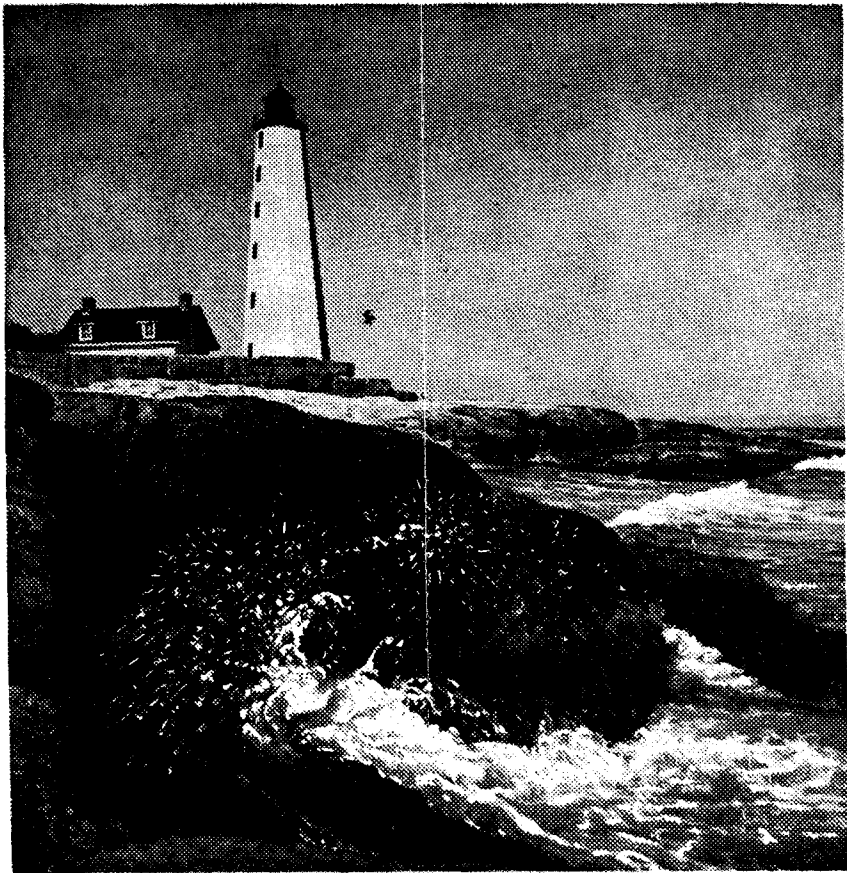


BEACON LIGHTS

**FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH**

MAY 1958



In this issue . . .

FEATURE – page 1

How to Recognize Our Calling
Rev. C. Hanko

EDITORIAL – page 4

The Spirit of the Age
Mr. Jay Kortering

CHRISTIAN LIVING – page 5

Marriage and Courtship
Rev. H. Hanko

TRUTH vs. ERROR – page 7

Deception – A Lack of Discernment
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

BIBLE OUTLINE – page 9

Acts 16:11-40
Rev. H. C. Hoeksema

NATURE STUDY – page 12

Burst of Spring
Miss Agatha Lubbers

PENCILS AND CHALK – page 14

Teaching Bible in the Primary Grades
Mrs. H. Van Dyke

MISCELLANEOUS –

Mother's Day – page 15
Miss Alice Reitsma

Saint Augustine – page 15
Wayne L. Lanning

News from South Holland – page 3
Miss Ruth Poortenga

BEACON LIGHTS

For Protestant Reformed Youth

VOL. 18

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No. 4



How to Recognize Our Vocational Calling

Three pre-school agers, clamoring about on the backyard fence, were engaged in the following conversation:

Teddy: "When I get big I'm going to be a bread man."

Cathy: "I'm going to be a Mom."

Freddie: "I'm going to be a Fred."

Each had his or her own aspirations, well considered, looming large as a worth-while goal for which to strive.

The problem faced was a real one, but evidently grows more acute as each passes into the class of the teen-agers.

How can each teen-ager recognize the vocation which God has appointed for him? How should he go about determining that? *First, give it plenty of serious thought.*

This is one of the three great issues that confront every covenant young man or woman; three of the biggest decisions to be made in your whole lives: Making confession of faith, choosing a life mate, and choosing a vocation.

You don't want to be a drifter, tossed about like a piece of driftwood, shifting from one job to the next, disliking the one as much as the other.

You don't want to plunge blindly into whatever comes along in the hope that somehow this might be just the position suited for you.

You don't want to go aimlessly through

your education in high school and college while you might be profitably majoring in the subjects that can help you to obtain your objective.

So think about it. But by all means do so prayerfully. Who but the Lord knows just exactly what He has created you for, and what work He has before ordained that you should carry out?

Read Ephesians 2:10, and prayerfully commit your way unto the Lord!
Next, set your sights.

What is your aim? Have you made up your mind what your chief ambition in life shall be?

Do you want to get rich, wallow in the luxuries of this world, and make mammon your god? Pause a moment to read Luke 11:13-21 and James 5:1-8.

Do you want a career merely for the sake of a career? Are you day-dreaming of your name in the headlines of the papers or in the annals of science, industry, or politics? Read I John 2:15-17.

