

Equipped to be a Good Soldier

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In a recent issue of *Beacon Lights* we discussed the “uncertainty of the times” and its implications and effects upon the decisions of our young people, especially insofar as service in our armed forces creates problems in regard to the choosing of a life vocation and marriage.

We expressed the thought at that time that other departments of their lives are also touched and effected by these things, upon which we would perhaps comment at a later date.

The lives of our Christian young men who face induction are not run in the normal course which we and they would choose. The normal way would be that they live at home under parental guidance and control; that they finish their education to equip them for whatever their calling or vocation may be; that they live with and in the midst of God’s people in His church, being active in the affairs of the church such as catechism, societies, singing, etc.

They normally would commence their chosen vocation or calling and seek out a suitable life partner. This is the way we and they would choose to arrange their lives.

Now God in His providence has arranged things in such a way that the normal life of most of our boys is not to run in this usual channel. If these young men are really God’s people then this interruption of the usual routine and this channeling of their lives in their ways also comes to them in His grace, for ALL things work together for good to those who fear God and who are the called according to His purpose.

Under the present stress of troublous and uncertain times, our young men face the disruption of their lives for a time and at a time when they are in their formative years; years during which their home-life and their church-life serve as a means in God’s hand to instruct, guide and control them in the ways of God. They are compelled to leave the security of their homes and church and live their lives in surroundings and among companions who certainly would not be of our choosing.

The instruction in the home and in the church is designed to fit and equip the young man to assume his God-given place in the world in accordance with God’s plan and purpose with him. Knowing that in all probability he will be faced with the necessity of serving a term of years in military service, his attention may be directed to giving special thought and attention to such instruction as may specifically fit and equip him for both the defensive and offensive needs that will be his while in the service.

Defensively he has need of a sound knowledge of the truth of Scripture and Reformed doctrine, in order that he may not be easily swayed from the truth by all the pseudo and half-truth with which he will come into contact. He will need a well-grounded knowledge of God’s precepts and commandments in order that he may recognize the evil in the various and varied temptations which will continually surround and attempt to assail him. Just as his military service itself instructs him in all the art of defensively protecting his country from all its enemies, so his pre-induction training in home and school and church must serve to equip him to do battle with all the evil forces to which he will be exposed while living in the midst of an evil world far from home and church influence.

Not mere instruction and knowledge can so fit him. Prayerful instruction and instruction in prayer are needful; prayer for grace and strength to use the knowledge received and the instruction given that, by grace, they may serve as an armor, shield, helmet and buckler against every evil in the battle.

There is also an offensive battle that must be prepared for. The young man must be equipped with the knowledge of God and thoroughly instructed in His Word in order to testify before the world in which he will be living, of the God in whom he believes. Not only must he learn to testify against the evil surrounding him, but he may also be given the opportunity to witness for the truth positively at the proper time. God may lead across his path those whom he wills shall come to a knowledge of salvation through means of his witness and testimony. For this reason also he must be well equipped to tactfully and effectively expound the word of truth and the way of salvation; God working by His grace and Spirit in such as shall be saved.

Preparing for such a task is not an easy matter. It requires much time, much thought, much study and much prayer.

The preparation can't be put off. You will have to begin when you are very young because usually you are still quite young when the need for putting this instruction into practice becomes a reality. So—study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed.

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