in spirit, one who mourned over sin, was meek, and hungered and thirsted after righteousness. John explains that murder as due to the fact that Cain's "works were evil and his brother's righteous." Why did they seek to kill Enoch? Why did the Jews kill Jesus? And why did they plot to kill Paul? The citizens of Satan's empire hate the citizens of the kingdom of God. And hate always wants to kill. It does not always dare to do so. It, for its own life's sake may not take life. But you can be sure of it that hatred wants to kill and get out of its way the object against which it is directed.

And we can expect, after the seven-fold description of the citizens of the kingdom of heaven to read, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake." But please note that change here. Whereas in the seven Beatitudes we read each time of what the citizens of the kingdom of heaven are and do, we now read of what is done unto them. And for that reason we do not list it with the seven Beatitudes as a separate and eighth Beatitude, even though it also begins with a "Blessed are". Note also that the blessedness of which this verse speaks is a repetition of the one in regard to poor in spirit, and thus, if you please, the same as in the very first Beatitude. We might, in a sense, call it a summarization, or better a consequence whose blessedness is mentioned for further comfort and peace of mind. This especially because Jesus adds, in Matthew 5:12, "Rejoice and be exceeding

glad: for great is your reward in heaven, for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Truly these words are added for further comfort, assuring these citizens that they are in good company, and that nothing strange is happening to them. It also cautions them not to look for their reward here below. Their reward is in heaven where the persecutors cannot touch it.

Still more, after Jesus had given the seven-fold marks of the citizens of His kingdom He now gives us a way to test our citizenship in that kingdom. Are we such citizens, we will certainly be reviled, persecuted, evil spoken of falsely for His sake. And the big question, young people, is exactly whether you do experience such reviling, persecutions and false accusations. One need not walk about in doubt, if one experiences the hatred of the world for that one's walk of life in the truth and in God's law.

You covenant young women are going to attract young men of the world. We live so much on top of each other today. We must mingle with unbelievers in the office and in the shop, on the street and in the bus. But if we meet them on the dance floor, in the movie, at sports events and worldly amusements, they are going to consider us fellow citizens in their kingdom of darkness. If they like your company, and in their presence you never mourn over sin or manifest any hungering and thirsting after righteousness, you are not going to be reviled but loved, will suffer no persecution for Christ's sake but be showered with gifts and affection, will have nice things said about you and receive, perhaps, proposals for marriage. But reveal these signs of citizenship in Christ's kingdom, and you will be dropped like a hot potato; and nasty stories about you will be circulated which are not true.

At the same time, when you meet a young man, even at church activities and in the church services themselves, by all means look to see whether he manifests these earmarks of citizenship in Christ's kingdom. If not, you must terminate the fellowship, or lose the assurance that your own citizenship is there. You must not think that you can make him such a citizen but must either wait until there are such evidences, or put out of your mind completely the idea that you are compatible for marriage.

This same thing, of course, is true for our young men. Before they begin a friendship with a young woman, they must look for these seven signs. If they do not find even one, they better find another young woman for their companionship. And that means also that they go where they can expect to find such young women. The tragedy of it today is that young men so often look, not in the church, but in the world and pick one up at a worldly function of some kind, and because of outward beauty rather than the spiritual beauty of the kingdom and listed in the Beatitudes.

The sermon on the kingdom was not spoken merely for middle age people, senior citizens and those nearing the end of their earthly pilgrimage. The Bible, Young People, was written for YOU! Christ is as concerned about little lambs as He is about the full grown sheep. And you, who lie between, are therefore also included. Does not the very law speak to children and command them to obey their fathers and mothers that it may be well with them? Does this not show that God is concerned with you, and that Jesus wrote these words for you, to guide you and to enable you to "rejoice and be exceeding glad"?

A word of caution, however, your being reviled, persecuted and having all manner of evil spoken against you, must be for Christ's sake. When you deserve reviling, and men despise you because of your sins, when they persecute you because you are not merciful, pure in heart and a peacemaker, but hurt them because of sinful bitterness in your soul,

and false accusations are made because you falsely accused them, all this is no sign that you belong to Christ's kingdom. Jesus qualifies His words twice in that He speaks of being persecuted for **righteousness'** sake, and when men shall revile . . . and say all manner of evil falsely for **My sake.** If that is the case, then we may be assured that our citizenship is in heaven. Then we may be assured that we are in the line wherein God's faithful prophets in the Old Testament were, as they walked to the new Jerusalem.

The prophets were persecuted for speaking the truth and for condemning a sinful walk. They already, long before Christ came, set forth the earmarks of citizenship in His kingdom. And think again of Enoch who walked with God and prophesied to the wicked that "The Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints to execute judgment, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed." See Jude 14:15. They tried to kill him. Think of Elijah whose life was sought by wicked king Ahab, to mention only a few instances of walking in righteousness, mourning over sin and being persecuted by Satan's kingdom's citizens.