Or do you desire to live as friend-servant of God, faithfully using the talents God has entrusted to you, with the one great ambition to be pleasing to Him? See Matthew 25:14-30, the parable of the Talents.

Be sure you first settle that matter in your own mind prayerfully.
Then, size up the field.

There are the various professions to consider: the ministry, teaching, science, law, medicine, nursing, etc.

Now don't frown because I mention the ministry and teaching first. I do consider these the highest calling anyone can receive in this world, don't you? Besides, the church has a very limited source of supply to draw from, while the whole wide world can be screened for scientists and the like. So your first question should be whether God has gifted you and called you for a definite vocation right within the church.

In considering the other professions the following must be considered:

Will my education and training for this particular profession deprive me of my public worship and other activities in my own church.

What effect will my training have upon my spiritual life? For example, I like to see our girls take interest in nursing, but I don't like it that this training so often deprives them of the very essential fellowship with the church in these formative years. It is well to consider that seriously.

How much would a certain profession interfere with my life in the church and in my family?

Would that profession force me into an entangling alliance with the world?

Then there is the field of skilled labor to consider. I am thinking now of such vocations as electronics, engineering, bookkeeping, accounting, construction, salesmanship, etc.

Once again, can I do this to the glory of God in the best use of my God-given talents? Is this a proper means for me to support my family and contribute to God's kingdom? Will this particular vocation, as it appeals to me now, make it possible for me to be active in the church and to bring up my family in the fear of the Lord?

And these same questions may be asked in regard to any field of unskilled labor. Will I have time to serve God as I must?

Does it involve Sunday labor? Does it require union membership? Will it be possible for me to carry out this employment and remain faithful to my God and unspotted from the world?

In one word, ask, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me do?"

Now, take a good look in the mirror.

It is always well to see ourselves as others see us. One glance takes away any inflated notion we might have of ourselves. A longer look helps to realize that we are not so different from others, even though we might have thought we were. And a careful study of ourselves helps to recognize the talents God has entrusted particularly to us.

A high school education can help us to know ourselves. If it serves to reveal our hidden talents we have not gone to school in vain.

But it is hard to be honest with ourselves isn't it?

Therefore, discover your abilities in prayer before the face of God.

And last, but by no means least, consult others.

Talk it over with Dad and Mom, for they are just as concerned about your future welfare as you should be.

Talk it over with your teachers and minister. You will make the worth-while discovery that they are just as human as you are. You will also discover that they have been observing you with understanding eyes, and know you better than you realized. They are also sincerely interested in your welfare. Just try them out.

But finally, — and I say this in all sincerity, talk it over with your God. He made you for His purpose. Ask Him to show you the way that He has planned for you. Commit your *way* unto the Lord, and He will direct your *paths*. He surely will!

REV. C. HANK

SOUTH HOLLAND Y. P. SOCIETY AIDS SCHOOL FUND

Just recently the Young People's Society of South Holland sponsored a banquet for our churches of South Holland and Oak Lawn. It was for the cause of Protestant Reformed Education and we turned over to our schoolboard a profit of \$173.61.

The banquet was held on February 26. We had a little over 100 tickets for sale and every ticket was sold.

Much of the food was donated by some of the people of our church. This really saved us a lot of expense. Then too, some of the ladies helped us by preparing a fine meal. The girls of the society did the serving.

We began the evening with the singing of a few Psalter numbers and prayer by Mr. Peter A. Poortenga, who served as Master of Ceremonies. The meal was then served and afterwards a program was given.

The program consisted of three numbers. The first was a vocal quartet by Mrs. J. Zandstra, Jr., Mrs. H. C. Hoeksema, Mrs. A. Lenting, and Mrs. J. Flikkema. The second number was the singing of "The Lord Is My Shepherd" and "Jesus Loves Me" by Lois and Karen Poortenga. And the third number was the showing of a film by Mr. John Flikkema. The program was well given and enjoyed.

Our evening closed with the singing of Psalter number 413 and prayer by Rev. H. C. Hoeksema.

An enjoyable time was had by all and the young people felt especially proud that they too, can help in this great work of establishing Protestant Reformed Education.

RUTH POORTENGA
Regional Staff Reporter



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EDITORIALS

THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE

Judge Samuel Leibowitz, judge of a Brooklyn criminal court, said in an interview with *United Press*, "The young criminal today, though barely out of knee pants, is more brazen, more cynical, more sadistic, than the toughest gangster of the Capone era." In Seattle, Washington, Judge William G. Long reports that the number of adolescents being brought into his office for criminal offense has increased 78 percent over the last 20 years. From New York to Washington, the problem of juvenile delinquency troubles the minds of civic leaders.

You may say that that is Brooklyn and Seattle, but not my home town, or you may observe that they are adolescents of worldly homes, and thus entirely different from our Christian young people who are raised in Christian homes. This may be very true, but I wish to impress upon your mind that the problem of juvenile delinquency is a very real problem, also for you and me.

At the basis of all unrest and wickedness is the carnal mind. That mind conceives all kinds of sin and evil enticements. Sin is progressive and develops as the ages unfold. Men invent new ways of sinning and seek anew to glorify the creature rather than the creator.

