BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

VOLUME XLVI NUMBER 3

March, 1987

The Signing of the Magna Carta

Contents

EDITORIAL
A Letter to My Grandchildren - John M. Faber 1
TRUTH VS. ERROR
Apostasy in the Last Days
13. Apostates Perish Through Triple Sin (Concluded) - Rev. R. C. Harbach ... 4
Supermarkets of Sin - Rev. G. Van Baren 7
The Lonely Times In Life - Janie De Boer 10
The Believer's Priceless Wisdom - Rev. J. A. Heys 11
The Signing of the Magna Carta - Sarah Ondersma 14
1987 P.R.Y.P.'s Convention - Rev. R. Cammenga 16

Published monthly (except June-July and August-September are combined) by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Dirk Westra - Pres.; Bryan Van Baren - Vice-Pres.; Lisa Van Koevering - Sec.; Robin Kuiper - Vice-Sec.; Phil Van Baren - Treas.; Steve Lotterman - Vice-Treas.; Karen Kuiper - Librarian; Hank Vander Wal - Youth Coordinator; Rev. Gritters, Rev. Haak - Spiritual Advisors

BEACON LIGHTS STAFF
David Harbach - Editor-in-Chief; John Faber, Ed Lotterman - Associate Editors; Doug Dykstra - Finance Manager; Brenda Holstege, Carol Kortering - Secretary, Mike Rau, Marcia Van Baren, Nancy Van Baren, Thelma Westra

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Mrs. H. Brands, Ken Feenstra, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. R. Harbach, John Kalsbeek Jr., Bernie Kamps, Rev. D. Kuiper, Dave Rau, Nancy Van Baren, Deane Wassink, Ben Wigger

BEACON LIGHTS
c/o Roger King, 1651 Moelker Ave.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Second Class Postage paid at Jenison, MI (USPS 046-840)

EDITORIAL OFFICE: David Harbach
4930 Ivanrest Ave. S.W., Apt. B
Grandville, MI 49418

NEWS EDITOR: Nancy Van Baren
6066 Wilson Ave. S.W.,
Grandville, MI 49418

EDITORIAL POLICY
The articles of **Beacon Lights** do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.

If any material of **Beacon Lights** is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source.

Contributions of general interest are very welcome.

SUBSCRIPTION DUES:
MICHIGAN: Marcia Van Baren
6066 Wilson S.W.,
Grandville, MI 49418
OUTSIDE Michigan: Brenda Holstege
7663 Bliss Court
Grandville, MI 49418
COLLECTIONS: Doug Dykstra
7928 Parklane, Jenison, MI 49428
Subscription Price $5.00

Editorial
A LETTER TO MY GRANDCHILDREN

by John M. Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

It was over two years ago that I wrote a letter to you about the spirit world; the origins of the good angels and those of the bad angels, Michael keeping the good ones, and Satan leading the bad ones - the devils. Just lately I was asked to write another letter answering the question, "What do they **do**?"

Well, I don't know what they do now-a-days. But we can think about the things they have done as we find it in the Bible. That was hundreds of years ago; no one has written a Bible since, so we cannot know about the present activity of angels. But if we study what they **have done** maybe we can imagine what they are doing now. I am sure I have never seen an angel, and I don't know anyone else that has either. But the writer to the Hebrews warned us that people have entertained angels unawares, that is, without knowing it at the time. I think he may have been thinking about the time that Abraham entertained three men with food, drink and a resting place in the shade of his huge oak tree. Even though Abraham was not aware of their identity at first when he fed the men, he became aware of it when they talked with him about God's plan with the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. I believe that idea holds for today, also. If you or I would entertain angels unawares we, too, would learn from their message who they were.

Let's look at angel's work in a study of God's providence. We believe that the providence of God governs all the activity of men; Solomon mentions that fact in his Book of Proverbs. He said that the hearts of men are in God's hands to turn that man to go wherever God wants him to go! In fact, God uses many means to affect His council: men, beasts and bushes. What did I say? Beasts? Sure, remember Balaam's ass. Bushes? Sure, remember Moses' burning bush? In the past He has used angels for that purpose, and probably uses them in the present that way, too. Let me try to point you to some such occasions.

Let us take a close look at the burning bush we just mentioned. God's council was to bring the children of Israel out of slavery in Egypt to a freedom in the land of Canaan. And that plan included Moses to be the leader out of that cruel slavery. So He sent an angel to appear to Moses from inside a burning bush. The reason Moses was attracted to that bush was the fact that it did not burn up and become ashes. The fire did not consume the bush; it remained a well-formed bush all the while it was burning. So Moses went real close to that bush to examine the wonderful thing. Then God spoke to Moses from that bush to give him instructions about leading His people, Israel out of Egypt. Notice, how an angel began the

series of events that God, in His providence, used to carry out His council? Later, in Exodus 23:20, God expressly tells Moses that He will send an angel to keep thee, to **bring thee in the way, and to bring thee into the place which I have prepared.**

Now let us examine the animal episode I mentioned. Balaam had been hired by the elders of Moab and Midian to go to the desert where Israel was camped in order to pronounce a curse upon them. Balaam was willing and ready to do so, and started on his way. But God's counsel was to bring them on to Canaan, so He sent an angel to stand in front of the ass so it could not go forward. Balaam did not see the angel for God had not opened his eyes to see that spirit-being. You know the story, how Balaam whipped the animal; how the animal was given a man's voice to talk to Balaam; how finally God gave the man ability to see the angel also; and how God instructed him to go to Israel's encampment and pronounce a blessing upon them. Notice, how an angel was used wondrously to cause God's counsel to be realized?

