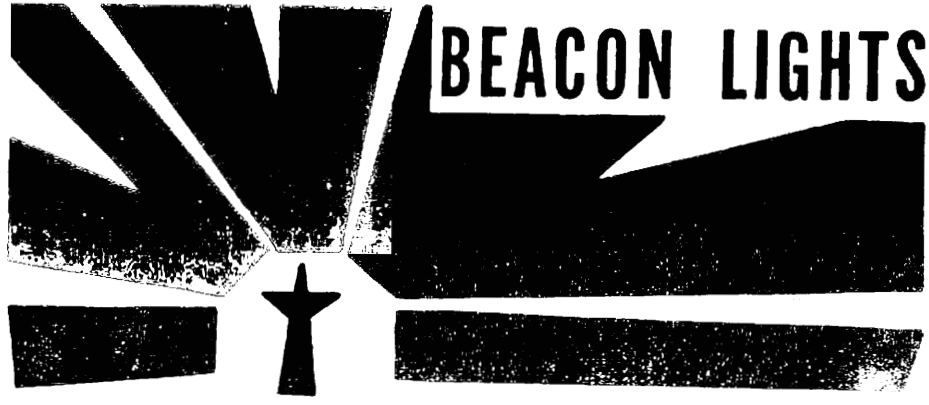
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

JUNE - JULY, 1978

BE YE HEARERS...

AND DOERS



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All material for publication should be addressed to
Dave Moelker 1401 Su-Lew S.W.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49504
News Editor: Cindi Dykstra
4625 Ju-Le-On Dr. S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Michigan subscription dues to Grace Faber
4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, Mich. 49506
Subscribers outside of Michigan please
forward subscription dues to
Nancy Van Dyke
3502 Bluebird S.W., Wyoming, Mich. 49506

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EDITORIAL COMMENTS

In February of 1958, Mr. Charles Westra was editor of *Beacon Lights*. An editorial appeared at that time entitled "The Fleeting Intelligence of Parents"; it was one of many which he produced for *Beacon Lights* in the time in which he served as editor. He is now a member of the Church triumphant, and that which he wrote for the benefit of the young people of 1958 is still right for the youth of 1978. His way of putting the point across is both interesting and thought provoking.

* * * * * * *

Rev. C. Hanko contributes the seventh in his series on "Leaving Father and Mother". "The Bridegroom promises that he will love his wife always; even in times of temptation, even when his wife is stricken with illness, physical infirmity, mental stess, or any other ailment that makes inroads into their marital relationship. The promise is not supplemented with a series of 'ifs' and 'buts'; it is simply the promise to love his wife faithfully."

* * * * * * *

Rachel Jansma of Hull Protestant Reformed Church, Hull. Iowa, contributes "Be ye Hearers ... and Doers". This article was originally a chapel talk given by her in Western Christian High School of Hull, Iowa. She has edited her chapel talk into a guest article for use in *Beacon Lights*. "Hi! Whatcha doing tonight?" "I don't know, 'Gone in 60 seconds' is showing at the theater. I heard that's pretty good." "O, yeah? We could do that — there's nothing else to do." "How about you? What are you doing tonight?" "Oh, my folks said I have to go to this dumb church doing. I don't know, some kind of installation service or something. Ugh."

* * * * * * *

Prof. H. Hanko in his series of the life and ministry of Rev. Ophoff quotes to some extent from an open letter of Rev. Ophoff to a minister who had defended conditional salvation, printed at one time in the *Standard Bearer*. "You may call my arguement anything you like — abject nonsence, sop history, it makes no difference — providing that you do one thing; make plain that your characterizations are true....," This was typical of Rev. Ophoff's straight forwardness and showed his zeal to defend the Reformed faith.

* * * * * * *

Here is a reminder to make use of "Rev. Moore's Mailbox" Thought postage rates have increased, don't let the flow of mail to Edmonton decrease.

Editorial

The Fleeting Intelligence of Parents

by Charles Westra

(Taken from Beacon Lights, Volume 18, Febuary, 1958)

We have noticed a strange and puzzling phenomenon regarding the intelligence of parents; especially of parents having growing children. When the youngsters are young, possibly during the ages that coincide with grade school and earlier, parents are virtually perfect. Every decision they make is the absolutely perfect one, every opinion is very fact indeed, and certainly no unworthy or sinful thought ever passes through their minds.

Although the exact moment of this loss of intelligence varies with each individual, the loss is usually noticed most prominently when a son or daughter enters junior high grades and continues until this same child is married.

Suddenly parents lose all sense of judgment. Their thinking becomes out of tune with the date, their judgments become based on archaic or at best, extremely old fashioned ideas; their former concern for the child's welfare becomes offensive "nosiness", and they spend long hours lecturing their off-spring on subjects regarding which the latter already knows far more than the parent can ever hope to know.

Or do they?

Let's look more closely at this supposedly fleeting parental intelligence. It seems that the same parent can be in both stages of intelligence at the same time depending on the ages of their children. Now that's odd, isn't it?

Or is it?

Let's face it. When we were youngsters, Dad and Mother stood for all that was righteous and good in our minds.

"My Daddy is stronger than your Daddy" was the challenge that we used to tell the world that our parents were richer, smarter, and in general far superior to any other parents in the world now or in the future.

But what happened? What brounght on this sudden change that causes us to feel that "the old man ain't hep"; that Dad and Mother have lost contact with today; that their decisions are based on ideas that should have been discarded with Dobbin, the surrey, and the kerosene lamps?

Regretfully, it seems to be a part of every person's growing up since it lasts only a few years. For when teenagers become adults and begin to establish homes of their own, suddenly the parents regain the intelligence. Very strange indeed!

But let us return for a moment to this period when teenagers are forced to tolerate their dull parents. As we evolve

from children into teenagers, our education broadens and many hidden things become plainer to us. Basking in the light of a few newly (for us) discovered ideas, we find with mild surprise and not so mild pride, that two and two not only make four but also make twenty-two. Other facts of life which until now had been the almost sacred possession of our parents are revealed to us. Presently we expect to graduate from school and then we'll have the whole world by the tail. Why should we listen to Mother and Dad who perhaps haven't gotten past the eighth grade?

Here's why!

Because, although they may have grown up before the days of twin carburetors and fin tailed cars, the basics of Christian living haven't changed! The powerful strength of temptations, the weakening affects of excesses, and the certainty of being burned when playing with fire are just as true as when they were teenagers themselves. Not only is life basically the same as in your parents' youth, but they have the added advantage of experience and years of observing life around them.

For example, when we are warned against driving at excessive speeds, Dad isn't just talking because of general good driving principles he once read on safe driving poster; he's speaking as one who has either seen or perhaps even experienced the effect of such carelessness.

Or a stronger example. When we are warned by our parents against taking part in questionable activities, they are not simply reading a little speech out of an antiquated rule book. They are warning out of experience of having seen friends' lives marred or even ruined by indulgences such as confront every one of us daily. Perhaps these friends were once as close to them as your best friend is to you. So when your parents counsel you, and warn you, they are most likely just as right now as you thought they were when you were six years old.