This development of sin is reflected in what we may call the "Spirit of the age." All the attitudes and manners, pursuits and desires of man combined together and considered as a whole, indicate what man considers to be important, what his values are, and the way he thinks he should conduct his life.

That spirit permeates all of life. One cannot escape coming into contact with it. The dress, conversation, music, entertainment,

magazines, work, and art all reflect the spirit of the age. That spirit flows as a main stream through all of society. It is the philosophy of life that the majority of the people profess. Anyone who doesn't proceed with the majority is branded "narrow minded."

We may well ask, What is the spirit of our age? In this short article we cannot begin to discuss all the facets of such a question. We can best take an example of one sphere of life and investigate it so as to come to some understanding of the attitudes which are prominent among young people.

Let us take the example of music. Music is a good representative of one's outlook on life, because it is the expression of one's inner self. Music is a melodious account of one's convictions. Considering these things, we ask, What does modern music tell us concerning the spirit of our age? The most popular type of music today as you well know, is the famed rock-n-roll music which is having its "hay day" in this age. It may seem so innocent, but what a tragic philosophy it conveys. Anyone with the least bit of sensitivity can readily feel the attitude such music takes toward all of life. Come one, come all, we're all young so just throw everything aside and live it up. Perhaps Leibowitz isn't so far off when he brands the criminal youth as "sadistic." Is it any wonder that youth act the way they do today, if such attitudes are in their minds. That this is the spirit of this age is obvious in considering the number of "pop" records sold today.

The question comes to us, How do we react to this spirit? We cannot ignore the

(Continued on page 13)

CHRISTIAN LIVING

MARRIAGE AND COURTSHIP

One of the most important aspects of the life of young people is their interest and concern in finding either a young boy or a young girl who can be for them a partner in marriage. This occupies much of their time and thinking, and is a major concern of their life. It is of this that I would like to write for a few articles, the Lord willing.

Marriage is an important institution. In fact it is the most important institution of life. There are many relationships which exist between men who live in this world such as the relation between government and governed, the relation between employer and employee, the relation between various members of a certain organization who have united for a common purpose, the relation between teacher and pupil, etc. But the marriage relation is fundamental to them all. If there were no such thing as the marriage bond, there would be no birth of children, and there would not be any other relation in life. And all the other institutions of men which I have mentioned all stem from the relation between a husband and his wife. It is because of this fundamental institution created by God that there are institutions of work, of government, of the school, of the family, etc. Our whole life in this world as we live together with our fellow man comes directly from the family. And above all else, the church and its existence from the beginning to the end of time is only possible because a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves unto his wife, and they become together one flesh.

God created this relation between husband and wife in Paradise when Adam stood

in the state of integrity. He caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and formed Eve from a rib of Adam's body. In this way He made a help meet for Adam who could live with him in the union of marriage. And it was this act of God that made possible the life of men in the world in all the relationships in which they live. Adam was created as the head over Eve, and Eve was his help meet. The father, in older times, was the head of the family in a very real sense of the word. As long as he lived, he was the ruler not only of his immediate family, but also of those generations which followed him and came forth from him. He was the responsible one for his children, his children's children, and his children's children's children, if he lived that long. And he was responsible for the instruction of all of them, for their employment, for their social life, for their place in the church and in family worship. He was a ruler in the strictest sense of the word. And when society and life became more complex and was divided into separate institutions of learning, of work, of government, it nevertheless all came forth from the relation between parents and children, from the institution of the family which marriage made possible.

Thus the marriage relation is very important. And yet this whole institution has been horribly corrupted and mutilated by sin in a godless world. And because this institution has been corrupted by sin, there is also something drastically wrong with dating and courtship as we know it in our day. The result is that there are all kinds of columns in daily papers and magazines that attempt to answer problems which arise

in marriage and in the lives of young people as they go about looking for a marriage partner. There are two or three such columns in *The Grand Rapids Press*. But the simple fact of the matter is that no amount of columns are ever going to solve any problems. The problem lies in sin and evil and the distortion of this beautiful institution of life. And no amount of superficial advice and supposedly sympathetic concern is going to change this in any way.

It is natural and worthy that a young boy seeks a young girl as his life's partner. It is natural and worthy that a young girl desires the company of a young boy. But it is well that we do not follow the pattern of this world in which we live both in seeking a marriage partner and in living in the marriage relationship.

The institution of matrimony is one of the most beautiful in life. And this is undoubtedly due to the fact that it is, according to Scripture, a picture of the relation between Christ and His church. At least it should be a picture of Christ and His church, and it will be if husband and wife live together in the fear of the Lord.

Marriage is possible because of the way in which the woman was created. She was taken from a rib of man. And this means that there is a certain and essential likeness between a man and a woman. They are both rational and moral creatures, created originally in the image of God. They are both on the same level and alike in this respect that they are the highest of all the creatures which God created, and are capable of standing in a relation of king to the rest of the world, but in a relation of servant to God. They are both human beings. They are both people. There is not the difference between a man and a woman that there is between a man and an animal, or between a man and a tree. Both man and woman are capable of thinking and willing, of living a life in this world, but also standing in contact with things that are not of this world, but are of God and His king-

dom. If this were not the case, marriage would be impossible. But since this is true, man and woman can live together as husband and wife.