And you, Young People, are here called to rejoice and to be exceeding glad. That means you are not to regret it that you have to suffer reproach and shame. Your flesh will want to weep when you lose the friendship of worldly young people, are insulted, mocked and called by very derogatory names. Our flesh is inclined to behave as a citizen of the kingdom of darkness and return blow for blow, sarcasm for sarcasm, and in even stronger language that that which is hurled at us to revile the citizens of that evil kingdom. And, if you please, our flesh is inclined to say all manner of evil about them falsely. They are evil, but we are inclined to get revenge and manufacture evil charges about them, to exaggerate what they have said and have done, and thus to do evil ourselves.

Not so, Jesus says. Instead rejoice and be exceeding glad. What can mean more to us than to know that ours is the kingdom of heaven? What has more value than to have a reward in heaven? Is there anything on this earth that can compare with it? Men can give your rewards here below. When you walk with the world in its sins, it will gladly reward you with what it can. At best it gives you what moth and rust corrupt and that thieves break through to steal. And be it a million dollars or something worth that much according to earthly standards, you can enjoy it only for a few years, and cannot take it with you. But a reward in heaven is an everlasting reward, whose value will only increase, so that the psalmist can truthfully declare that then, yes then, he shall be satisfied. Did you ever see a person here on this earth who was satisfied with what he had? You will be, if your reward is in heaven. And you need have no fear that anyone can or will take it away from you.

The kingdom of heaven and its treasures were bought with the precious blood of Christ; and He earned the reward for you. If you are going to evaluate anything by what is cost, then heaven and all its glory so far surpasses all else because of the death of God's Son Who bought it for us by His blood. And He here assures you that when you suffer and die for His sake, He is not going to forget your deed but reward it.

Rejoice then and be exceeding glad when He so directs your life, and gives you grace to suffer for His sake. He is speaking to you in all that ridicule and sarcasm, in the pain of body and soul you suffer for His sake. He is saying to you: "You are a citizen of My kingdom. And I did die for you. When you die for me, it is because I died for you and gave you the life of My kingdom. I will receive you into it and reward you, in My grace, with all

the pleasures and joys of My kingdom. I suffered to buy your citizenship. And your suffering for My sake, is an evidence that My life is in you. Rejoice and be exceeding glad for this." There is great blessedness for the persecuted, if they are persecuted for Christ's sake.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. D. KUIPER

Joseph, The Beloved Son

"These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren; and the lad was with the sons of Bilhah, and with the sons of Zilpah, his father's wives: and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age: and he made him a coat of many colors." **Gen. 37:2, 3**

In a number of articles during the next several months we would like to say a few things about the young saint Joseph that we hope will be of spiritual benefit to the young people who read our **Beacon Lights**. At the time this sacred history begins, Joseph is seventeen years old. Obviously this fact makes this history especially pertinent to young people; young men, but also young women. Joseph is a wonderful example for you to follow. What the Scriptures say of him, what God worked in his heart and life so long ago, that is a safe example for you to follow. Be like Joseph! As we unfold this

part of the Bible together, pray that you have the grace and the desire to be like him spiritually. The times have changed and the geography is different, but the lessons endure.

We hold Joseph before you as a safe example to follow because he was an Old Testament type of our Savior, Jesus Christ. There simply can be no doubt about this: in his relation to his father, in his relation to his brethren, in his being slandered, in his prophesying, in his saving much people alive, in his being a fruitful bough (Genesis 49:22-27), the eleventh son of Jacob is a beautiful and powerful picture of Jesus in His relationships and in His saving work! There is, therefore, an impress of the life and work of the coming Messiah in the life and work of this young man. From time to time we will bring this out, but our primary purpose is to hold before you the sterling spiritual qualities which God blessed then and still blesses today.

What's your relationship with your parents? What kind of a relationship is it, and what is its chief characteristic? The relationship between Jacob and Joseph has received a bad press in many commentaries and Sunday school papers. Generally, Jacob is portrayed as a partial parent, creating family problems by doting over a son of his old age. With that, Joseph is generally described as a spoiled child, a goody-goody, and a tattle-tale. Both these characterizations are far from true. Two things in the passage quoted above show this to be untrue. We do not merely read that **Jacob** (as in verse one) loved Joseph more than all his children, but **Israel** did so. That new name, given to Jacob by God at Peniel, is a name with covenant significance, and it is used here to reveal that his greater love for Joseph was a covenant-motivated love. Secondly, the coat that Joseph was given was an expression of Jacob's desire that Joseph receive the birthright blessing. Rather than being a "coat of many colors" it was a "long-sleeved cloak", not suitable for manual labor, but suitable for the work of an overseer or governor.

Thus we see that Joseph stood very high in his father's estimation. None of the other sons came near to Jacob in spiritual stature as Joseph did. The father actually had little in common with most of his own sons. They did not reveal a strong interest in the promise of God that had been given to Abraham and to Isaac, and which was the wellspring of Jacob's life. Some of them were cruel and unstable. But already by the time he was seventeen years of age, Joseph revealed a love of the truth and a determination to stand for the truth as is clear from the fact that he reproved his brothers in their iniquity, and reported their evil doings to their father (verse 2). All this means that father and son were spiritually one! They loved each other not only naturally, but spiritually, for spiritual reasons. They often spoke of the truth of salvation as that salvation was promised to them by their God. They had the same view as regards doctrine and life! Father and son were brothers in the Lord! They were friends together, and in that friendship they were united to God!