In a few years you will be establishing homes and possibly raising families of your own. Between now and that time, you expect to gain much knowledge both through education and experience. Doesn't it make sense that your parents also learned much during the same period in their own lives?

Why not listen to them now, and give them credit for having the intelligence you expect to have by the time you are their age?

GOD'S WORK IN NATURE

There was a man who dwelt in the East
centuries ago,
And now I cannot look at a sheep or a
sparrow,
A lily or a cornfield, a raven or a
sunset,
A vineyard or a mountain, without
thinking of Him.

—G. K. Chesterton

George M. Ophoff (25)

by Prof. H. Hanko

The Polemicist

We had promised to give to our readers in this article a quote from the first answer of Rev. Ophoff to those who were agitating for the Liberated position on the doctrine of the covenant. This article is found on pp. 350-355 of Vol. XXV of the **Standard Bearer**. We cannot quote the entire article. It is much too lengthy for that. But we will quote sufficient to give the general idea of Rev. Ophoff's answer. Here then follows the quote. The article appeared in the form of an open letter to a minister who had defended conditional salvation in the **Concordia**.

"The last issue of the **Concordia** brought to us your 27th installment on the subject of the **covenant**. I am a faithful reader of your articles. I find them interesting and thought-provoking. You write in a fresh style. You have your own way of putting things. This does not mean that I can always agree with you. Such is not the case. I find myself at odds, for example, with your last few articles. It is especially these articles that cause me to take up my pen to write you this open letter. I would like to discuss with you the content of these articles. They gave rise in my mind to questions, which I have need of revealing and herewith do so as trusting that you will be willing to entertain them and give reply. You must have realized when you penned those articles that from certain quarters there would be some reaction to what you wrote. However, what you have from my pen in this article is not to be taken as criticism. All I desire is discussion for the sake of the truth, I take it, is as dear to you as it is to me and to us all.

"....You quote three texts in support of your contention that there are **conditions** in connection with the covenant....

"Can it be that these texts or any other text in the whole Bible teach what you say they do? — teach namely, that God lets it be known to men that He will save His people **on the condition** that they believe? From the sequel of your article it appears that this is what you mean....

"Allow me to set forth what I believe to be the truth of God's Word on this point. And then the first question that confronts us is: What meaning does the dictionary give to the term **condition** when occurring in such conditional sentences as: the Lord saves His people on the condition that they believe. What is the idea of the concept condition in that connection? Let us turn to my dictionary. I have a good one here at my elbow; it's The Century Dictionary, an Encyclopedia Lexicon of the English Language, a work of ten volumes of microscopic print with each volume measuring 10-12-12½ and weighing seven pounds and two ounces. Not that it's good just because of its size and weight and bulk. But it's a good dictionary...."

After a defense of his use of the dictionary and a long quote from it, Rev. Ophoff goes on:

"What now do the sum and total of

the expressions that form that definition spell? They spell uncertainty, don't they? This is self-evident. Anything that may or may not occur is uncertain. So that something — here salvation as a work of God — that is dependent on faith as a condition, contingent on the will of a human being, or finite agent. It is characterized by uncertainty. And that, too, must of necessity characterize the faith of God's people as a condition, on which that something — salvation as a work of God — is contingent. The faith of God's people as a condition is uncertain. It may or may not occur and if and when occurring, it may or may not abide. Just because faith as a condition is uncertain, salvation as a work of God, contingent on such faith, is uncertain. In fine the characteristic of faith as a condition is uncertainty. It may or may not occur.

"And what must that needs imply? The following: 1) Whether a man believes is solely dependent on his own sovereign capricious, and arbitrary will. 2) Hence, faith is not of God; it is of man. 3) Like the creature, God is limited in His power and knowledge and stands helpless over against man's unbelief.

"It is plain that in the proposition, "God saves His people on the condition that they believe," that is, "Salvation as a work of God is contingent on the faith of the believer," we deal with a heresy of the first magnitude, destructive conceptionally of God and of all true religion.

"Isn't it plain, brother, that the term, condition, as a sentence-element in the proposition, "God saves His people on the condition that they believe," is a dangerous one. It doesn't fit in the thought-structure of the Reformed theologian. It has place only in the perverted system of theology hatched out by Pelagius and Arminius....Why should we exchange God's way of saying things for a heretical terminology? Why should we try to discourse on Reformed theology in the terminology of Pelagius and Arminius? It simply can't be done. What is there to be gained by such a doing? Nothing at all, as far as I can see. Absolutely nothing. And there is everything to lose. We all know how Satan works. He first smuggles in the terms, as satisfied that his lies will follow. Why play with fire?...

"Your definition of condition states that God, salvation as a work of God, fulfills the condition (the faith of God's people as a requirement) and that it is at once contingent, dependent, on faith as a condition. But that is impossible. Both cannot be true. That I have correctly stated your definition of the term condition is as plain as can be. You call faith a condition, which is equivalent to saying that faith as a condition is that on which something (the will of God) is contingent. At the same time you say that faith as a condition is fulfilled by God. So there you are.

"It seems to me then, brother, that you will have to do one of two: 1) either stop saying that salvation as a work of God is contingent on the faith of God's people, and if you do that, you deny, of course, that faith is a condition, and that you do not want to deny, of course; 2) or stop saying that faith as a condition is fulfilled by God, something you don't want to do either. So what are you going to do now, brother?...

"Reading your article there is something that struck me as being very strange. It is this: At the beginning of your article you write, 'I cannot see a great importance in the question,' — you mean the question of the use of the term condition — 'except as it leads us back to the question, 'What is the covenant?'' You mean then that it is not an important question **by itself**. Yet, at the same time you devote your entire article to eulogizing the term and recommending the use of it to our people. At the close of your article you even write, 'From this it may appear that we have no quarrel with the idea of conditions in the covenant, if they are

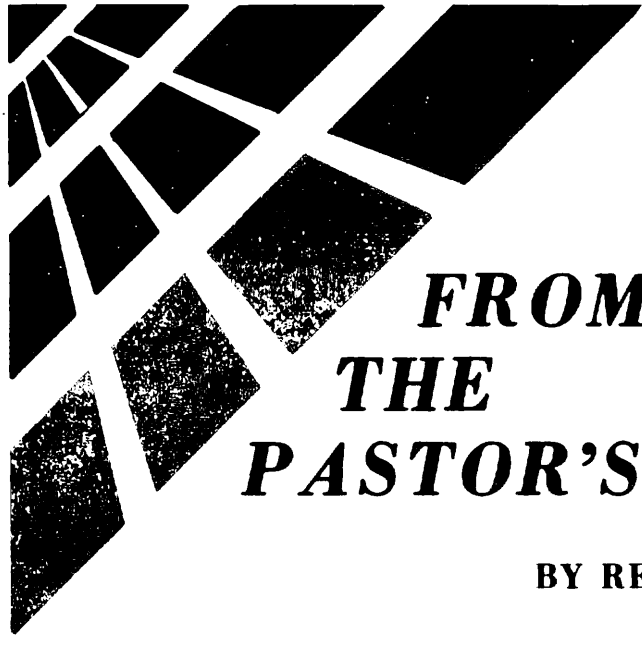
negatively guarded against Arminian and Pelagian falsification, and positively seen in their spiritual necessity and beauty.' I have a question. If, according to your way of thinking, conditions in the covenant are necessary and beautiful, how could you write, 'I cannot see a great importance in the question,' and why did you write that? Conditions in the covenant necessary and beautiful? I wonder. Fact is that as I see it conditions in the covenant are destructive of the covenant. There is great importance in the question. For me it is fundamentally a question of whether we as a communion of truly reformed churches are to be or not to be.