Yet it stands to reason that although it is necessary for a man and a woman to be alike in this respect, if they were exactly alike in every detail, marriage still would be impossible. And so the Lord created Eve in such a way that while she was formed in the image of man, she was also different from her husband. And it was because of these differences that she could be a help meet to him, that she could supply what Adam himself noticed was lacking in his life, that she could complement the life of Adam and make it full, that she could be a partner, a companion, a friend within the marriage relation. There could be fellowship and communion between husband and wife, a full and complete life, a harmonious and rich existence in the real sense of the word in the state of marriage.

These differences are of two kinds especially. There are physical differences, and there are psychological differences. There are differences in the physical structure of a man and woman, and there are differences in the way a man and a woman think. And because of these two, they can be one flesh. But of these we will speak later.

H. HANKO.

Recent Contributions Gratefully Acknowledged

Oaklawn Protestant Ref. Church.....	\$15.25
Singspiration — Creston.....	42.05
Singspiration — Hope.....	35.33
Singspiration — South East.....	36.13
Miss J. Dertien.....	2.00
Protestant Ref. Men's League.....	25.00
Hull Protestant Ref. Church.....	14.50
Hope Protestant Ref. Church.....	35.50

TRUTH vs. ERROR

DECEPTION — A LACK OF DISCERNMENT!

From the giant printing press all over the land an enormous supply of religious literature is daily being provided and distributed without cost to the public. Churches and religious sects of every hue compete at enormous costs to get their message across and win adherents to their particular view. This necessitates a discerning public for the lack of proper discernment is the fertile soil in which deception prospers. It also demands utmost vigilance for us in providing sound and thorough education in the truth for our children because lack of this produces a generation that is unable to discern and thus is made an easy prey to the ropagandists of deceit and falsehood. In his article, however, we want to especially emphasize the importance of young people developing the good habit of proper discernment in the labyrinth of religious confusion that characterizes our present age.

Permit us to use an illustration to make this matter clear.

Some time ago we received in the mail a small booklet containing four separate sermons. We read them with interest. The first one was entitled, "Sowing And Reaping" and although no Scriptural passage was cited, we observed that the author had in mind the text of Galatians 6:7, "For whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The sermon made interesting reading and many of the illustrations and comments it contained were expressive of elements of truth. Some of these we would like to convey to our readers merely for the purpose of showing how easy it is to draw a superficial conclusion that "that was a good (true) sermon" without making proper discernment.

The author begins by emphasizing the importance of selecting the right kind of

seed in the matter of sowing and knowing that we are morally and spiritually sowing that right kind. He writes:

"Suppose I meet a man who is sowing seed, and I ask: 'What kind of seed are you sowing?' and he replies, 'I don't know!' In reply I ask, 'Don't you know whether it is tares or wheat, good or bad?' And he answers, 'No, I don't know what it is, but it is seed, and I am sowing it.' What would you think of such a man? Perhaps you would think he had holes in his head. But, friend, he would not be half as foolish as the man who sows for time and eternity, knowing that he is sowing the kind of seed which will bring him eternal misery."

Elements of truth!

Further, he stresses the importance of parental training being the right kind of sowing. He uses this illustration to express the point.

"A father started for his office early one morning, after a light fall of snow. Turning, he saw his two-year-old boy endeavoring to put his tiny feet in his own footprints. The little fellow called after him, 'Go on, I'se comin,' papa; I'se comin' yight in ure tracks.' He picked the little boy up in his arms and returned him to his mother, and started again for his office. His habit had been to stop on the way at the saloon for a glass of liquor. As he stood upon the threshold of the tavern that morning he seemd to hear a sweet voice say: 'Go on, I'se comin,' papa; I'se comin' yight in ure tracks.' He stopped, he hesitated, he looked the future squarely in the face. 'I cannot afford to make any tracks I would be ashamed to have my boy walk in,' he said decidedly, and turned away."

Elements of truth!

Then again the author points to the truth

that in our sowing we must learn patience for the harvest is not immediately reaped. This is so with respect to both good and bad sowing. To show the former he points to Galatians 6:9 and James 5:7, "*Let us not grow weary in well-doing for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*" And the latter is evident from Ecc. 8:11, "*Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.*"

Elements of truth!

We speak here of elements of truth because the whole truth is not presented in this sermon but rather the underlying tenor of it is false and this is cleverly disguised under a camouflage of truthful elements. Like so much that floods the religious market today, it is not what is said and written that is so glaringly false but rather what is left unsaid gives the lie to what appears on the surface to be true. This is deception and unless we discern carefully, we will be carried away by it on a path that leads away from the true fellowship of God in Christ Jesus. Many are and in their generations go lost! This is serious, young people!

This we see clearly by discerning several elements in this sermon. Firstly, as we stated before, the sermon has no textual basis. It is merely a dissertation on a general subject taken from the Bible. Such "*topic preaching*" rather than "*preaching the Bible*" is common in our day. At first the topics stand rather closely related to things in Scripture but it is usually not very long before the preacher discovers that the glib and easily misled public is more fascinated and lured by other subjects so that, as we experienced a few years ago in the Reformed Church, the *Daily Paper* is made the source of sermon themes instead of the Bible. "*For Sale, For Rent, Help Wanted, House For Rent, Apartment Needed, Used Cars,*" and many more like these are employed. Incredible?? In *Reformed circles!!* But it is so!