Then there was that story of Gideon which was full of wondrous works. It started with the appearance of an angel who sat under an oak tree. He spoke to Gideon to call him to deliver Israel from the domination of Midian. Remember how Gideon asked for a special sign that he might be made sure that it really was God's angel who had called him? Gideon made a basket full of food, flesh and cakes, to bring out to the angel (who evidently looked like a man) for him to eat and be refreshed. The angel had a staff in his hand (like any traveler might have) and touched the food with the end of the staff, and all the food burst into flames and was consumed. Then Gideon knew that that man was really an angel of God, and was afraid that he would die because he had seen an angel face to face. But God assured him that he would live because God had work for him to do. Gideon then blew a trumpet to call men to battle behind him. After they came up, an army was formed. Gideon needed additional assurance that God would use him to fight the enemy and asked God for another sign; to keep a piece of fleece dry while the dew lay all around it. This God did. Then Gideon asked that the next morning he might test his calling once more by laying the fleece out again, and that it might be soaked by the dew, enough that he might wring it out and fill a bowl of that dew-water. God again did so. Notice how an angel was again used to bring about God's counsel which included Israel's deliverance?

Who will ever forget the famous prophet, Elijah, who was to be killed by Jezebel, and was so dejected that he lay under a juniper tree, asking God to let him die? But then an angel came to him and fed him two miraculous meals which gave him enough strength to walk for forty days without any food! You see, God had planned in His providence that Elijah was to annoint Hazael to be king over Syria; to annoint Jehu to be king over Israel; and to annoint Elisha to be a prophet to succeed himself. What a chain of future events were started by the angel who furnished Elijah those miracle meals! Notice another classic example of angels' work in the providence of God!

The case of an angel's work which stands out in all your, my grandchildren, minds from early kindergarten days is that of holding shut the mouths of very hungry lions in whose den

Daniel had been thrown. That was so that Daniel might escape the death sentence of King Darius because Daniel had been found praying to his God, against the strict orders of the king. He had to live in order that his influence might affect the history of many nations. Oh yes, angels have done much in the furtherance of the counsel of God! Just think of the angel's warning to Joseph, the husband of Mary, so that Jesus might be born in Bethlehem, according to the Scriptures; how an angel advised Joseph to move his family outside the reach of Herod who was about to kill all the children under two years old; think of how the angels ministered to our dying Savior so that He might finish His suffering with a loud cry, "Father into Thy hands I commit My Spirit."

The one great work which the angels still have to **do**, is recorded in Matthew 24. At the Last Day our God will send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather all the elect for whom Christ died to take them (us) to glory. From graves wherein we were buried; from ash heaps where some saints were burned; from ocean depths where some were drowned; from all over the world! What a glorious last work for them to do on earth!

Now we have seen what they **have done;** what they must still **do**. But the question, what do they **do** cannot be answered for sure. But I, for one, can imagine that they are **doing** their work because God's council is being carried out every day. Maybe none of them will appear to any of us, but their activity does not depend on taking on an appearance; that happens only to show men their presence which cannot be seen unless it is shown! And if you children have a strong enough imagination you can forsee that the elect will need angelic ministering in the latter days when they shall be persecuted nearly unto death.

Very likely you will not have to wait for the Day, but according to Jesus' parable, each of us will be carried into Abraham's bosom (heaven) by the angels. May you all eagerly await that journey!

Love, Gramps.

THAT UNSEEN TEMPLE

A builder builded a temple.
He wrought it with grace and skill;
Pillars and groins and arches
All fashioned to work his will.
Men said, as they saw its beauty,
"It shall never know decay.
Great is thy skill, oh builder,
Thy fame shall endure for aye."

A teacher builded a temple
With loving and infinite care,
Planning each arch with patience
Laying each stone with prayer.
None praised his unceasing efforts,
None knew of his wondrous plan
For the temple the teacher builded
Was unseen by the eyes of man.

Gone is the builder's temple,
Crumbled into the dust;
Low lies each stately pillar,
Food for consuming rust.
But the temple the teacher builded
Will last while the ages roll;
For that beautiful, unseen temple
Is a boy's immortal soul.

— Author Unknown

Truth Vs. Error

APOSTASY IN THE LAST DAYS

13. Apostates Perish Through Triple Sin [Concluded]

by Rev. Robert C. Harbach

"and ran greedily after The Error of Balaam for reward" —Jude 11b. Literally, "And [for] pay they poured out themselves torrentially to the error of Balaam."