What a tremendous lesson for us today, both parents and young people! Today, when every thing goes on at such a mad pace that there is no time for worthwhile things unless one consciously makes the time; today, when the truth is ridiculed, correction is despised, and wisdom falls in the streets; today, what is **your** relationship to your parents? What does **your** family life amount to, a pitched battle? A going of separate ways with as little contact and conversation as possible? Or can it be said of you and your relationship to your parents that it is based on the covenant and takes the covenant into consideration at every point?

Sons and daughters ought to care far more about what their parents think of

them, their ideas and practices, than many seem to care. Sons and daughters ought to give more earnest heed to the words that their parents are speaking to them than many seem to be giving. The fact that most of you are peer-oriented rather than parent-oriented is often used as an excuse for mindless, mob behavior and disobedience. Let's see it for what it really is: the inclination to follow the word and example of our peers (peer pressure) rather than the word and example of our parents is an inclination that arises out of our old man of sin. I find nothing in Genesis chapters 37-50 to indicate that Joseph cared one whit for what his brothers said of him or thought of him. Nor did he have these insecurities later when he was in Egypt. He had the new-man, Spirit-worked gift of looking above himself and his peers for approval, and then for an approval that had some real meaning!

For many years, in fact, from the very earliest years, Joseph had received instruction and correction gladly. He trusted the Word of God that his father spoke to the family. He did not question parental authority, and he did not try to maintain himself when he was found to be in error, as he surely was from time to time. The result was that he developed in the fear of the Lord personally, and a strong bond of love and respect, communion and joy blossomed between Jacob and Joseph. Sadly, Jacob could not find this in the other sons, and just as sadly Joseph could not find it with his many brothers. But father and son had it! This explains the strong love of Jacob for Joseph. He was the well loved son!

Twice during the earthly sojourn of the Son of God in our flesh, God spoke these words concerning Jesus: "This is My beloved Son in Whom I am well pleased." This divine pleasure and love were revealed when Jesus was baptized by John at the Jordan, and when Jesus was transfigured with excellent glory on the holy mount. This great love of God for Jesus Christ, revealed at these crucial points in his ministry, is the fulfillment of the love that Jacob had for Joseph typically. The Triune God established a covenant with the Son of God in the flesh. That covenant was the basis for the beautiful prayer that Jesus uttered in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 17), and that bond of friendship was the basis for all the work that Christ accomplished for us as the Head of the Church. In Christ there was submission to the Father's will that is truly amazing! In Christ God delighted and found fullest pleasure! For God had appointed Him to have the pre-eminence and to be the firstborn of many brethren. All men are directed to "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect in whom my soul delighteth!" (Isaiah 42)

But God's covenat is not only with Christ, it is also with all those who have been given to Him in eternity and believe on Him in time (Gal. 3:16-29). We know this as a covenant of grace, for by nature we do not stand in relation to God as Joseph did to Jacob, but by nature we stand related to God as his brothers stood to their father! We were enemies of God, not friends; we were repelled by the thought of God, not drawn. But God has brought us nigh through the blood of the cross, made us His friends, and established us in His family circle.

God is pleased to do that in the line of believing generations. That means that fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, parents and children of all ages, because of their place in that covenant, have love for each other, have things to say to each other, have things to share and a common life to live. How does your relationship to father and mother measure up, in the light of what we have found in Joseph's life, age seventeen? How does your relationship to God measure up, in light of the intimate friendship with God that was enjoyed by Christ?

The Power of CHRIST'S RESURRECTION In Our Life

by Pastor Wayne Bekkering

Larry was a Christian. He was a junior at the Christian high school supported by his church. Larry had a part time job at a hardware store so he could have some spending money and so that he could help pay part of his tuition.

Larry had worked at the hardware store for about a year and a half when a boy named Bill began working there. Bill was nearly the same age as Larry. The two boys often worked together in the basement getting stock priced and ready for display.

Saturday was normally the busy day especially in the spring time. Friday night the two boys could get in some extra hours marking stock.

One Monday Bill found out that Larry had asked for Friday night off. When Larry come to work Bill greeted him with a cheery "Hello" and a knowing grin. "Got a big date coming up, eh?" Larry smiled and quietly said, "No". Now Bill was really curious. All that evening Bill tried to find out what was happening Friday night but Larry carefully avoided telling him.

Wednesday the boys worked again after school. Larry had decided that he would have to tell Bill what he was doing Friday night. Bill was all set himself to find out, and he started in. Larry told Bill that on Friday he was going to church for a Good Friday worship service. "Church on Friday night? You have to be kidding! You can use the money can't you? I thought you were saving to get a car!" Bill stopped and Larry said nothing.