This leads to a second serious error. That is that even when the subject chosen is related to the Bible, it is never expounded in the light of its setting in Scripture. In the sermon referred to there is not one word said or one small reference to the context. The result of this is a philosophic discourse on a given theme and a total lack of Biblical exegesis and concepts. This is a serious lack and a very gross error. It is the very destruction of true preaching!

Thirdly, this sort of preaching, however it may be colored with nice phrases, impressive language, attractive illustrations, etc. which appeal to the undiscerning, omits the essential element of the truth of the Gospel. That element is *CHRIST!* This is strikingly true in connection with the sermon we are writing about. The author totally ignores the truth that man in sin can and does only sow unto the flesh corruption. He never mentions directly or indirectly the truth that it is alone through Christ Jesus and His regenerating grace and Spirit that one is able to sow good seed unto everlasting life. The impression is made throughout that man determines of his own free will and pleasure what he will sow and, therefore, he has no need of the Christ of God at all. He is *master of his own fate, captain of his own soul.* This the carnal minded public likes to hear. Oh, the author does not state this in so many words but this belongs to the subtle deception of that form of preaching that presents the lie in admixture with *elements of the truth!*

Our space is more than taken. Let us conclude here by stating, young people, exercise the power of discernment. Utilize to the fullest advantage your catechetical training, your societies, your personal study of the Word of God in the days of your youth and in the light of the truth of the Word, evaluate what you hear and read in such a way that you "*Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*" I Thess. 5:21.

G. VANDENBERG

BIBLE OUTLINE

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

(continued)

Acts 15:36 to 18:22

III. AT PHILIPPI, 16:11-40

A. The Journey, vss. 11, 12.

1. What is the significance of "therefore," vs. 11?
2. Trace the journey. How long did it take?
3. What kind of city was Philippi?
 - a. What is the meaning of "the chief city of that part of Macedonia"?
 - b. What is meant by "a colony"?
4. How long did they remain at Philippi?

B. The Conversion of Lydia, vss. 13-15.

1. How did the missionaries make contact at Philippi?
 - a. Where did they go on the sabbath day?
 - b. Why did they go here?
 - c. To whom did they speak? What does it indicate that their first audience here consisted of women?
 - d. Was there no Jewish synagog at Philippi, or does Paul forsake his rule of "to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile"?
2. Who was the first convert at Philippi?
 - a. What does her name "Lydia" indicate?
 - b. What was her business? Why is this mentioned?
 - c. Was Lydia a Jew or a Gentile?
 - d. What was her spiritual, or religious, status before she heard Paul's preaching?
 - e. What did the Lord do to her? What does this mean?
 - f. What was the result of this opening of her heart? What does it mean that she "attended" to the preaching of Paul?
 - g. What followed upon her attending to the things Paul spoke?
 - 1) What does this baptism indicate?
 - 2) Who were baptized with her? Is this proof for infant baptism?
3. Lydia's hospitality:
 - a. Why is this invitation to stay at Lydia's house specially mentioned?
 - 1) Does it show anything concerning Lydia and her conversion?

- 2) Was it of any importance as far as the labors of Paul and his companions were concerned?
- b. What was Lydia's attitude?
 - 1) Was she very eager to have the missionaries at her house?
 - 2) What was the motive of her hospitality? Was it ordinary, natural friendliness? Or was it of a spiritual nature?
 - 3) What does this incident show concerning the relation of Jew and Gentile, both on Lydia's part and on the part of Paul?
- c. What do you think of those who read in this passage the beginnings of a romance between Paul and Lydia?

C. Persecution at Philippi, vss. 16-40.

1. The occasion of the persecution:

- a. What was the position of this damsel, as is plain from the reference to her "masters"?
- b. What is meant here by a "spirit of divination"? The margin renders it a "spirit of Python."
- c. What was the testimony of this damsel as she followed Paul?
 - 1) How is it to be explained that the evil spirit in her would give such testimony?
 - 2) Why did the damsel follow Paul and Silas with such testimony?
 - 3) What was the purpose of God with this incident?
- d. Why was Paul grieved by this testimony of the damsel?
- e. What did Paul command the evil spirit?
 - 1) Was the command successful?
 - 2) What explains the success of Paul's command? Was this also expressed in the command itself?
- f. How did this become the occasion of persecution?

2. The persecution:

- a. What did the masters of the damsel do with Paul and Silas?
 - 1) What is meant by the "marketplace"?
 - 2) To whom did they bring them?
 - 3) Were not Luke and Timothy persecuted? Explain this.
- b. What was the charge that was brought against them?
 - 1) Did they bring a valid charge according to Roman law?
 - 2) What is the difference between the charge brought here and the charges in previous persecutions?
 - a) Why did they include in the charge that Paul and Silas were Jews?
 - b) Was this then persecution for the sake of the gospel, or was it a case of anti-Semitism?
- c. What was the result of the charges registered?
 - 1) How is it to be explained that the multitude became so inflamed?
 - 2) Was there any kind of trial? Why not?
 - 3) What was done to Paul and Silas?
 - a) How was this scourging carried out?
 - b) How were Paul and Silas treated by the jailor?