The root-sin of Balaam was covetousness. Take note of what Peter says of these apostates, first, in what they are in themselves, as, according to the Authorized Version, "Presumptuous are they, self-willed," (II Pet. 2:10), or, as in the Greek, "darers, self-pleasing" (self-titilating); second, what they are to the church, "spots. . .and blemishes" (2:13); third, what they are to God, "cursed children" (2:14), Greek: "children of curse." (They are not children of promise, but the very opposite, children of curse!) On this point Peter says of them in the third verse of this chapter, "and through covetousness **shall** (prophesying of Jude's later day) they with feigned words make merchandise of you." What is the root of all evil is also the root of apostasy, heresy, sects and cults. Jude says, "for pay they poured themselves out torrentially." How they devoted themselves to covetousness! Peter says in heart "they have exercised with covetous practices" (II Pet. 2:14), or strictly literally, "having been trained in the gymnastics of covetousness." Like Balaam, their aim is to get all the gain they can for themselves, not only filthy lucre, but whatever else to enrich themselves. So Judas in selling out Jesus to the enemy "purchased a field **with the reward of iniquity**" (Acts 1:18), or, Greek, "out of the pay of unrighteousness." "Balaam. . .loved the wages (pay) of unrighteousness." (II Pet. 2:15). Also addicted to this root-sin were Laban, Achan, Gehazi, Simon Magus, Ananias and Sapphira and Demas.

Cain replaced the revealed religion of Jehovah with his own; Balaam opposed God's revelation; Korah rebelled against it. Cain had a substitute for the Cross; Balaam was blind to the Cross; Korah profaned (rendered common) the Cross. Balaam's error was in reasoning from natural light, knowledge and morality, in which, seeing evil in Israel, he presupposed that a righteous and holy God must curse them (Gal 3:10), not seeing the Cross (Gal. 3:13), God's own full satisfaction to the demands of His justice in His holy law on behalf of His people (I Pet. 3:18). Just so, in this way alone is God just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. But the profane, wicked, apostate world must recognize

Cain, Balaam, Korah, Esau and the Sodomites as their own kindred.

Balaam took pay to curse the people of God and to seduce them to whoredom through "the doctrine of Balaam" (Rev. 2:14). First, the error of Balaam is made, which soon develops into "the doctrine of Balaam," and thence many are seduced into taking "the way of Balaam." The way of Cain is apostate religion; the error of Balaam represents apostate ministry and gainsaying of Korah, apostate worship. Why are so many in the business of the cults? For the seduction of souls to get money, power and to advance the kingdom of Antichrist. They are not in it for nothing. They all aim to sell some weird oddity which they claim to be divine. Think of the religions of Eastern mysticism so popular today, especially among the "rock-n-roll" devotees and the drug addicts. Their "gurus" are taking in millions of dollars. How long would they last if they spread their silly superstitions gratis? They have no free gospel. They disseminate their false gospels to the ends of the world by means of the unrighteous mammon unrighteously squeezed out of the purses of their ungodly dupes. Their false doctrine and newly invented blasphemies are lucrative pursuits. It is well known that these false prophets are multi-millionaries. Those who blithely and blindly make them rich pay their own way to hell.

Covetousness. Moral uncleanness is a very violent outburst from the wicked heart in a rage of passion; but covetousness, headstrong and violent, is stronger and a more deep-seated, persistent lust. The motions of the lust of the flesh are down-payment on present continuance in sin, but covetousness is the natural and constant condition of the heart addicted to evil. Watch in prayer that your feet slip not into this "way of Balaam" (II Pet. 2:15).

". . .and perished in the gainsaying of Korah."—Jude 11c, literally, "and in the contradiction of Korah they perished." **Gainsaying.** The word is **antilogia**; it means an utterance, a word spoken against. It was Korah's word against God's Word, and so a daring impudence. It was Korah's word **in the place of** God's Word, and so an infernal arrogance.

Now we see that apostate teachers are solidly imbedded in liberation from everything except their own unimpaired avarice, sensuality and lust. This anarchistic spirit motivates them to insurrection against the authority of Christ and His office bearers (Moses and Aaron) under the cover of nominal orthodoxy and pious individualism. Such independentism attempts worship of the Father without Christ, the Mediator (but cp. Jn. 5:23). This is the apostate doctrine of Unitarianism, of theological Modernism, of ecclesiastical Liberalism, that of "the universal fatherhood of God," in which there is no need for a great high priest mediator. The Gentiles have always attempted approaching God without the one Mediator between God and man, the Man, Christ Jesus. The Jews of Christ's and our day did and do the same. This is true, too, of all the Muslim peoples. It is all Korahite apostasy. Korah, in pride and ambition (III Jn. 10), would assume the office of mediator and, on the levelling principle, or parity policy, make all the Israelites mediators (Num. 16:3). Korah's modern accomplices rise in rebellion against magistracy and ministry.

God had denied Korah, Dathan and Abiram the place of authority in Israel for obvious reasons—they were not worthy of it, and Israel was far from ready for them. Now modern female children of Korah, speaking of "our liberty" and "our rights", invade public office without a call, trampling the order ordained of God. This reveals a yet deeper decline and involvement in the development of sin. For current feminists go well beyond what they would call the "male chauvinist" sin of Korah and his company. For they want the right to rule, the result being that first in the church they disturb the divine order (there the cry is, "Ye take too much upon you!"), then soon in the state also. The worst of this is that in the end schism and dissension split the church and the rejection of its doctrines brings destruction to its corporate body.