Later on that evening the boys were busy working and Bill asked, "Is church really that important to you Larry?" Larry's answer was "Yes", and his question was, "Is it important to you that Jesus died on the cross and rose again?" Bill didn't know quite what to say, but answered that he had always believed in Easter and would probably go to church too. His answer struck Larry because it wasn't a straight answer. So Larry asked, "What **do** you believe about Easter, Bill?" Now Bill was stuck. "Well", stammered Bill, "It's sort of a sign of new life with spring and everything else connected to it."

On Larry's way home that night he was thinking of Bill's vague answer. Was Bill just embarrassed to talk about spiritual things or was that the way he really looked at Jesus' death and resurrection? Larry kept analyzing Bill's response after he was in bed. Larry had never talked with anyone before about spiritual things that didn't believe just as he did. Bill's response was so disconnected from the truth of the Bible. It was so mythical like Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny.

Larry continued to meditate "What would I have said if someone asked me that question?", Larry thought. Larry began to think back about what he had learned about Jesus' death and resurrection. The Bible is so clear and factual. How could anyone doubt these things?

With that he went to sleep.

The next day Larry thought little about his brief talk with Bill. But one thing he did think about was this, "What if Bill asked me the same question?"

When Larry went to church with his family Friday night he was more attentive than usual. The pastor preached from John 19:30 where Jesus says, "It is finished". The pastor set the historical scene at Calvary. Jesus was on the cross between two thieves. He had been mocked, spit on, whipped and hung on the cross. All of that was real history and Larry believed it. The second point of the sermon dealt with the question, "What had Jesus finished". The pastor talked about God's counsel, about our sin, about our disobedience and what we left unfinished, about the satisfaction that God demanded, about the anger of God against our sin and about Jesus bearing it all for us so that He finished everything that God would ever require of us. In the third point the pastor asked the question from Matt. 16:13, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" Then he asked the question of verse 15, "But whom say ye that I am?"

That was not a difficult question for Larry to answer in his mind, but more difficult to express verbally.

Saturday at the hardware store was very busy so Larry and Bill had no opportunity to continue their discussion. Larry was happy that the subject didn't come up because he was not yet settled in his heart and mind what he would say to Bill. This troubled Larry. He had always believed everything the Bible taught about Jesus' death and resurrection. That was evidence that he had faith, wasn't it?

On Easter Sunday morning the pastor preached from I Cor. 15:17-20. Larry thought the sermon was preached just for him. Many of the things he had thought about were treated in the sermon. Larry thought that "faith in Jesus" meant that one believed that what the Bible said about Jesus was historically true. He found out that there was more to it than that. The pastor showed that the resurrection of Christ was the very foundation of our faith. If Christ is not raised then our faith is empty and powerless. The resurrection of Christ energizes our faith - gives it life. It is because Christ rose that we can believe that what the Bible says is true. But there is more to it than that! The pastor showed that the forgiveness of our sins and our very salvation was inseparably connected with the resurrection of Jeus, "And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."

Somehow that made the historical facts more real to Larry. He could see that faith was more than an historical or an intellectual assent. Faith implied life and power that does not come from us, but comes directly through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. This meant for Larry then that because Jesus was really alive He was actively working to save His people.

When Larry's family came home from church they were talking about the wonder and significance of the resurrection. They often did that after church but, today it was more interesting to Larry because he knew what they were talking about. Now he was better prepared to talk with Bill about the importance of the resurrection for himself.

On Easter Sunday evening the pastor preached from Col. 3:1 and 2, "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." The pastor showed not only that the resurrection of Christ was an historical fact and not only something that Christ did **for** us but something that God's elect children were involved in. The pastor said that the thrust of the first verse was that since we are risen with Christ we have the calling to seek the things that are above. The life of Christ is **in** us, in fact, verse 4

says that Christ is our life, i.e., our new spiritual life. Our ability and our desire to seek the things which are above is only because Christ lives in us. If there is no life of Christ in us then there is no interest in and ability to seek the things which are above. I Cor. 2:14 says, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

The pastor went on to show that "seeking the things which are above" is not just some vague, general idea, but that specific and practical content was given to it in the rest of the chapter. He showed what that means negatively from verses 8 and 9; "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." For the positive he quoted verses 12 and 13; "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another. . . ."

In a special way Larry understood and felt the power of Christ's resurrection in him. Larry was no longer afraid to talk with Bill about the importance of the resurrection of Christ, in fact, he hoped that Bill would bring it up. He would tell Bill that the power of Christ's resurrection was real because Christ really and historically lived, died and rose again from the dead. Next he would tell Bill that when Jesus died and rose again He actually accomplished complete salvation for His people by taking away the infinite load of sin from them and by bearing away God's infinite anger against that sin. Finally Larry would tell Bill that the power of Christ's resurrection was experienced in the lives of God's people. It gave them the desire to serve God in thankfulness for His grace to them in Christ Jesus. It gave them the ability to seek the things which are above, i.e., in a life of holiness and obedience to God. They also seek the things which are above because Christ is there and He is preparing a place for His own.