3. The conversion of the jailor:
 - a. What did Paul and Silas do at midnight?
 - 1) Why did they do this at *midnight*?
 - 2) Why is it mentioned that the prisoners heard them?
 - 3) Did this have any effect upon the prisoners?
 - 4) How is it to be explained that they sang praises? Is there any relation between their prayer and their singing? What was the substance of their prayer?
 - b. What followed immediately upon the prayer and singing?
 - 1) What is the significance of this earthquake, as well as of earthquakes in general in Scripture?
 - 2) What happened to the prison as a result of this earthquake?
 - 3) What was the effect of all this upon the jailor? What did he intend to do? Why?
 - c. The conversion:
 - 1) How did Paul prevent him from committing suicide?
 - 2) What question did the jailor then ask? What is the meaning of this question? How is it to be explained that the jailor asks this question?
 - 3) What is Paul's answer?
 - a) Was this something that the jailor "must do"?
 - b) Does this passage show that faith is a condition of salvation? Explain.
 - c) Was this Paul's only answer to the jailor, or did he preach Christ to the jailor, the Christ Whom he admonished him to believe?
 - 4) What was the fruit? How is it manifest that the jailor was converted? Is this baptism merely a formal, outward ceremony accompanying conversion, or is it of deeper significance?
 - 5) How does the jailor manifest his faith by his works? vs. 34.
4. The release of Paul and Silas, vss. 34-40:
 - a. How is it to be explained that the magistrates ordered the release of Paul and Silas the next morning?
 - b. Whom did they send to effect this release?
 - c. What was Paul's reply to this message?
 - 1) Why does he insist that the magistrates come personally? Would this be any compensation for their public beating and imprisonment? In what way?
 - 2) Why does Paul make use here of his Roman citizenship?
 - 3) Why does Paul insist on being publicly justified?
 - 4) Does all this have anything to do with their labors as missionaries and with the cause of the gospel?
 - d. The release:
 - 1) What do the magistrates do? Why do they want them to depart from the city?
 - 2) Having been released, do Paul and Silas depart immediately? Why not?
 - 3) Was there a church established at Philippi? Who belonged to this congregation? Was it a large congregation or not? Was it a Jewish or Gentile or mixed congregation? Why did they "comfort" the brethren?

(to be continued)

H.C.H.

NATURE STUDY

BURST OF SPRING

*Thy Spirit, O Lord, makes life to abound,
The earth is renewed, and fruitful the
ground;*

*To God ascribe glory and wisdom and might,
Let God in His creatures forever delight.*

Psalter No. 287:1

The lines quoted above are a versification of the 30th and 31st verses of the 104th Psalm: "Thou sendest forth thy spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth. The glory of the Lord shall endure forever: the Lord shall rejoice in His works." In this psalm the psalmist, inspired by the Sacred Muse gives an interpretation to the many voices of nature, and sings sweetly both of creation and providence.

These lines take on special meaning for the child of God in the spring of the year when life seems to begin anew after the cold, death and stillness of winter. Just as the rivers begin to flow and the sap begins to course through the stems of the long quiet plants, so also the blood seems to run more freely through the veins of man, woman and child as spring gradually makes its appearance.

Goethe, the great German poet, wrote concerning the approach of spring:
*Freed from the ice the brooklet flows,
Touched by the Spring's life-giving glances.
River and stream forget the snow,
Hopeful the valley's green advances.*

Yes, Lord, Thy Spirit makes life to abound; the earth is renewed and fruitful the ground. We can see this in the springing grass, in the trees bursting forth with buds, and in the flowers that sprinkle the lawns and meadows.

One of the months of this invigorating

and joyful season is May. May, for us who live in the north temperate zone, is one of the most beautiful months of the year. The snow and ice have melted. The intense heat of summer has not yet begun. The trees and grass are green and wild flowers are in bloom.

This April afternoon as I write these lines the falling rain reminds me of this little verse: "April showers bring May flowers."

I would like you to spend a few moments more with me in our arm-chair visit talking about two of these flowers that make May what it is — a month of flowers.

One of these perennial May flowers is the wild violet. In spite of the fact that few of our native wild violets are noticeably fragrant, there is no flower which holds a higher rank among the favorite flowers of Spring than these native wild violets. Pulled by grimy but loving little hands, they become the center-piece for mother's table and add a tinge of color and good cheer to teacher's desk.

There are literally dozens of species of them, and an even greater number of subspecies and hybrid varieties. Often, as we follow the country byways, we come upon colonies of them so large that the ground is tinged with blue for many yards. Even at a quick glance such sights are almost too lovely to believe.

But their full beauty strikes us only when we have knelt down to see the symmetry of the individual blossoms, the delicacy of their details, and the incredible freshness of the young massed leaves which form their background.

Yes, wild violets are a perfect symbol of Spring's flood tide at its best. No wonder

that they are favorite wild flowers of so many of us, both young and old.

Another of the well-known May and early spring flowers is the dandelion. The French have a good word for it. They call it the *Dent De Lion* because the sawtooth outline of its long, bitter-tasting leaves reminds them of a lion's teeth. To us in America it is just plain dandelion, a troublesome lawn weed but nevertheless one of the brightest jewels in Spring's entire crown.