This sin of rebellion leads to Antichrist. It pretends to stand for the common rights of men and women as individuals, but, as in the case of Korah, there is an audacious seeking of the priesthood for oneself. **That** was Korah's actual purpose. So all the current talk about "women's rights," "equal rights" is, in reality, self-seeking and personal advantage in an improper position. "And this is that spirit of Antichrist" (I Jn. 4:3b). For this clamorous line will produce the final antichrist (II Thess. 2:3, 4).

Therefore, let not only wicked men but also apostate women see **their** destruction foretold in the destruction of these **others** who sinned, fell and were swept away in judgment. Today they break the same law of God; His wrath is as immutably directed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of sinners as ever; He takes vengeance on sin, not only in eternity but in time, as violently as ever; they commit the same evils, crimes and lusts which God hates as much as ever. Many sins are regarded as no more than accepted life-styles, as though sin has gone out of style and is less dangerous than in "the old days." Not wiser, but more foolish this old world has become, having failed to have learned the lessons of history and precedent. Such names as Nebuchadnezzar, Absalom, Ahithophel, Jezebel, Uzzah, and Uzziah should be given the same serious consideration we give red highway signs warning, Wrong Way! Do Not Enter!

"And in the gainsaying (anti-word) of Korah they **perished**." As Korah and all his company went down alive into the pit, so Hell opens its mouth ready to swallow all who rebel against the peculiar distiction of the Gospel, "no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me," that is, through Jesus Christ crucified and risen. "Perished" is the same verb translated "destroyed" in verse 5. It means "to go lost" (II Jn 8; II Cor. 4:3; Jn. 17:12). Its nounal form means "perdition." Since these apostates were "children of curse" they were also sons of perdition (Jn. 17:12; II Thess. 2:3) whose judgment was "their **damnation**" (again, the same word as **perished**, II Pet. 2:3).

There are some who boast that they shall never become apostate. But do they know that for a certainty? They do not take the warnings of Scripture seriously. Before long they may go farther than they thought they ever would. The most sure are the more insecure. But he that prays, "Hold Thou me up, and I shall be safe" shall in that way be preserved from all harm. Better to confess, "Lord, I know I shall

become utterly vile unless Thy sovereign grace prevent," and then in humble faith cast ourselves upon the mighty Savior for strength. Then we shall be kept. Even the regenerate need to so live and pray. It is true that they "cannot sin," for they are born of God. The sense in which the apostle means this is not that now we arrive at the point where we do not sin at all, but that we do not sin so as to depart from the living God, give up our allegiance to Him and cease being His children in the family of God. We shall not perish through pride, envy or lust. For the grace of regeneration in us shall overcome all sin to keep us faithful to the end.

SUPERMARKETS OF SIN

by Rev. G. Van Baren

When I was a boy, I recall that the grocer made his appearance at our back door once a week, to bring last week's grocery order, and to take the order for the following week. Rinkema, I believe, was his name. He had a very small store in South Holland. But soon telephones were used more extensively to place orders and people became accustomed to picking up their groceries directly from the store. Cars made travel to the store easy.

That little grocery store was soon replaced by other, larger stores. The number of brands increased on the shelves. One could choose and pick. It was still a neighborhood store where one knew the clerks and perhaps the owner of the establishment.

This changed too. Soon there were the large supermarkets. Neighborhood stores stores remained for a time, but the competition was too great. Large stores with huge inventories and unimaginable varieties attracted people from over wide areas by offering lower prices. That's "progress".

All of this came to mind as I sat down to write this article. I was asked to write about the changes taking place in the realm of entertainment — specifically with the movie. What effect is all of this having on the young people of our churches? Surely progress and development are seen in the world of entertainment. Is this making it easier to sin without a guilty conscience?

It would be pointless to go into great detail. But one can recall, if not from personal experience, then from reading literature on the subject, how the movie industry developed and grew. First there was the silent screen. Men had managed to invent a machine to flash pictures in succession, giving the impression of movement. The invention was quite a hit. And before long, some had managed to present a story on film — usually accompanied by piano music. The plots were predictable: villain captures girl; hero rescues her after enduring many hardships; girl and hero marry and live happily ever afterwards. Churches, having long condemned drama on the stage, usually condemned these movies

as well.

But more was to come. Speech was added to the film. Now the actors and actresses could speak. The plots became more complicated. The scenes were sometimes lewd. All manner of sin was portrayed — though not with that open disregard of the laws of God as is true today.

Then color was added. Soon it was a wide-screen and stereophonic sound. Hollywood became an important entertainment center. Many found this very attractive.

Together with the above, there was added the drive-in theater where one could attend in relative privacy. With this, there was the growing influence of a new invention: television. First with its black and white presentation, then later color, the movies and dramas could come into one's living room. With cable t.v., the variety and choice increased. There were those who earlier had refused ever to attend movies, who would now watch the soap-operas during the day and even the late-night movies in the evening.

The presence today of video recorders and players has further affected this whole picture. Now one can purchase, even through vending machines, the latest movies — in fact, movies of the most pornographic sort. In the privacy of one's home, these can be seen.

We have truly reached a position where we have "supermarkets of sin". The variety and availability of all of this corruption has made the world in which you, the teen-ager live, far different than the world in which I was a boy. Sin is sin in whatever age it manifests itself. But the means to sin, the inventions used to enjoy this sin, have increased greatly.