Larry was trying to sum it all up when the question of the hymn came to his mind, "You ask me how I know He lives?" The answer really fit. "Yes, He lives within my heart."

AS A FATHER PITIETH [4]

by Rev. D. Engelsma

A third characteristic of the friendship between Godly parents and their children is that it is a life of peace. The family-life of God, both within the Trinity and within the Church, is characterized by peace. This is an outstanding feature of the family-life sketched in Psalm 128. Father, mother, and children live together peacefully. Peace is demanded, when the children are called "olive plants," for olive plants, we are told, required a peaceful environment for growth. Parents

must promote peace. They must see to it that there is peace between husband and wife. The spiritual unity of husband and wife is necessary. Then, they must live together without fighting. Bickering and tension between husband and wife destroy the children. Parents must maintain peace between themselves and their children, as much as possible. Where there is love for, and friendship with, the children, peace may be expected. It is kept by good teaching, proper discipline, and mutual forgiveness. Parents must work for peace in the church. Parents always at war with the church—with the pastor, with the elders, with the rest of the congregation—will reap a bitter harvest in their children. Unnecessary conflicts in the congregation will take their toll in our young people. Parents must make every effort to cultivate peace among their children themselves. They do this by teaching them mutual love; by disciplining them for hatred and fighting; by warning them against envying each other; by showing them how to forgive and reconcile; and the like.

If there is to be peace, there must be order. God is a God of decency and order in His life with His people, as I Corinthians 14:40 teaches. Therefore, a household of disorder and uproar is **"het huis van Jan Steen,"** to use a proverbial Dutch description of a chaotic household, not a house of God.

There must be order in the family-structure itself. Father is head of the home; mother is in subjection, for God's sake. Disorder here is ruinous to child-rearing. The danger is not only that mother is a barely disguised rebel, but also that father neglects to exercise headship. Both father and mother are the authority in the home, to be honored by the children; and the children are the subjects, to give honor and obedience. Friendship does not rule out, or undercut, the authority of the parents. In the eternal covenant of grace, God is Friend-**Sovereign**; and we are friend-**servants**. In the covenant of the family, parents are the friends **in authority**; and the children are the friends **under authority**.

There must be order in all the life of the home: rising and going to bed; time of meals; working six days and resting on the Sabbath; doing school-work; practising music lessons; learning the catechism; brushing teeth. What saves this from a harsh, rigid, burdensome, militaristic order is the friendship which this order serves. Obviously, bringing about this order demands the time, the energy, and the presence of the parents.

When this order is the Law of God ordering the life of the family (and it must be), the friendship and atmosphere of the home are holy. The covenant-life of the Heavenly Father with His children is a holy life. "Holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, for ever" (Psalm 93:5). God calls His children to be holy. But He calls them to be Holy, "for I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44, 45). So it must be with us earthly parents. We are to train our children in holiness, as we ourselves are holy.

Parents must teach their children to be holy. Holiness, not earthly success, is the great goal we have for them. We strive to reach this end by teaching them the Law of God. These commandments are the "words" that Jehovah exhorted Israelite parents to teach diligently to their children, in Deuteronomy 6:6ff., talking of them when they sat in their house, when they walked by the way, when they lay down, and when they arose. Well may Reformed parents ask themselves, "How often do we talk with our children about the Law of God?" But let us be sure that we teach the Law as the expression of the fear of the LORD and that we teach obedience to the Law as thankful love to the children's Redeemer. Obedience does not serve only to keep them out of earthly trouble; nor is it mere conformity to the rules of the church.

Parents can teach holiness to the children only if their own lives are holy. I am pleading now, not for perfection, but for integrity. How can we exhort the children to be holy, or expect them to be holy if we do exhort them, when our own lives are worldly—this world always comes first and God's world, second; when our own lives are covetous—our hearts are set on fame, money, and things; when our own lives are full of the pleasures of the world—night after night we amuse ourselves with "the unfruitful works of darkness" on television; when our own lives are drunken—we drink too much in order to quiet our fears, to drown our sorrows, or to live it up at indecent parties; when our own lives are lives of hatred—envy, fault-finding, back-biting; when our own lives profane the Sabbath—our outward keeping of the Lord's Day is a cold, dead custom, or we easily neglect worship for our own convenience, or we devote the hours between the services of worship to worldly pleasures?

Before He told the parents of Israel, "teach them diligently unto thy children." Jehovah said to the parents themselves, "And these words . . . **shall be in thine heart**" (Deuteronomy 6:6). There is no cheap way to teach holiness. Jesus flayed the Pharisees, who "bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4). Even the worldly poet saw the fatal weakness of a call to holiness by the unholy, for in his **Hamlet** Shakespeare has Ophelia say to Laertes:

> Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
> Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven:
> Whilst like a puff'd and reckless libertine
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
> And recks not his own rede (And heeds not his own counsel).

The warning of Andrew Murray should be heard: The greatest danger to Christ's Church is not infidelity or superstition. It is the spirit of worldliness in the homes of our Christian people, sacrificing the children to ambition or society, to the riches or the friendships of the world. [**The Children for Christ**, p. 40]

In the interests of the holiness of our children, discipline is necessary, a firm discipline.