Dandelions come into blossom early, late, and in between but they are especially numerous during the warm days of May.

It is the petals or "rays" of a dandelion bloom, not its flowers, which are responsible for most of its stunning yellow effect. These rays usually wither within twenty-four hours. By this time the inconspicuous true flowers in the center of the mass have opened, been fertilized, and seed formations have begun.

Within a few days, the stem which at first bore that familiar crown of gold has lengthened and is topped by a perfect ball of incredibly delicate pearl-white strands—the parachutes of tiny seeds ready to take flight on the first breeze that comes along.

The seasons come and go. Spring to summer, summer to autumn, and autumn to winter, but each year God is faithful to His promise and by His Spirit causeth life to abound.

A. LUBBERS

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 4)

spirit of this age. The fact is that frequently what once we hated and resented, now becomes a willing part of us. Take also the example of music. Perhaps the first time you heard rock-n-roll, you disliked it. But,

if you continued listening to such music, it became part of you. You sang the songs to yourself, you hummed the tunes, and became attached to them. The carefree melody dominated your thoughts. This is a very sad state, for I submit that when this occurs, this aspect of the spirit of this age has dominated your life. Your attitude toward all things, though you may not be conscious of it at all, is different. Indifference and carelessness soon become evident. School work becomes a chore, society is considered dull. Quiet meditation is boring because the rhythm of fast tapping feet is on your mind. This is the danger we must guard against. Music is but one example of the entire spirit of our age. The same carefree and liberal attitude also dominates the other aspects of life today.

We can so easily become complacent and say, That may be true of some other people but not me. All the attitudes of this day and age do not affect me. These attitudes prevail in the wicked world.

Such a conviction should not arise in our minds. The dangers are very real, and all the life view of this age, considered as a whole, is careless, thoughtless, and above all godless. That spirit can creep into our home so easily. We may keep out the television, forbid subscriptions to immoral magazines, forbid all rock-n-roll etc. but this negative approach is not enough. We must have an entirely different spirit. We need the spirit of truth as our covenant parents, teachers, and ministers try to impress upon our minds. We need God-centered music, magazines, entertainment, and conversation. When our minds are filled with God's spirit, we have no room for the spirit of this age. This requires an ardent battle. It is a struggle for us, but let us pray to God for the strength that we may be faithful to him and forsake all that would hinder us from serving him with our all. We cannot serve God and mammon. It is either-or, not both-and. J.K.

PENCILS AND CHALK

TEACHING BIBLE IN THE PRIMARY GRADES

The teacher of Bible must have a thorough knowledge of the Bible as a whole, for this sacred history is not a disconnected list of episodes having no bearing one upon another but are firmly woven together by the all-purposeful God so that each "story" can only be understood in the light of the rest of God's Word. Even though it is difficult for young children to grasp the meaning of the one purpose of God from the beginning of creation, nevertheless an attempt should be made to make them aware of this fact lest they look upon the Bible merely as a "nice story book." It must also be brought out that this is an *inspired* account of what happened years ago.

In order to present the Bible and its truths to young children successfully it is necessary that the teacher not only have a thorough knowledge of the whole Word of God but that he also be sincere and love that Word. The sincerity and enthusiasm of the teacher can in a large measure be sensed even by very young children. Try coldly reading a Bible story to children. Then *tell* them the same story in simple language, living the story with perhaps a few gestures and direct eye contact. You will see that the latter method produces much greater interest and retention of facts. Of course this does not mean that we should depend on Bible Story Books to the exclusion of the Bible. The teacher must read and re-read the Biblical account of each story to be sure that nothing but the truth is presented. She must also be very careful how she puts the Biblical account into childlike language for often children will draw wrong conclusions merely from the

manner in which something is stated. As the child grows older and his vocabulary is increased the Biblical account can also be read.

However the Bible course should not be limited to the hearing of the Bible story. Young children learn best when permitted to be active themselves. Thus the re-telling of the story by one of the pupils serves this purpose in one way. It also provides a means of review for without repetition the story is forgotten. Another way is to utilize the questioning nature of youngsters. Let them ask questions, and in answering them guide them to the central idea or lesson of the story. Foundations must be laid even now for a life that may serve to the honor and glory of our Maker.

Another phase of primary Bible study is that of visual aids such as pictures, maps, and objects. It is not wise to press the geography of a story to the foreground at this age although it may be mentioned in passing. Gradually he will become more and more aware of the part geography plays in each story.

Of course we must not forget memory work.

Passages which are chosen must not be beyond the comprehension of the child of that age level. It should be meaningful to the pupil and therefore should be chosen in connection with the current lessons. Two important keys to memorization for youngsters are frequent repetition and review. It is wise to have the entire class listen while individuals recite (a few at a time lest it become tiring). It should be stressed that a passage be thoroughly learned so the child

(Continued on page 16)

Mother's Day

Are you ever curious to know how special days originate? I am. I looked up the origin of this one. It seems to have had its beginning in England or amongst the Yugoslavs who, for many years, have set aside a Sunday for honoring mothers.

In the U.S. the day received national recognition as recently as 1914. However, long before this, Julia Ward Howe, author of "Civil War Days," suggested the observance of a Mother's Day "as a day dedicated to peace," and in the early 1900's Anna Jarvis of Philadelphia urged the annual observance of Mother's Day to honor "the best mother that ever lived — your mother." It was she who selected the second Sunday in May for this purpose.