All of this makes it so easy for young people to take advantage of this easy access to corruption. In the past, young people might be able to sneak to the movies. Today they can see these in their own homes.

And who has strength to resist all these temptations? There is the problem of "peer pressure". Other young people seem willing enough to enjoy these sinful activities. Their conversation is often about the television programs they have watched the night before — and not news broadcasts either. These can visit the movie theater and encourage others to join them.

Besides, do not even some parents see these movies on television in their homes? How can parents watch that at home while forbidding their children to attend movie theaters? Children soon recognize the inconsistencies in the lives of their parents!

Possibly most difficult to understand of all of this, especially for young people, is that churches which formerly condemned movie attendance (when movies were not nearly as evil as today), now approve of the "good" movies and speak of the "film arts". Almost all are approved because it is "art". And, so the Christian Reformed Synod pointed out, this "art" is the fruit of the common grace of God upon the wicked sinner. So, if very many Christians can attend these "film arts", why can we not do so?

The temptations to join others in using these "film arts" are great and becoming ever greater. Then, because so many succumb to the temptations, some perhaps in our own churches, ought we simply to ignore what was taught in the past on the subject — and have each do what is right in his own

eyes? Can we not enjoy all of this — and be Christian too?

But we might rather ask: if a thing was so wrong 40 years ago, and condemned even by most churches, how can it now be approved (when admittedly there has been deterioration over the years)? If attendance of movies was so wrong in the past, it is surely more so in our own day.

Can young people resist the temptations? Is not peer pressure just too great? If young people would think to resist by their own strength, or determine the right or wrong by their own reasoning — they would not stand.

But we have weapons which must be used to resist all evil. Especially we have the sword of the Spirit which is the Word of God (Eph. 6:17) whereby only we can "resist the wiles of the devil". The "wiles of the devil" confront every one of us, but especially you, young people, face that. The devil, through all of the wonderful inventions of our last days, has more means to trick and deceive than ever before. Believe me, he makes excellent use of these inventions.

But we have a weapon against which the devil can not succeed. That Word of God causes him to flee even as he did when Christ repeated that Word at the time of His temptations. Use that Word as sword against the many temptations of today.

Sadly, even as the evils of this age multiply, there seems to be a declining interest on our part in the study of the Word of God. Societies are not attended as they ought to be; lessons are not studied. When our "sword" ought to be burnished and bright through constant use, it often seems to grow rusty through disuse.

Young people must realize the urgency, the absolute necessity, of study of Scripture. One ought to have a set time every day for private devotions and study of the Word. There must be faithfulness, diligence in this. One ought not dare to have one day go by without turning to our "sword". That, together with daily prayer, equips young people to resist the temptations of the devil in these last days. Young people: hold on to that sword and be sure it is sharp and ever ready for use.

Christ Saves

To the church of our choice, to worship our Lord,
Where we sing and our offerings we bring,
By grace, and through faith, we receive our reward,
For it isn't our church—it's Christ.

Our church may have style and beautiful art,
Where we pray for sinners astray,
But all beauty is vain if faith's not in our heart,
For it isn't our church—it's Christ.

Our church may be filled from front to the rear,
Where we bow and our praises bestow,
Yet huge numbers alone do not make us sincere,
For it isn't our church—it's Christ.

Edwin W. Saeger

THE LONELY TIMES IN LIFE

By: Janie de Boer

1. I think about those lonely times
   When I come around a bend,
   And I see ahead of me a road
   Of life without a friend.

2. It hurts me in my inner heart,
   But at the very end,
   I see around the very next corner,
   I returned to my Friend again.

3. For many times in my life,
   I left my Friend in sin,
   Jesus Christ my one true Friend,
   Has cleansed my soul within.

4. He helped me in the bitter storms,
   Until the seas were calm,
   And for my hurts and wounds within
   His love was my only balm.

5. Although I left Him in temptation,
   He did not leave me to sin.
   He supported and led me until the dawn
   Broke, and shed light within.

6. In all the wickedness and pain,
   In sin, temptation, and fraud,
   My only hope and Friend in need,
   Is the one and only God.

7. Near the end of all the earth,
   When I am persecuted sore,
   My friends have all deserted me,
   But Christ will open up His door.

8. I know that I am perfect not,
   But Christ my Friend is still,
   The Holy Spirit will clean my prayers,
   So hear my prayers God will.

THE BELIEVER'S PRICELESS WISDOM

by Rev. John A Heys

Can you, young people, name the Five Points of Calvinism? And can you tell me what each one of these five points means? If you can, you have in your mind some of the basic and very important truths of the Reformed Faith. What is more, these truths you must know and believe, if our churches are going to continue to be Reformed; and if our churches are going to develop in the truth of the Reformed Faith in the future, when more crafty and more subtle departures from the truth are invented and presented in the church world than are propagated today.

Now I do not intend to treat these Five Points of Calvinism in this series of articles. I do intend to refer to them now and then; but the main purpose of this article and the four to follow is to present to you the five points that Paul presents to us in I Corinthians 1:30, 31. There he writes, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, Who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, and sanctification and redemption: that according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

Did you notice that there are four items here that Christ is made to be unto us, namely wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption? But there is another item listed in verse 31, namely, glory. We must glory in the Lord.