"....A closing remark. I say again, What I have penned in this article is not to be taken as criticism. All I desire is discussion here in the **Standard Bearer**. It is true, I do express myself rather positively. But that has at least this virtue that you know exactly what I mean and think and believe especially so because, as far as I am aware, I have been using my words according to the meaning that they have in the dictionary. I really do hope that you will thoughtfully examine my argument and give reply. You may call my argument anything you like — abject nonsense, sophistry, it makes no difference — providing that you do one thing; make plain that your characterizations are true...."

This is the end of the quote. Really, the issues as laid down in this first article by Rev. Ophoff contain all the issues which were to be more extensively developed in the next four years in the voluminous writings which appeared on the subject.

TEST YOUR MEMORY

1. Whose sons were charged with turning aside after lucre, taking bribes and perverting judgement? I Samuel 8:1-3
2. What did the stone Ebenezer symbolize? I Samuel 7:12
3. What group of people said there is no resurrection? Mark 12:18
4. How many basketsful were left over after Jesus fed the four thousand? Mark 8:8-9
5. Complete the verse "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life...." John 14:6
6. What is the more common name for the Sea of Tiberias? John 6:1
7. Complete the verse "For all have sinned, and....." Romans 3:23
8. Who called himself the chief of sinners? I Timothy 1:15
9. What were the names of Job's three friends? Job 2:11
10. What kind of tree did Zaccheus climb to see Jesus? Luke 19:4



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. M. KAMPS

THE GOOD SHEPHERD

"I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." John 10:11

In this passage from the gospel of John, Jesus is addressing the Jews and is stressing the truth that He is the Messiah. The promised Messiah had come and this is He, Jesus of Nazareth. As the Messiah Jesus was, of course, the Good Shepherd, who was to give His life for the sheep. Jesus preached the significance for His sheep of His death and resurrection. This Jesus of Nazareth had the power to lay down His life freely and the power to raise it up again. Besides, He gives to His sheep life eternal and they shall never perish.

Many of the Jews said: "He hath a devil, and is mad, why hear ye him." But the sheep know Jesus' voice and follow Him. Devils cannot open the eyes of the blind.

What is meant by the figurative term "good shepherd?" The work of a shepherd was common knowledge to the Jews of Jesus' day. The shepherd's duty was to lead the sheep to the green pastures and streams of water. He had to feed and care for the sheep day and night. In the context Jesus stresses above all the duty of a shepherd to protect and guard the sheep from every danger. Lions, bears, puma, or wolves at times would attack the sheep and it was the shepherd's duty to protect the flock from these wild beasts.

The hireling fleeth because he is an hireling and careth not for the sheep. He

is an hireling. The sheep do not belong to him. Therefore, concerned only for his own safety, he flees and as a result the sheep are scattered and destroyed.

But Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He will not flee, but, he tells the Jews, I lay down my life for the sheep.

This is figurative language. In reality the sheep are the people of God and as one flock they are the Church of Christ chosen in Christ from eternity. You and I are the sheep. The repentant believer is a member of the flock of Christ, our Good Shepherd.

The Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep! Why? Because the danger of death threatened the sheep. There was a great enemy who threatened the people of God. What specifically was that danger that threatened the sheep and which Christ saw and knew that in order to remove that danger He must lay down His life for the sheep? The answer: the guilt of our sin and iniquity. Our guilt in Adam and the guilt incurred by our daily sins made us worthy of eternal damnation in hell. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way.

That impending danger, as a roaring lion, the Good Shepherd foresaw and knew that the certain destruction of the flock could be prevented only by the Shepherd's death. "I lay down my life for the sheep."

Vicarious atonement! To make atonement is to satisfy the justice of God for all our sin and guilt. Christ by His atoning death not only removed all our guilt but He also merited for us righteousness. That atonement was vicarious. It was the laying down of One's life for others. The word "vicarious" means substitutional. Jesus died for the sheep. Christ died **on behalf of** those given Him by the Father and, therefore, He died in their stead. Jesus took and God laid upon Him the iniquity of us all. Jesus death satisfied the justice of God for some sinners...the sheep.

When Jesus saw the danger of death that threatened the flock, why did He not flee? Why did not Jesus flee to Galilee from the garden of Gethsemane? Why did He not come down from the cross? Why not flee the billows of God's eternal wrath against our sin and guilt?

There is a blessed answer to those questions. The sheep belonged to Jesus... He was not an hireling. Further, Jesus loved His own even unto death! (John 13:1) No one else could defend the sheep for Jesus alone is Jehovah salvation. Jesus alone is the revelation of God's covenant faithfulness and love. Jesus alone had the power to sustain the burden of God's wrath against our sin and guilt and to bear it all away. Jesus alone was the Son of God sent of our Father to be made sin for us. The Messiah.

Could the Christ have fled? Absurd! He came determined to defend the sheep.

We should not over look the fact that Christ by His death removed the danger that threatened the sheep. The flock is safe and secure. The wolf hath been destroyed. You must not say, as do some foolish preachers, that the sheep are still in danger of hell fire. You must not think that the sheep can still be devoured by the guilt of their sin. They have forgiveness. You must not think that even though Christ has died that, nevertheless, the guilt of sin still threatens the flock of Christ. You must never believe, as some would have us believe, that some for whom Christ died go to hell after all. God Forbid! To teach that nonsence is to deny that Jesus is a complete Savior, (Heidelberg Catechism; Lord's Day 11), and to cast aspersions upon the infinite value of the blood of Christ. Rather God's people are objectively justified! Righteous they are before the Judge of heaven and earth. Our God beholds no iniquity in Jacob. Our God accounts the sheep as worthy of everlasting life. For Jesus merited for them righteousness and the right unto everlasting life. The elect of God are objectively justified on the basis of the

atoning death of the Good Shepherd, which blessed fact has been publicly declared as the incontestable truth by God in the resurrectiong of Christ from the dead.

The sheep have been protected and kept safe through the loving faithfulness of the Good Shepherd, who died in order that the sheep may have life and have it more abundantly.

Note too, that Jesus had said: I **am** the Good Shepherd. Jesus did not say I will be, or I will become, or I would like to be, or I will try to be the Good Shepherd. No, I am the Good Shepherd. Jesus is stating what was always His position with respect to the sheep. How many sheep did Jesus have at the time these words were spoken. Outwardly considered, he did not have very many. The twelve disciples could be mentioned, but one of them was a devil. That leaves eleven and the fact is that later they too forsook Him and fled leaving Christ to stand alone rejected of men! But outward appearances are deceiving! Jesus had at this time many hundreds of thousands and even millions of sheep. As innumerable as the sand upon the sea shore were the members of His flock. Some of which were the saints of the old dispensation, who were already in glory through faith in the promised blood typified in the blood of animals. Some of the sheep were those who were his disciples of that day. Many millions at that time were not yet born but would be gathered through the preaching of the gospel throughout the new dispensation. However, the point is Jesus had His sheep.