The day is celebrated by many churches with special Mother's Day sermons and with musical selections. By our church the day passes unnoticed. But *mothers* do not!

The calling of the Church is to preach the Gospel. And in the history of the Gospel, mothers have their own unique place. The Bible gives us such an interesting variation in mothers. And each one serves God's purpose in her own peculiar way, furthering the coming of Christ.

When the tabernacle was built as a picture of God dwelling with His people, the *mothers in Israel* shared in this blessed work. "And all the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands. And all the women whose hearts stirred them up in wisdom, spun goats' hair."

When, because of sin, things were so dark in the history of God's people that "the highways were unoccupied and travelers walked through byways," there arose a

mother in Israel, Deborah, who judged Israel with courage and wisdom, and brought deliverance. In her song of victory she cries: "So let all thine enemies perish, O Lord."

A lonely woman rose from the untasted sacrificial feast to which she had sat down and went to kneel before the sanctuary to cast her burden upon the Lord. Hannah vows her vow as an afflicted handmaid of the Lord, and she keeps her vow as a *mother in Israel* dedicating her son wholly to the Lord to whom he belonged.

Another type is the "wise woman" who cried to Joab, David's captain, because she claimed he was "seeking to destroy a city and a *mother in Israel*." When Joab tells her all he wants is Sheba who is in the city, she goes to all the people "in her wisdom" and they cut off the head of this Sheba and throw it to Joab over the city wall. So the city is saved. I wonder if that is where Julia Howe got the notion of a Mother's Day observance as a day dedicated to peace! I doubt it, but it's not such a bad idea.

And then there was that *mother in Israel* who marvelled at the things spoken of her son, who pondered them in her heart, and whose own soul was later pierced with a sword for she was the mother of a son who was also her Lord.

These were wonderful women, these *mothers in Israel*. They were wonderful because they were wise-hearted. And they were wise-hearted because they were interested in just one thing — *the coming of their Lord*.

Alice Reitsma

Saint Augustine

Probably one of the greatest and most influential church fathers of the ages was

Augustine. He was born in Tageste in 354. His mother, Monica, was a staunch believer

in the Christian faith and she tried to indoctrinate these beliefs into her son despite the hindrance of his pagan father.

While still very young, his parents sent him to law school at Carthage, where he immediately fell into sin. He led a life of shame and violence which he later revealed in his book, *The Confessions*. Later, after discontinuing his study of law, he turned to philosophy where he was led astray by the heretical Manichean doctrine. Finally, in 384, he was given his professorship in Milan where he soon came under the teachings of Ambrose. It was the earnest preaching of Ambrose that eventually led to his conversion. Shortly after meeting Ambrose, he was converted and baptized.

Four years later, he was at Hippo where he soon became a priest and finally the bishop of Hippo. It was here at Hippo that his first monastery was established. Augustine thought that monasteries were very good to be used as institutions of learning for the clergy. It was also at Hippo that Augustine began to fight so valiantly against the heresies which had crept into the church. First the Manicheans, whom he had joined while in Carthage. They taught that evil is matter and not a power or force. The way to escape from evil then was by means of monasteries and convents in which they could live secluded lives away from the world. Augustine broke down these beliefs by using God's Word to make them see their error. He said that when one goes into monasteries he can't get away from sin because those who are shut up in them still have their own sinful hearts which cause them to sin.

Another false teaching which arose at this time was Pelagianism. Pelagius was an Irish monk who taught that man is created good, without blemish, and having no original guilt. He claimed that grace is only an external help for the common man and he could, if he so desired, refrain from all sin and be without need of Christ. He said that man sins because his will makes the evil

choice to sin, and that at any time throughout his life he can refrain from sin if he can only break a powerful "habit" which he has formed. Contrary to this, Augustine said that man is saved only by irresistible and unmerited grace granted by God. He said too, that God does not determine the sins of man but only permits them. This puts the free will of man in the place of the determining will of God, and makes Augustine a believer of Infralapsarianism.

Therefore, because of the many new ideas which he started at this time, he is considered the greatest teacher of the Western Church. Many of the later doctrinal issues which sprang up were inspired by the teachings of Augustine.

WAYNE L. LANNING

PENCILS and CHALK

(Continued from page 14)

will need no prompting. Also it should not be recited merely as a string of words but with meaning and expression.

In conclusion you will note that a well-rounded Bible course is desirable in the primary grades as well as later in the upper grades.

MRS. H. VAN DYKE
(Hope Prot. Ref. School)

THE SAFETY OF BELIEVERS

God guards the good with watchful eye,
His ear attentive to their cry,
Against the wicked sets His face,
From earth their memory to erase.

The righteous cry, Jehovah hears,
And rescues them from all their fears;
The Lord draws nigh to broken hearts,
To concrete spirits help imparts.

Afflictions on the good must fall,
But God will bring them safe through all;
From harmful stroke He will defend,
And sure and full deliverance send.

Psalm 34:1



*You'd
Better
Hurry!*

and make plans for
the 18th Annual
Young People's
Convention, to be
held August 5, 6, and
7, 1958.



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