In this article I want to call your attention to that first element, namely, wisdom. And if you refer to Webster's dictionary, you will find that wisdom is presented as "ability to judge soundly and deal sagaciously with facts." Another definition often given is that wisdom is the ability to choose the best means along the best way to reach the highest good. Choose a poor means, and you may fail in reaching your goal. Or it may take you much longer to get what you desire and seek. Choose a good means but use it in a wrong way, and the same result of failure or slowness will result. Choose good means and use them along a good way for an evil, bad goal which you want to reach, and that too is folly and not wisdom.

Now we ought to notice that Paul stated in I Corinthians 1:30 that Christ was made wisdom unto us. And get this, young people, you cannot find greater wisdom than that of God when He chose Christ as the means and His cross as the way to our salvation. This fits in so beautifully with what Paul wrote in the preceding verses. There he states that Christ is, to those that are called to be God's children, the power and the wisdom of God.

But what might startle us a bit is what Paul wrote in verse 27, where he states that God chose "the foolish thing of this world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty". It would almost seem as though God chose the wrong things along the wrong way to reach that good

goal of our salvation. But nothing is farther from the truth than such an assumption.

God is the all-wise God Who never makes a mistake. The point is that God chose, in His wisdom, that which to the world looks foolish and far too weak to accomplish anything good. You see, God chose His own Son Who is the only sinless man since the fall of Adam and an eternal and almighty Person, and thus He is the best means or tool. That cross, even though it seemed to show folly, weakness and helplessness, was the best way, because it blotted out our guilt and gives us the right to life everlasting. Through Christ that highest good for man was reached, because God chose the right means and way.

You see, young people, we have to hold on to that first of the Five Points of Calvinism. Man, since the fall, is totally depraved, and that means that by nature man is completely, entirely, one-hundred percent corrupt with no spiritual good in him at all. There just was no means, no other person God could use to save us. A sinner would have to die for his own sins and could not die for ours. Man could never bring an everlasting punishment to an end; but Christ, the eternal Son of God could. What wisdom on God's part to choose and send Him! Likewise the cross as an accursed death was the only way. Hellish agony had to be borne in our stead. And though it looked to the world, and caused those who believed in Jesus to be astonished and confused in their thinking, it was the wisdom of God that chose the cross as the way. And what higher good can you think of than that we shall be like Christ in the glory of the new Jerusalem? What higher good can there be for man than that?

But notice that Paul says that Jesus Christ was made to be wisdom unto us. We will, the Lord willing, go into that more fully, when we consider the other three elements that Christ was made to be unto us; but it is important to see that we have been given wisdom by God through this work of making Christ all these four things for us. And wisdom for us means that we believe Christ is the means and His cross is the way, and that everlasting bliss at God's right hand is the highest good.

Look now then at yourself. Do you have that wisdom? Do you agree that Christ and His cross are the only way to salvation for us? And do you choose that covenant life with God, which Christ earned, as the highest good that there is for man?

The question is not whether you know all this. Knowledge is important, and without it there can be no wisdom. If you do not know a tool, you cannot choose it. If you do not know a way, you cannot choose to go that way. If you do not know that a certain good exists, you cannot set out to seek it. And you cannot choose the right means and way to get it. But the question is, young people, do you choose that life with God as the highest good? Do you want it badly? Do you choose Christ as the only One Who could bring you there? Do you choose that cross as the only way that Christ could bring us to heaven?

Then you have a priceless wisdom. It is of infinite value, but it also is a way that does not cost you one penny. There is no price upon that wisdom that you must pay to God. The wisdom that chooses this way of salvation is God's free gift to those for whom Christ died. And if you are truly wise, you will

agree and with God judge that this is the way of your salvation. It is folly to say that man is part of that means and that man must take the first step and accept Christ, and then God will choose to save him. No, it is folly to judge that a dead man, one totally depraved, can want to be saved from his sins before God has already begun the work of salvation in him, that is, has regenerated him. Would you call it wise for a king to choose a dead soldier to be his bodyguard? Would you choose a newborn babe, or even a child in kindergarten to help you solve a difficult mathematical problem that you must have answered by tomorrow morning?

There is, however, a practical side to this matter of wisdom. If you believe that Christ earned for us that highest good of life with God in the new Jerusalem, where no sin can be found, is it wise if you close your catechism book, fail to learn thoroughly the answers, skip catechism class for fleshly fun? Is that wise? Are you choosing that best means and the best way to enjoy the highest good? Is it wise to avoid society meetings, or disturb the discussion, come unprepared and choose sports and amusements instead? Is it wise to sleep in church, or let your mind wander all over material, temporary things while Christ is being preached?

In the verses preceding I Corinthians 1:30 Paul taught us that it is through the foolishness of preaching that God shows us His wisdom. And by that he means that God in His wisdom uses that which looks foolish to the unbeliever but actually is not foolish in any way and to any degree. But if we avoid that preaching and are bored by it, we are the ones who are acting foolishly as well as sinfully.

Let me conclude this installment by warning you in love that it is always foolishness when we walk in any sin of any kind. The psalmist rightfully states in Psalm 14:1, "The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God." Every time we sin, we say by that deed, "There is no God Who can tell me what I may do or may not do." And it is also through Christ that God makes us wise, so that we choose to walk in His commandments and look for the day when we will do that perfectly before His face in heaven.