Or is it possible to be a shepherd without possessing sheep to shepherdize? If as Jesus claimed He was the Shepherd then He had His Sheep. Can one be a pilot with possessing a plane to fly? Can one be a jockey if he has no horse to ride? So also with the Good Shepherd. The elect of God were the sheep of Jesus flock. Jesus was the Good Shepherd when he was twelve years old debating with the elders of the people. Jesus was the Good Shepherd when as an infant He was taken up into aged Simion's arms "as the glory of thy people Israel" He was the Good Shepherd already when conceived in His mother's womb as the one to whom God would give the throne of His father David. Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, is the Good Shepherd from all eternity. The care and protection of the sheep, the chosen people of God, was the responsibility of the Word become flesh. Forget not, His name is Jesus, that is, Jehovah Salvation!

Jesus of Nazareth is our Good Shepherd, who beheld from eternity as the Son of God, the danger of death that threatened His Sheep. Jesus, therefore, had come to do His Father's will, which was that the Son of God should lay down His life in our flesh for our redemption.

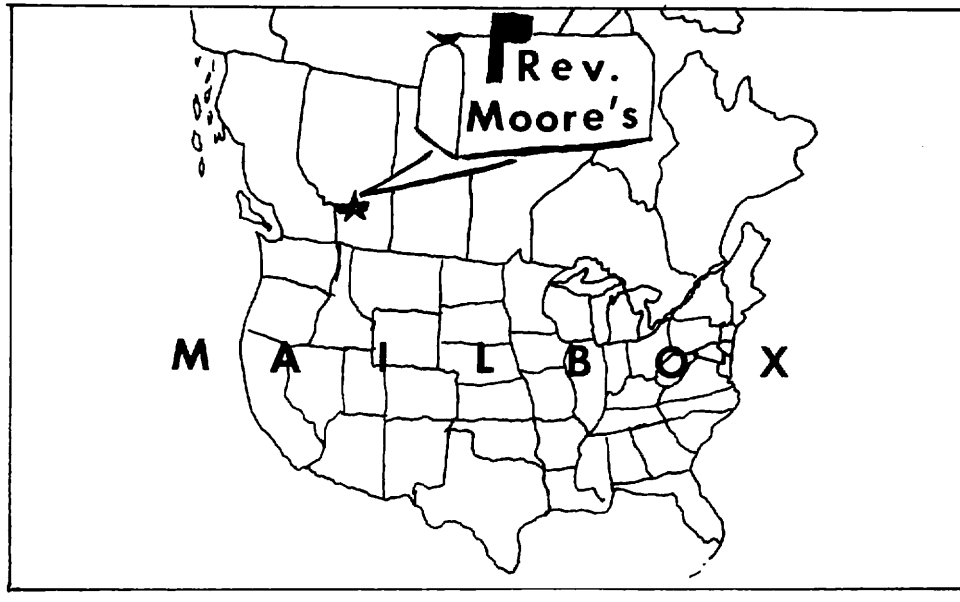
Blessed words: I **am** the Good Shepherd.

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd."

"...The Son of God from the beginning to the end of the world gathers, defends, and preserves to himself by his Spirit and word, out of the whole human race, a church chosen to everlasting life, agreeing in true faith; and ...I am and forever shall remain a living member thereof."

"Some people fall for everything and stand for nothing."

"The men who moved the world were men whom the world could not move."



Send all Correspondence to:
Rev. Richard Moore
12324 134th St.
Edmonton, Alberta
Canada T5L1V1

This question comes from Grand Rapids. **Scripture says thou shalt not swear in Matthew 5:33-37. How does that relate to our taking an oath?**

To begin we should quote the text:

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by earth; for it is his footstool; neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

In the first place, it is obvious that the oath itself is not evil. The Scripture makes it plain that there are ways and times when an oath is properly used before God. God, Himself reveals that the oath is able to be so used. He does so by swearing an oath by His own Name. This is recorded in Hebrews 6:13-18. Further, Christ allowed Himself to be placed under an oath and this is recorded in Matthew 26:64. And Paul uses an oath as seen in I Corinthians 1:23. Certainly then, there are times an oath may be used rightly to attest to the truth.

But in the second place, there are obvious instances when the oath is very sinfully used and such use should not be named in our midst! Some examples are:

The trivial or light use of an oath. By often using an oath to confirm almost everything one says, is to use God's name in vain and the oath itself loses all meaning. There is the use of an oath in cursing, such as the expression, "By God!" Such cursing is met with sure judgment! Also, there is the use of the oath to swear falsely before the magistrate. This is an attempt to make God partaker of the lie! And is terrible wickedness. And one more example is the swearing of an oath of alligence to a club, society, labor union, etc. These are oaths used to bind oneself in a godless union. These uses of an oath are clearly false and sin. God's children abhor and flee their use!

Evidently then, there are uses of the oath which are evil in themselves, while at other times there are uses of the oath which are most proper before God.

But then what does Jesus mean when He teaches us to "swear not at all"? Does our Lord merely refer to the swearing by objects other than God, by explaining in our text that this is impossible? Or does Jesus forbid the false swearing that we have mentioned above? Yet this does not really explain His words, "Swear not at all." Rather it is clear that there is a time when the oath ought not to be necessary at all!

We can understand this when we consider that Jesus addresses His Church. In the "Sermon On The Mount", He sets forth the spiritual characteristics of the Kingdom of Heaven, and of the subjects of that kingdom. He speaks of His elect body. They are members in His blood and by His Spirit of the one household of faith. And in the sermon, Jesus sets forth the right manifestation of the covenant life of God's people. Then Christ says to His own that they have no need of oaths within the sphere of the kingdom of Father. We ought not in the church, in the midst of God's people, swear oaths at all.

This admonition means exactly that as children of light, we ought to speak as children of light, that we speak the truth to one another. Let your yea be yea; and nay, nay. When we speak one to another in the Lord we have nothing to hide or to hold back. Further, we should have no doubt nor mistrust in what our brother or sister says as we walk by grace in faith. Thus within the grace of God-in His covenant fellowship-Christ's body ought always to speak as before the Face of God. Then, indeed yea, yea; and nay, nay is sufficient. And we have no need to swear an oath at all. It is only sin that gives rise to the need of an oath. May God grant us grace to so walk as covenant young people that our speech will be mutually trusted as the truth before God!

Because of sin, the magistrate may require an oath. For he knows that sinners stand before him and may require the oath to obtain the truth. And it may be because of the weakness of sin, that even for a brother's sake one may find it necessary to take an oath to verify the truth. But then make your oath a confession of faith.

In summary, in the kingdom of Christ, amongst brothers and sisters in faith, let us seek grace to swear not at all—to have no need of an oath. And if it is required either for a weak brother's sake or by the magistrate, let our prayer be for grace to have our oath be a confession of complete trust and confidence in the God of all grace. And may we by grace glorify God in all of our speech!