SOCIAL SECURITY

by Ben Wigger

The teen years are perhaps the most difficult of any years that you will ever face. There are no years quite like them. If you need any proof, just ask any parent who has just had a son or daughter go through these years. Or perhaps you are right in the middle of these years yourself, and you know exactly what I am talking

about.

Perhaps one of the reasons these years are so difficult for teenagers is the constant change they have to deal with. Every aspect of your life will undergo a dramatic change during these years. Emotionally, physically, spiritually, and socially - these years will all lead to change.

All of these changes are not always easy to handle. These teen years could perhaps be characterized as the years when teens experience the change from the securities of childhood to the uncertainties of adulthood. The one aspect which all this change could quite possibly give you is a strong sense of being inferior. These years seem to have that effect on a lot of young people.

Today's society, particularly the schools, feed the natural sense of inferiority, which in turn can aggravate feelings of depression. But what you, a Christian young person, do with these feelings will make all the difference.

For some of today's young people the results are at their worst - teenage suicides, emotional problems, and feelings of rage and guilt expressed in anti-social behavior.

It is important to remember that most people do experience feelings of self-doubt and inferiority. We all have times when we have these nagging suspicions that others are better than we are, and that there is nothing we can do about it.

You should expect the problems for they seem to go hand and hand with the teen years. Parents, teachers, and your own peer group can go a long way toward helping teens live with these feelings. Support from all of these is a tremendous help.

It seems that we all develop an internal image of what we want to be and look like, and when the image in the mirror doesn't match, we frequently say "I'm ugly". That, of course, is putting the blame for all of our supposed shortcomings on God our Creator. For it is He who has made us and not we ourselves. To be dissatisfied with what God has given to us not only in looks, but in material possessions and talents as well, is to quite really point an accusing finger at God and say to Him, Why? Each of us has to look for and develop ways which lead to less and less of these feelings. Putting the blame on God is a terrible thing to do, and we should avoid it.

One of the best ways for all of us to do this is to develop a means of compensation. Compensation occurs when the person counter-balances his or her weaknesses by capitalizing on his or her strengths. We have to find these strengths, either on our own or with help from our parents, teachers, or friends.

We have to keep in mind that these feelings of inferiority can either crush and paralyze an individual, or it can provide tremendous emotional energy which in turn powers all kinds of success and achievement. Remember that the same boiling water which hardens the egg will also soften the carrot. Everything depends on our reaction to stressful circumstances.

The question you have to ask yourself is will you collapse under the weight of inferiority, or will you use that same feeling of inferiority to super-charge your motivation and drive? The answer may depend on how you go about identifying what your strengths and weaknesses are.

Perhaps you can establish your special place in the world of music. Or you may find that you have artistic skills, or writing skills, or skills in rebuilding car engines, or teaching, or preaching, or caring for the sick, or whatever. Regardless of what the choice is, the important thing to remember is to start looking for these gifts now. God has given unto each of us so many wonderful gifts. It is foolish to be ashamed or embarrassed at any gift that God has freely given us. The only shame is to make the least of it. There are so many things that we could do, but

many times we just sit back and let it go undone, or we let others do it without our help.

There is nothing more tragic than a teenager headed into adolescence with no identifiable skills, nothing to measure his self-worth by, no means of compensating.

With that tool by your side you could say to yourself, I may not be the most popular student in school, but I am the best trumpet player in the band.

The answer for all of this really has to come from within us. It has to be a solution that we have worked out; no two people are alike, and each has his own particular problems to deal with. What works for others may not work for us. But right here is where we have the advantage. The Word of God can give so much strength in matters such as this. It speaks directly to our own needs.

Pity the world as it looks for the answers to these problems. They wander from supposed solution to supposed solution, never getting anywhere. God has hid it from them, but not from us. Man is digging himself deeper and deeper into the awfulness of sin's consequences. There is no hope for him, only eternal destruction.

But for us as fellow believers together in God's church, there is love and security. For we all recognize that we are all made in God's image, and therefore we are all special and important. God has a place for each of us, and we were created in such a way that we are the only ones who can fill that place; and by God's grace and the gift of His Son, we will for all eternity.

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UNTO THE HILLS

As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about His people, henceforth even forever. Psalm 125:2

by Sue Porte

San Gorgonia to the east, and Mt. Baldy towards the west.
Out north the San Bernardino range, and south the canyon crest
Serenely secure the valley lies, within these granite walls
While gently wafted on the air, this Sabbath anthem falls.

As round about Jerusalem, the mountains give defence
Jehovah is His people's guard, their lasting confidence.
O Thou who art Thy people's shield, their helper and their guide
Upon them let Thy grace and peace, Forevermore abide.

How good, how true our God has been these many many years.
In love and grace upholding us, calming all our fears.
For we were troubled and distressed, under censure burdened down.
Yet within our hearts we knew, that we had done no wrong.