One more point yet, young people, wisdom will guide you to choose a wife or husband who will help you, not hurt you, in walking as God demands in His law. You must look for a believer, one who will go with you in a wise way. Anyone who seems to threaten such working together, and raises doubt as to whether she or he will bring up the children in that way must be dropped. That will be a wise decision.

How wise are you? Has Christ been made to be wisdom unto you? Your walk of life will show it. Solomon in his wisdom wrote in Proverbs 4:7, "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting get understanding." And in Proverbs 16:16 he writes, "How much better is it to get wisdom than gold!" By all means pray that you may get this priceless treasure.

"Spiritual rest maketh no man idle, spiritual walking maketh no man weary."
— Nathaniel Hardy

THE SIGNING OF THE MAGNA CARTA

by Sarah Ondersma

All of history is the unfolding of God's counsel. This not only applies to what is studied in church history, but also to what is studied in world and modern history. All treaties made, revolts, and presidents elected are taking place according to "His Story". Every event, however routine or usual as they may seem, all have a hand in God's purpose for His Church. I would like to show how the signing of the Magna Carta- instigated by the hands of wicked and greedy men - had a tremendous effect on the Church of England. Although this event did not arise out of concern for the church or the people's spiritual welfare, we know, as stated in Romans 8:28, that "all things work together for good to them that love God. . ." Keeping in mind this Biblical concept, I plan to demonstrate how King John's signing of the Magna Carta in the early 1200's provided England with an atmosphere of religious freedom and reform.

Richard I, also called Richard the Lion-Hearted, reigned in England from 1189 A.D. to 1199 A.D. Richard spent most of the time in the Holy Land where he fought in the Third Crusade. England was taxed heavily to pay for his adventures. So when John, Richard's brother, came to the throne the barons were already discontented.

King John did not get any support. The king was cruel, treacherous, and a coward. John was a man rapid in action, of low morals, and had a "despotic temper". The discontent of the barons grew when John lost lands across the English Channel in a quarrel with France. His reign was a succession of wrongs and insults to the English people and the church.

During this era of English history, the popery had complete dominion. The pope at this time was Innocent III, whose rule marks the golden age of the medieval papacy and an important phase in the history of the Catholic Church. Innocent was a spiritual sovereign with extensive power and had no rival. The Pope put whoever he wanted on the thrones and cast out whom he didn't want. His decision was final in all matters concerning the bishops.

Innocent III was convinced that the papacy was established of God for the good of the Church and the salvation of the world. He also believed that the papacy was infallible. During his reign Pope Innocent was trying to make his authority supreme all over Europe. His only major failure was in England as we shall see later.

As I stated before, the king was not well-liked. The king squeezed every penny out of his subjects to pay for the wages of his soldiers. He often collected this money by unjust means. The nation was taxed almost beyond the point of endurance. Another reason for John's dislike was his amours with the wives and daughters of the barons. These high taxes and the king's amours

aroused the determined hatred of both the barons and the people. The subjects felt it was time to stop John's illegal demands for money. They wanted a return of the ancient liberties which were confirmed by Henry I, an earlier English king known by his strict administration of justice. A list of these rights, called the Article of the Barons, which the barons wanted the king to promise them, was drawn up. But King John refused to listen to their requests.

The king was being pressured at this time not only by the barons but also by Pope Innocent. During his quest for supremacy, the pope ran into a barrier in England for King John refused to submit. The pope hastily put an interdict of England which cast a gloom over the nation. Still John showed unconcern and remained in his defiant mood. Innocent declared the king unworthy of his throne and deposed him through excommunication, but the Arch-bishop in England released John from the ban. The pope countered by moving Philip Augustus, the king of France, to invade England.

King John didn't know which way to turn for he was pressured on both sides. He elected to submit to the Pope and declared that he surrendered his kingdom of England to the Pope. The king now received the support of the Pope in the battle against the barons. The barons were asked by Innocent to stop their threatening measures. and to ask the king respectfully for what they wanted.

The barons defied both the Pope and the king and threatened war. The barons prepared an army but Archbishop Stephen Langton persuaded the nobles to hold a conference instead. This took place in a field beside the Thames River in Runnymede, England. On June 15, 1215 A.D. King John realized he had to agree to the barons general demands. He signed and officially sealed The Article of the Barons, the final draft of which is known as the Magna Carta.

The signing of the Magna Carta was not so important in what was stated in the charter but rather in the values it stood for. This was the first time that the subjects of a feudal king made the king agree to their terms. King John was forced to admit to rules. Not only this but the barons showed that they would no longer try to be independent of the king. They would recognize the king as their overlord.

Because the "Great Charter" stated that justice could not be sold, delayed, or denied to any freeman, it brought about many reforms in judicial and local administration. It was a step in the gradual growth of law. The Magna Carta became a national symbol - a battle cry against oppression. When liberty was in danger, the charter became the people's defense. Every following generation could see its own protection.