"The Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School is in need of a lower room teacher, grades 1 through 4, for the 1978-1979 school year. Application can be made to the Loveland School Board, c/o Gary Griess, 612 East 41st Street, Loveland CO 80537. Phone (303) 669-1816."

Is Your Bible Knowledge Based on the Bible?

by Ben Wigger

I suppose that it would be accurate to say that the Bible is the best known, if not the best read, book in the entire world. Yet there are not that many people who can distinguish between what the Bible actually says and what has been added by our own imagination and popular folklore.

This is especially an important fact to consider as Christians, and as young people of the church. Is our biblical knowledge actually based on the Bible? Do you read enough of God's word to really know what is included in that word?

Has it happened to you, as it has to me, that you find yourself part of a religious conversation with fellow believers, or maybe perhaps an unbeliever, only to find yourself up against a stone wall when it comes to supporting your stand with scriptural proof? You know what you believe, but where do you find support for that belief in scripture? I am afraid that there are not that many of us who can put our finger on one specific text, the one text we need to find when the time comes.

There is not only that particular point to consider, there is also the many forms of imagery that we have formed in our minds over the years.

For example, how many times don't we think of the Christmas nativity story as dealing with three wise men coming to the manger, when actually we all know that the number is nowhere mentioned in scripture. And that by the time the wise men had made the trip from the east, the Christ child and his family were no longer in the manger, but rather in a home in Bethlehem.

There is also no mention of what type of fruit was eaten by our first parents, Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden; but common tradition states that it was an apple.

And the story of Jonah doesn't speak of a whale as being the fish that swallowed the prophet of God. (A whale is not even a fish!)

Think also of the world's popular visualizations of angels and devils. Angels

in the Bible, of course, do not have wings, nor do they need them, being purely spiritual creatures. Yet how many pictures do you see of an angel that didn't have wings? And there is no passage anywhere in scripture to support the idea that devils have horns, tails, or pitchforks in hand.

These are just a few of the ways the world distorts the Word of God. What is of more concern to us is the reality that the false church also uses the Word of God as its foundation.

The modern Arminian, after all, bases his claim that God loves all men and makes salvation possible for everyone, on scripture.

And we have to be ready always to give answer to those claims.

Of course, the conclusion is rather obvious. How can you refute the Arminian lie, or any other error, when your own knowledge of God's word is at a questionable level.

What do you say to one who points to John 3:16 as a proof that God desires all men to be saved? Part of your answer would be to convey a proper understanding of just what that verse really means, and you could not do that with only a limited knowledge of the Word of God.

Our calling then is plain, not only as young people, but as Christian believers. After all, the study of God's word is an ongoing process. You constantly build on previous knowledge.

This means that we must make use of the means God has given us, both in our private devotions and in our study of God's word with fellow believers, so that, with the help of our Heavenly Father, no one can say that our biblical knowledge is not based on the Bible.

For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad
through Thy work:
I will triumph in the works of
Thy hands.
—Psalm 92:4

What mild, peaceful sway o'er the motions
Of human heart like Nature's potions!
The agitated mind, leaving town,
At sight of sea or mountain, calms down.
In falling of the dusk, stars arise,
Quieting the soul with sweet surprise.
Then tranquility the heart rules o'er,
Frees my thoughts: they to Creator soar.
Father of the world, His works I see
In grandeur: earth, sea, sky, mount and tree.
I feel His love, to heart appealing;
Space, place and time verge by me reeling.
Forgetting where I am, Earth grows dim,
A shadow of the Heav'n bright with Him!

Neither doth a fool understand this.
—Psalm 92:6b

—R. C. Harbach

BE YE HEARERS... AND DOERS

by Rachel Jansma

"Hi! Whatcha doing tonight?"

"I don't know. 'Gone in 60 Seconds' is showing at the theater. I heard that's pretty good."

"Oh, yeah? We could do that—there's nothing else to do."

"How about you? What are you doing tonight?"

"Oh, my folks said I have to go to this dumb church-doing. I don't know, some kind of installation service or something. Ugh."

"And, you. What did you say you were going to do tonight?"

"We were thinking about going to the Disco."

"The what?"

"The Disco, you know. They've got a really decent dance floor and—you should go there once. It's pretty neat."

"Hm-m-m. I'll have to go there sometime."

Hey! Wait a minute. Open your Bible to Proverbs 15:3 where it says, "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the good and the evil." I came across this text one time when I was reading the Bible before I went to bed. You know, it really struck me. It's nice and easy to think that God sees all our good little deeds. We kind of tingle inside with self-pride and esteem because we did "another good thing". Nobody likes to think and admit that God sees all our bad things, too.

Like, how often don't we wake up on Sunday morning, turn up our noses, roll over, and go back to sleep. It's that boring day of the week again. We brag that we went to church twice, maybe even three times. We complain that the minister preaches too long. But, really, we don't complain when we have to sit three hours at a basketball game or at the races. Why is it that we complain when we have to sit in church a little over an hour? Look at the Psalmist David. He says in Psalm 122:1—"I was glad when they said, Let us go into the house of the Lord." He was glad, he was happy, he rejoiced! He was eager to go to the house of the Lord. He loved the Lord—he wanted to praise Him, glorify Him, show his gratitude to Him. And, like us, he had been through another week of trials, temptations, hardships, and regular daily activities and routines. God had been with him the past week, and now at the beginning of a new week, he was again going to ask God to continue to bless him, give him the courage and the faith to fight each battle and fight Satan and his temptations. He cries, "Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul, O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me." And again he cries, "great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised." Look what God has done for us. He sent His only Son Who was born in a lowly stable, suffered His whole life, was rejected, mocked, spit upon, had to carry His own cross, and was crucified on that accursed tree, descended into hell for three long and dark hours—willingly. He knew no sin. That's why He had a human nature. Man sinned, man had to be punished. But He also had a divine nature. God's wrath was so terrible that only Someone Who was truly God could bear that wrath. Really, then, how dare we complain?

Instead, we must rejoice with David when we have the privilege to go to the house of the Lord. After all, the minister isn't just another man standing up there, saying what he pleases. That is God speaking through that man, revealing Himself unto us. And that knowledge we obtain is a saving knowledge. One that is necessary to possess and enjoy the fellowship with the everblessed God.

Another thing that I would like to touch on is living in this world. It says in the Bible that everybody will be judged according to his own works. If you think about this, this is really serious. Think of all the things that go on in our minds—evil lusts and desires, judging others, taking God's name in vain without verbally saying it, and the list goes on. Think of all the things that we say—our jokes, talking back to our parents and teachers, swearing and cursing, gossip.... Jesus says in Matthew 12:36, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." We say a lot of idle words, don't we? And our actions—even little things like how we spend every little penny, we have to give account for that, too. Here's a big one—we read the books and magazines of the world, watch their filthy T.V. shows and movies, listen to and sing along with their songs—and think nothing of it. Most likely when we get home from school, work, or whatever it is, we go right to the radio and turn it to our favorite station. Then a song that we especially like will come on. "Oh, my favorite song! I just love it." And we run to it and turn it up and just sit back in a daze and listen to it, or even sing along. We frown when it's over. What we're really saying, then, is that we love them—the world—their sinful lusts and desires, their mocking and cursing the name of the Lord, their filthy jokes, or whatever. But if the Almighty God were standing here, would we dare say, "I love that song. I love that show"? No, we wouldn't dare because then what we're saying is that we love the world, the things of this world. And that we hate God—the all-powerful God, Who created this whole vast universe, and upholds it, and preserves it. So great a God and we dare to say, "I hate You"? You might say, "But I didn't say that—I didn't say that at all." Proverbs 24:1 says, "Be thou not envious against evil men, neither desire to be with them." And again in James 4:4—"Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." Enemies hate! So if we are lovers of the world, then we are enemies of God—we hate God. But, instead, we are commanded to seek those things which are above where neither moth or rust corrupt nor where thieves break through and steal.