The preaching also bothered us, T'was not like days of old.
When truly Calvinistic men, scriptures treasures did unfold.
Salvation wrought by God alone, is not what we did hear.
But sinful man by his own power, must unto God draw near.

T'was then God stirred the heart of Brother Vander Wall, to Rev. Hoeksema to write.
And tell him all about our needs, the sad story of our plight.
This call for help was answered soon, the beloved Brother came.
And opened scripture unto us, its glorious truths proclaiming in God's name.

The following days were most eventful days indeed
As Rev. Hoeksema lectured unto us, fulfilling all our need.
T'was then we fully realized, how starved we had become.
As our languishing spirits responded to the theme, Salvation is from God alone.

In sovereign elective grace, ere heaven and earth were framed,
In God's eternal counsel, His chosen ones were named.
Tis only His good pleasure, and by no merits of our own.
Salvation is in mercy given. It comes from God alone.

He gave His only begotten Son, who died on Calvary
Took on Himself our sin and guilt, and bore it all away.
We drank it all in as thirsting weary souls.
This glorious gospel, God our God, Our blessed all in all.

.....

Yes truly God has greatly blessed us these 50 long years.
In love and grace upholding us, calming all our fears.
Nourishing and leading us in the green pastures of His word.
The precious truths of sovereign grace and tender mercies of our Lord.

And now we are gathered here in this edifice so grand.
Erected by laborious toil, with many a helping hand.
Under direction of Brother Joosten, truly an artist in his trade.
Until it all was completed, the final touches made.

It is the Lord who led and prospered us, until it was complete.
May we with grateful hearts, humbly worship at His feet.
And may we ever in this beautiful house of prayer
Praise and adore Him, for all His tender love and care.

We know not what the future holds or where our way will lead.
Will we hold fast our precious heritage? And to God's word give heed?
Look up unto those lofty hills, Majestic, immovable, secure.
Symbolic of Almighty God, the eternal I AM, His word is ever sure.

To the hills I lift my eyes. Whence shall help for me arise?
From the Lord shall come my aid. Who the heaven and earth has made.
He will guide through dangers all. Will not suffer thee to fall.
He who safe His people keeps; Slumbers not and never sleeps.

That the Lord establishes His covenant with believers and their seed in the line of continued generations, and that therefore the little children of believers, as well as the adults, are comprehended in the covenant and church of God and ought to receive the sign of the covenant; that, moreover, this sign of the covenant under the Old Testament was circumcision, but that this sign has been replaced in the new dispensation by that of holy baptism, — all this is confessed by the Reformed Churches and constitutes one of the fundamentals of the Reformed faith.

Believers and their Seed, Chapter 7, p. 84

Discussion Outlines For I Samuel Chapters 15 & 16

by Rev. R. Hanko

A. Saul's disobedience.
   1. The context of chapter 14:47-52:
      a. How does the list of Saul's victories stand in contrast to the history of Saul and Israel after his disobedience as recorded here in chapter 15 (Compare with 16:14 and 17:11)?
      b. In light of I Samuel 8:11, what is the significance of the last phrase of 14:52 - that Saul took all the strong men for his army?
   2. Preparations for war with Amalek:
      a. Who were the Amalekites (Gen. 36:16)? Why is it important to know this in the light of God's command to Saul (Mal. 1:2-4)? Of whom are the Amalekites a type?
      b. When Samuel came to Saul he reminded Saul of what Amalek had done to Israel: what was that (Ex. 17:8-16, Num. 24:20, Duet. 25:17-19)?
      c. What was Saul commanded to do in his war with Amalek (15:3, Deut. 25:19) and why?
      d. In verse 6 the Kenites are mentioned. Who were they and why did Saul tell them to depart from among the Amalekites (Num. 10:29-32, Judg. 1:16, 4:11, 17)?
   3. Saul's sin:
      a. Why did Saul keep alive the best of the cattle and the King? What was his excuse when Samuel came to him?
      b. What other sin did he commit according to verse 13?
      c. What reason does Samuel give in verse 17 which required obedience on Saul's part? Do we stand in the same position as Saul with respect to the commands of God (Deut. 4:37-40, 6:20-25)?
      d. What commandments did Saul break by his sin (Heid. Cat., Lord's Day XXXIV, 104, XLIV, 113)?
   4. Saul's punishment:
      a. What was Saul's punishment and in what ways was it different from the punishment of his previous disobedience?

b. Was Saul's punishment in harmony with his sins? Cf. Deut. 21:18-21.

c. Explain chapter 15:23. How is disobedience like witchcraft and idolatry (cf. Lord's Day XXXIV, 94, 95, and Rom. 13:1, 2)?

d. What sign did Saul receive in connection with his punishment and what did the sign mean?

5. The result of these things:

a. What reasons did Saul have for wanting Samuel to stay after Samuel had announced his punishment? Were they good reasons?

b. In light of the last question do you think Saul's sorrow for his sin was sincere (II Cor. 7:10)? Can you find other evidence to support your answer?

c. Explain verses 11 and 29. Do these verses contradict each other? If not, what do they mean?