The Magna Carta stated many provisions which allowed an atmosphere of religious toleration to arise. The people were given more liberty because the absolute power of the king over his subjects was taken away. One provision stated that no man could be imprisoned, outlawed, or deprived of property except by judgment of his equals or the law of the land. So from then on, no Christians could be persecuted or harmed before a trial by jury. There would be no Inquisitions in England. Also, the freedom of ecclesiastical elections was confirmed by the Magna Carta.

This was the first time the papacy

had come into collision with modern liberty. Although the Pope declared the charter null and void, King John had signed it, making it official. England had broken the hold of the Pope and was no longer under his authority.

The people of the Church of England were captivated and charmed by magnificent churches, ceremonies, and chantings which shows the lack of strong moral Christians. The worship of relics and the veneration of the saints indicated the Biblical ignorance of the popery. These errors tend to bring about a reaction, and a reaction was now possible in England. The signing of the charter resulted in religious toleration.

England had been brought low by the papacy, but it rose again by resisting Rome with the Magna Carta. The beginning of the march of the Reformation actually begins here.

1987 P.R.Y.P.'s CONVENTION

by Rev. Ron Cammenga

The 47th annual Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention is scheduled for August 10-14, 1987. The Convention will be hosted by the Loveland, CO Young People's Society. Plans and preparations are in full swing.

Registration will take place early Monday afternoon, August 10 at the Protestant Reformed Church of Loveland. The church is located at 705 E. 57th Street in Loveland. After registration, all conventioneers will be bussed into the mountains. The Convention itself will be held at the YMCA of the Rockies just outside of Estes Park, Colorado. The YMCA camp stretches over 1,400 acres and is bordered by Rocky Mountain National Park. This is an ideal spot for the Convention. Accommodations are excellent: spacious lodges, meeting rooms, a large auditorium. There are almost unlimited opportunities for leisure time activities: indoor swimming, roller skating, basketball, tennis, horseshoes, volleyball, miniature golf, softball, bowling, and more.

The Convention theme is: "Lessons From The Life of David." Our purpose is that by the speeches which develop this theme, the young people may be instructed and warned by the example of the life of David. the one whom the Scriptures refer to as "the man after God's own Heart." Our purpose is that the result of the Convention may be that under the work of the Spirit, we be made more and more young men and young women after God's own Heart.

The three speeches planned are as follows. Rev. Ron Hanko will present the first speech entitled "David And Goliath." Rev. Ken Koole will follow with a speech entitled "David and Bathsheba." Rev. Wayne Bekkering will present the last speech, "David And Absalom." Besides the three speeches, the young people will interact and exchange ideas in the various discussion groups that are being planned. We think we have some fresh approaches to the discussion groups

that will be stimulating and make the discussion groups a valuable part of the Convention experience.

Once again, we are issuing a special appeal to the older young people, those in their 20's who have probably dropped out of society. We would like you to attend the Convention with us. We have again planned some special activities for you, and believe that you have much to add to as well as profit from the Convention.

We would like to extend a special invitation to the families of young people who might be attending the Convention to take the opportunity of the Convention to vacation in Colorado. We have put together a special packet of information concerning campgrounds, recreational facilities, and all the vacation possibilities available in our beautiful state. In order to receive this packet, simply write to us at the address of the church: Loveland Protestant Reformed Church, 705 E. 57th Street, Loveland, CO 80537. Those parents who do take their young people to the Convention, we would invite to attend the three speeches that will be given.

Because of the fact that the Convention will be held at a camp in the mountains, the projected cost will be fairly high. For this reason we are encouraging all societies to sponsor **at least** two fund-raisers for the Convention. We are also encouraging once again the idea of individual patrons for the Convention. We would like every society to contact all of the members of their congregation individually soliciting a contribution towards the Convention.

We will keep everyone informed on the progress of the Convention. Monthly newsletters will be sent to each Young People's Society. Periodic announcements will be placed in church bulletins, in the **Beacon Lights**, and the **Standard Bearer**. We ask parents, pastors, and Christian school teachers to promote the Convention amoung our young people.

Our aim in the 1987 Convention will be the fun and edification of the young people. We want you to have fun, good clean fun. We also want you to be built up spiritually. But especially do we aim at the glory of God in this Convention. In order to accomplish this aim, we will demand godly behavior on the part of every young person at the Convention. The few basic rules necessary for the running of the Convention will appear on the pre-registration form which will be sent out in due time. Those rules must be obeyed; infractions will not be tolerated. We ask that parents impress this upon their young people before they come to the Convention.

We in Loveland are pleased to be your hosts for the 1987 P.R.Y.P.'s Convention. We look forward to seeing everyone of you the second week of August.

CONTEMPLATION:
The butterfly is often a symbol of Easter.
First, the caterpillar, which stands for life.
Second, a cacoon stage, which stands for death.
And third, the butterfly, which comes from the cacoon, showing the Resurrection.

47th ANNUAL P.R.Y.P.'s CONVENTION

AUGUST 10 - 14, 1987

At The Scenic Estes Park YMCA

Camp In The Rocky Mtns.

THEME: "Lessons From The Life of David"

SPEAKERS: Rev. Ron Hanko
Rev. Ken Koole
Rev. Wayne Bekkering

A SPECIAL INVITATION
TO ALL YOUNG ADULTS!!

Sponsored by the Young People's Society of Loveland, Colorado

For information call: (303) 667-1347