How many of you have thought about the end of the world? I mean, really thought about it. Humanly speaking, it's scary. Did you know that there is going to be a time when if we don't have the mark of the beast, we won't be able to buy or sell? It says this in Revelation 13:16-17. If we can't buy nor sell, we won't live long. Or there might come the time when the rulers of our land will say, "You bow down to this god or we'll take your life." The true child of God won't bow down. He will profess along with Paul in the beautiful passage of Romans 8:35ff, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerers through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from

the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And the sad thing is that I can say, "We must do this," and "We mustn't do that"; and we think, "I know I'm not supposed to be doing this," but we do it anyhow! You see, just because I'm pointing out a few of these things doesn't mean that I think I am better than you. I'm not. You've all heard the old saying, "If the shoe fits, put it on." Well, let me tell you, this shoe fits perfectly—it's just my size. But, instead, I'm speaking to you out of love and concern for you and of the love of God. That's the only way I can speak to you. You and I both are in duty bound to heap coals of fire upon those who are living in sin. If we know they are committing a certain sin, just say stealing, we must show them they're wrong and also show them the right way—not because we never steal or because we think we're better, but because we love them and God. And God will reward us for this. Probably this person will hate us, literally despise us, but that's what is called "suffering for Christ's sake". We'll probably be mocked, laughed at, scorned, be called a "goody-goody". But if we heaped coals upon his head out of the right motive—out of love for him and for God—then we can have the assurance that someday the Lord will reward us. There will be different degrees of blessings in heaven. The more we are persecuted and suffer for Christ's sake, the greater the degree of blessing will be. Remember the old familiar text in Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Now, you may be thinking that I've been pretty negative about the whole thing. Well, in the human sense of the word, I have. But, like I've said before, the life of the child of God isn't easy. It never has. Look at Moses. Hebrews 11:24-27 tells us, "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharoah's daughter." He didn't want to be famous—to be known and have an earthly name. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Look at all that he went through—pleading with Pharoah to let the Israelites go, the plagues, crossing the Red Sea with Pharoah and his horsemen close behind, the murmuring and rebellion of the Israelites, seeing the children of Israel and Aaron dancing around the golden calf, the wars and battles, and you know the rest. He chose these tremendous trials and sufferings rather than the pleasures of Egypt for a short time. Why? Because he "esteemed the reproach of Christ"—or the suffering for Christ's name—"to be greater riches than the treasures in Egypt. For he had respect unto the recompence of the reward." Or, in other words, he realized that suffering affliction along with the people of God would have a much greater and eternal reward that the insignificant and temporal rewards which Egypt had to offer. Just think of that promised land... Read Revelation 21:1-4. A new heaven and a new earth. No more tears, death, sorrow, crying pain—for these are passed away. Also read Revelation 22:1-5. "And they shall reign forever."

What a blessed assurance! And what an incentive to continue as pilgrims in a strange land, as Moses did.

"How long halt ye between two opinions?"

"For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." I say, therefore, "be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only...." James 1:23.

Leaving Father and Mother (7) "And Shall Cleave Unto His Wife"

by Rev. C. Hanko

"Who giveth this woman to this man?" With a practiced voice the father answers, "Her mother and I." Thereby the leaving of father and mother is complete. The father sits down with a deep awareness that the bond with the parental home is broken. The parents of the groom, as well as the bride's parents, are filled with mixed feelings. While they anticipate a vacant spot in the home, they rejoice that their child is marrying in the Lord.

Marrying in the Lord. This fact is vital: This couple eagerly steps forward to be united in the bond of holy matrimony. Already a marriage license has been obtained, signed, and sealed by the magistrate. Now the couple are ready to speak their vows to each other, vows which will bind them together as husband and wife as long as they both shall live. They are fulfilling the scriptural mandate given already in the state of perfection in paradise: "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."

Why does this formality have such far-reaching implications? This question is important today, particularly because another question looms menacingly: Why are two persons kept from each other, so that they may not live together sexually until the marriage vows have been spoken, and immediately afterward they are free to live together? Or still another question: Why do these vows bind them so firmly and so permanently together that they may never separate, and if they would be forced to do so, it would only be by the painful and expensive formality of a legal divorce? Many would rather brush aside the marriage license and vows, to live together on an experimental basis, and if the whole affair proved to be a failure, they could part from each other without fuss. The only reason why some women insist on a formal wedding is that they want a sense of security, so that, if their marriage suffered ship-wreck, they have a claim to alimony. But obtaining a license and going through the formality of speaking vows seems too cumbersome to be of real importance to many. A marriage license and marriage vows are intimately related. The marriage license is the legal aspect of the marriage bond. This legal aspect arises out of the organic relationship of all mankind, that is, we live in this world, not as individuals, but as part of the human race. John Donne wrote: "No man is an island...", and this is very true. No man can take the attitude that he is responsible for his actions only to himself, as if he can do as he pleases, and nobody else should care. He is a member of his family, a neighbor in his community, and a citizen of his country. As a child of God, he is a member of God's Church and an intregral part of the world of God's love that will be renewed in the perfection of heavenly glory. In former times, the parents as legal guardians were responsible for their children marrying in a

proper, legal manner. As the human race spread out and the laws of the magistrate became more specific, the civil authorities became responsible before God for supervising the legal aspect of marriage. Therefore the magistrate, as God's servant, has the divinely given right to demand that a marriage license be obtained, and that consent be given to a marriage that is in harmony with the law. For example, the civil magistrate may not grant a license to someone who is already married, since bigamy is contrary to the law of God. The law also gives consent to some responsible official, either a justice of the peace, a judge or a minister, to perform the ceremony. This official sees that the vows are properly spoken. In the Netherlands, a double ceremony was required. A marriage was solemnized by the local magistrate, and then confirmed by the church. The ceremony first took place in the city hall, and then in a public worship service. Therefore we still read in our Psalter: "Form for the Confirmation of Marriage before the Church." In our country, the magistrate authorizes the minister to perform the ceremony, so that the marriage is not merely "confirmed", but is actually solemnized by the minister. The entire ceremony centers about the vows that are spoken, which makes the marriage legally binding before the church and before the magistrate.