B. The King of God's choice.

1. In general:

a. Why was Samuel's grief for Saul wrong? In this connection, what must our attitude be toward those, even of our own children who manifest themselves as unbelievers (Deut. 21:18-21, II Thess. 3:14, 15)?

b. What was the lineage of Jesse the father of David? What tribe was he from and what notable ancestors did he have (Ruth 4:18-22, Matt. 1:3-5)? Why was the family of Jesse chosen (Gen. 49:8-10)?

2. The anointing of David:

a. Why did Samuel hesitate to anoint another king and why did he try to keep the matter secret (20:30-33, 22:11-16)?

b. Why did the Lord bring David to Samuel only after Samuel had seen all the other sons of Jesse? Why is it mentioned that David was the youngest (Ps. 75:6, 7, Dan. 2:21, 4:17, I Cor. 1:27-29)?

c. Why does the Scripture tell us also that David was caring for his father's sheep when he was called (Ps. 78:70-72, Jn. 10:11-16)?

d. What does it mean that the Spirit of God came upon David? Was this different than with Saul (10:6, II Sam. 23:2)?

3. David in Saul's house:

a. What does it mean that an evil spirit troubled Saul (vs. 14)? Does this mean that he was insane or does it just mean what Paul says in Romans 1:28?

b. Why, in His providence, did God bring David to the house of Saul?

4. David and Saul:

a. What was the difference between David and Saul in relation to God (8:5, Ps. 2:6), spiritually, and in their relation to God's people (8:10-18, Ps. 78:72)?

b. What does David's name mean (Ps. 60:5, 108:6) and what is its significance (Ps. 2:6, 7, Matt. 3:17, Eph. 1:6)?

WHAT'S HAPPENING

by Paula Faber

NEWCOMERS:
God Blessed:

Mr. and Mrs. P. Mac Graw, of Southwest Church, with a daughter, Megan Leigh, on September 22.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Kuiper, of Southwest Church, with a son, Daniel Lee, on December 19.

Mr. and Mrs. T. Buiter, of Southwest Church, with a son, Thomas Jon, on January 26.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Bleyenberg, of Hull Church, with a son, Myron Dale.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Wassink of First Church of Holland, with a son, Brandon Lee, on January 26.

Mr. and Mrs. S. Holthouser, of Loveland Church, with a son, Christopher Lee, on January 21.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Key, of Grandville Church, with a son, Jonathan Daniel.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Peterson, of Grandville, with a son, Jacob Richard.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Westing, of Hudsonville, with a daughter, Pamela Rae.

Mr. and Mrs. A. Bylsma, of Hull Church, with a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Dykstra, of Hope Church, with a son, Carl Robert.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Wiersma, of Doon Church, with a son, Benjamin Edward.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Kuiper, of Southeast Church, with a son, Matthew Jordan.

Rev. and Mrs. C. Haak, of Southeast Church, with a daughter, Keri Marie, on March 3.

MARRIAGES:

Ryan Feenstra and Karla Wassink were joined in marriage March 16.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS:

Pella Church received the papers of Steven Lanting from our South Holland Church.

Southeast Church received the papers of Mr. B. Kamminga and four baptized children from the Orthodox Reformed Church.

First Church received the papers of Mr. Daniel Kamphuis from our Hope Church.

Doon Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. H. Van Oort from the Doon CRC.

Faith Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. M. Richards from our Hope Church.

Hudsonville Church received the papers of Mrs. E. Boer from the Trinity CRC and Mr. D. Schimmel from our Hope Church.

Southwest Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. I. Vander Veen and daughter from our First Church.

Byron Center Church received the papers of Mr. and Mrs. D. Wedekind and four baptized children from our Southwest Church.

Southwest Church received the papers of Mrs. Joan Stalsonburg from Beverly Reformed Church.

Southwest Church received the papers of Sheri Van Dyke from our Pella Church.

Southwest Church received the Baptismal papers of Leon Kamps from our Hudsonville Church.

Grandville Church received the papers of Miss Diane Brenner from The Evangelical Lutheran Church.

Grandville Church received the papers of Mr. Warren Busscher from First Jenison CRC.

CONFESSION OF FAITH:

Karla Wassink made public confession of faith on February 26 in First Church in Holland.

Gretchen Kamps made public confession of faith on February 26 in South Holland Church.

ACTIVITIES:

February 15 the Hull Young People's Society had their annual Soup supper.

February 19 the Federation Board sponsored a Singspiration in First Church.

February 26 the Loveland young people sponsored a singspiration.

March 4 the Chamber Choir of Covenant Chr. presented a concert at Kalamazoo Church.

March 17 the First Church Jr. and Sr. young people sponsored a breakfast.

The young adults of First Church in Holland had a fun night at Jefferson School.

"Thou mislikest thine enemy because he hateth thee: if thou hate him, then dost thou imitate the very thing which thou hatest. Love thy neighbor therefore without exception, and love him as thyself."

—Edwin Sandys

The 1984 Convention will be held
AUGUST 6 - 10
at
CALVIN COLLEGE
Sponsored by
First Young People's Societies

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