A vow, as you know, is a promise under oath. This oath-bound promise is made before God and the witnesses that are present. Thus the vow expresses three things. First, the couple declares to each other and before all present, that they are deeply aware of the presence of God. They actually call upon God to witness the promises that are made. Second, they declare that God in heaven confirms the truth and sincerity of their promises. He Who searches the heart knows that they speak the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. They make their promises to their prospective mate in sincerity of heart and mind. Third, they affirm that God Who is just, will bless them in their faithfullness to each other, but will surely punish them if they transgress in any way. The common expression for this, as found in Scripture, is, God do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part me and thee.

This makes the marriage vow a very serious matter. By this very act the bridegroom and the bride pledge fidelity to one another. The bridegroom takes his wife, promises to cleave to her as long as they shall live. The wife takes her husband, promises likewise to cleave to him as long as they shall live. Since this is done in the presence of God, it is a prayer that God may perform His mighty work now and henceforth, joining them together in one flesh, one love, one life, as long as they walk life's pathway together. It is interesting to note in this connection, that the expression 'to cleave' means literally, 'to be glued together', devotedly joined together with heart and mind, with their whole being. It should also be added, that whether a couple consciously makes these vows in the presence of God, or makes them indifferently, God still holds them to their vows. To speak these vows lightly, carelessly, without forethought or purpose, is profanity, the sin against the third commandment. To break these vows is also serious profanity. God will **not** hold him guiltless that takes His Name in vain.

This makes the contents of the vows extremely significant. In recent years far too much emphasis falls on the external display at the ceremony, the bride and her gown, the bridal party, (one seemingly trying to outdo the other with the size of the party and their dress), the floral arrangements, and many other additions to the ceremony. You understand, I like a nice wedding. I like to witness a ceremony that will be long remembered by the bridal couple, and also by others. But I bemoan the fact that far too little emphasis is placed on the heart of the

matter, the vows which are spoken. It seems to have become a popular pastime for couples to change the wording of their vows, to simplify them, to put them in their own words and often to make them meaningless. I know of no serious objection if young people prefer to memorize the vows as found in our Marriage Form and recite them to each other. But I do see serious objections if those vows are changed, so that the vows of the bride are the same as those of the groom, as if their marriage is nothing more than a fifty-fifty proposition.

The vow of the bridegroom in our Psalter reads as follows: "N., do you acknowledge here before God and this his holy Church, that you have taken and do take to be your lawful wife, N., here present, promising her never to forsake her; to love her faithfully, to maintain her, as a faithful and pious husband is bound to do to his lawful wife; that you will live holily with her; keeping faith and truth to her in all things according to the holy gospel?"

By this vow, the bridegroom declares publicly that he is taking his bride as his lawful wife. Two words receive the emphasis in this vow, lawful and faithful. Twice it is said that this is his lawful wife. Faithfulness is the keynote that runs through this pledge. Taking his wife involves a fourfold promise. First, the groom promises never to forsake her. This promise is based on the Scriptural teaching that the marriage bond is unbreakable. Nothing, absolutely nothing, as long as both parties are living, can break that bond. God joins together. What God joins together, man has no right to tear asunder. Often, after a few years of marriage, difficulties arise, and the complaint is readily raised, "We made a mistake. We really did not love each other after all. We were not even meant for each other." Whatever mistake the troubled couple may seem to have made, or rather, whatever sin they made themselves guilty of, God makes no mistake when He joins two people together. Therefore He requires of them: "Love one another, and forgive one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven you." When the young man promises never to forsake her, he must realize that this is for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, even until death breaks the earthly bond. A young man can leave father and mother to attach himself to his wife, but he cannot ever leave his wife to cling to another.

Second, the bridegroom promises that he will love his wife faithfully. As has been said before, this love is not a mere sexual urge. At the time of marriage, sexual appeal may seem to predominate. Yet married people soon learn that sexual intercourse is not an end in itself. It is the expression of the unique love whereby God unites husband and wife as one. Love between life partners is unique in every way. A man cannot love his neighbor's wife in the same way that he loves his own wife. He cannot love his sister, nor his daughter, nor, for that matter, any other person in the manner in which he loves his wife. He sees in her an attractiveness that is only for him. His wife does not have to arrange a special hair-do, cover herself with make-up, or wear a sexy dress to make herself appealing to him. She is just as appealing when he meets her across the breakfast table, or with strands of hair hanging down her face, or with clothing disheveled when she has been cleaning the house. He experiences a bond of unity in their thoughts, desires, ambitions, asperations. They enjoy each other's company, dreading the thought of being separated from each other, eagerly looking forward to being together again. They love each other for what they are. It has been said, "I love you not only for what **you** are, but also for what I am when I'm with you." Yet the strongest bond is the spiritual bond that unites them in the Lord, and makes their life complete. The

bridegroom promises that he will love his wife always; even in times of temptation, even when his wife is stricken with illness, physical infirmity, mental stress, or any other ailment that makes inroads into their marital relationship. The promise is not supplemented with a series of "ifs" and "buts"; it is simply the promise to love his wife faithfully.

Third, the promise of the groom includes that he will "maintain his wife, as a faithful and pious husband is bound to do to his lawful wife." He is fully aware of his responsibility to be the head of the home that is being established. He wants to be a proper picture of Christ, Who is the head of His Church. (I Cor. 11:3). Our Marriage Form expresses that rather nicely, "You, who are the bridegroom must know, that God hath set you to be the head of your wife, that you, according to your ability, shall lead her with discretion; instructing, comforting, protecting her, as the head rules the body; yea, as Christ is the head, wisdom, consolation and assistance to His Church. Besides, you are to love your wife as your own body, as Christ hath loved His Church: You shall not be bitter against her, but dwell with her as a man of understanding, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel, considering that ye are joint heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers be not hindered. And since it is God's command, 'that the man shall eat his bread in the sweat of his face', therefore you are to labor diligently and faithfully, in the calling wherein God hath set you, that you may maintain your household honestly, and likewise have something to give to the poor."

Fourth, the prospective husband promises that he "will live holily with her, keeping faith and truth to her in all things according to the gospel." As to their mutual relationship as husband and wife, Paul says in I Corinthians 7:2-5, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto his wife due benevolence (consideration), and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband; and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency." Moreover, there must be no reason for distrust or suspicion between them at any time. Keeping faith means to be faithful, worthy of trust. Keeping truth means to be open, honest with one another, avoiding all personal secrets, keeping all the lines of communication open between them, living one life, with one love, one devotion to God, one aim, the glory of God.

The vow that is spoken by the bride is similar to the vow of the bridegroom, with the exception that it does not speak of "Maintaining" him, but rather, promising "to be obedient to him, to serve and assist him." That obedience is not a slavish subservience. I have known husbands, even some who professed to be serious-minded Christians, who treated their wives like slaves, ordering them about, belittling them in public, expecting them to cower and to crawl for them. That is not the love of a husband for his wife, and that kind of obedience is not required of a woman. The husband is the head of the home, and his wife is his helper, his assistant, and therefore manager of his affairs. (Genesis 2:18; I Corinthians 11:8,9). The wife makes his home comfortable, pleasant, so that he can carry out his life calling with her full support. As a helper, she surrenders her self to he husband, promising henceforth to live for him. She gives up her name and assumes his name. She gives up her private ambitions, to unite her asperations with his. This is the unnate nature of a woman

according to her very creation. The more a woman can live for her husband, the more she will experience the blessedness of their union in covenant life. This does not mean that she must agree with her husband when he is wrong, nor must she consent to share his sinful ambitions. She does not sell her soul when she marries, but she remains an individual confessing member of the body of Christ. In that respect there is no difference between husband and wife, no more than between bond and free, Jew or Greek, but all are one in Christ. Yet as a wife, she is bound to her lawful husband to obey him in all things right.

In a recent article in the **Reader's Digest** (March 1978), Carolyn Lewis writes that many women picture marriage as something boring, demeaning, deadening, a form of imprisonment, a threat to the solitary individual. Moreover, that marriage imposes grueling, baffling, frustrating responsibilities on the woman. She goes on to point out that this is not true. She says, "In our eagerness to exact equal treatment, we woman seem to be forgetting who we are. We are not men. Men cannot bear children. And for a woman, the birth of a child is a transforming experience." To which she adds, "There is nothing inconsequential or demeaning about choosing to make a child one's life work. Nor is there anything shameful in wanting to make life comfortable and happy for another adult human, like a husband. There are good and useful and important things to do inside the home, and the woman's movement makes light of that fact at its peril." A believing wife has so much more reason to realize how important her life is, when she obeys, serves, and assists her husband in serving the Lord. For her, it is a privilege to have children, for she is "saved in bearing children". Scripture points out to us, that sin came into the world by the woman, yet God has privileged the woman to bring forth the covenant seed, the Church. (I Timothy 2:13-15). Throughout the ages, believing women (Hannah, Elisabeth, Mary to mention a few) have considered themselves blessed in bringing forth the covenant seed. The Church throughout the ages has sung from the heart:

> She shall fill thy house with good.
> Happy in her loving service
> and the joys of motherhood."
> Psalter No. 360

It is after these vows are spoken, that one man and one woman are declared husband and wife, and they become one flesh. Not the minister, not a justice of the peace, but God in heaven joins these two lives together into one. The legal bond is established. The physical and the spiritual bond continue to join in perfect unity, until, as often happens, an elderly couple even look very much alike. The newlyweds do well to lift up their hearts in prayer to God, asking for His continued blessing that in their lives they may be an earthly picture of Christ and His Church.

Upright and faithful christians ever think they are not faithful, nor believe as they ought; and therefore they constantly strive, wrestle, and are diligent to keep and increase faith, a good workman always sees that something is wanting in their workmanship. But the botchers think that nothing is wanting in what they do, but that everything is well and complete. Like as the Jews conceive they have the Ten Commandments at their finger's end whereas in truth, they neither learn nor regard them.

-Martin Luther

NEWS FROM SOCIETIES

Edgerton Young Peoples Society

The Edgerton Young Peoples Society is a small society consisting of six members, led by Rev. Slopsema. We meet from week to week on Sunday afternoons to discuss God's Words. Currently, we are studying the Book of Matthew. On the first Sunday of every month, the Young Peoples study a certain topic and find proof texts for that topic. After we all have proof texts, we keep them in a file for easy reference when needed.

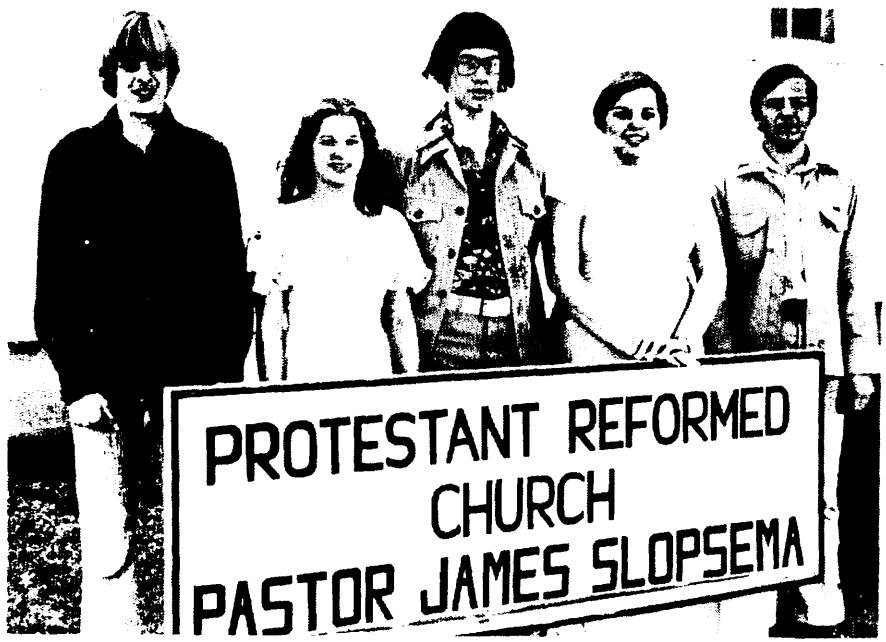
The Edgerton Society is small, yet plans a lot of activities. We try to prepare one activity per month. These activities are held either with just the society and president, with the whole church, or with the Doon and Hull Societies.

The Edgerton Society annually sponsors a Christmas Singspiration. The Doon, Hull, and Edgerton Congregations get together and praise God through our singing.

Some activities of our society in the past are: a sports night in a local gym, a "fun night" in Sioux Falls attended by just the Society where we attended an amusement center, a rollerskating party, and a "mystery" supper; to mention just a few.

In the future, the Y.P.S. plans to have a bonfire and roast hot dogs, and soup supper with profits toward the convention.

There is a close fellowship in our society as we meet and discuss God's Word. We enjoy this fellowship and praise God through it.



Southeast Young Peoples Society

We started our society season with our first meeting beginning on October 16, 1977. We accepted 10 new members this year making a total of 26 members in all.

Mr. T. Pipe was chosen to be our society leader and we decided to study I and II Peter for Bible discussion.

Kevin Bos was the elected President for the year with Doug VanDenBerg as Vice-President, Kathy VanDenBerg as secretary, Steve Meulenberg as treasurer and Grace Faber as Vice-sec.-treas.

We only had one money raising project this year which was our Annual Potluck Supper held on April 27.

Now that our society season is over for the year we look forward to the upcoming convention where once again we can come together in christian fellowship with our Lord.

...Our Father in heaven knows what we have need of before we ask Him. (See Matthew 6:8) Besides, He know much better than we what our needs are, for He Himself has first of all created these needs.

For this same reason we do not come in prayer to the throne of grace in order to try to impose our will upon the will of our heavenly Father. This can never be done. We cannot change the will of God. His will is eternal and unchangeable. Our prayers do not change things with God. If this is the meaning of the motto "Prayer changes things," it is a motto that ought never to be found on the lips of the child of God. What-ever we ask for in prayer and receive from our heavenly Father, He has already determined to give us through the way of prayer. We may be humbly thankful that this is the case. I would certainly never dare to pray again if I had any reason to suppose that my prayers would change the mind of the Almighty. This indeed would be a terrible thing. Our Father knows what is best for us. We never know, for we are little children.

Prof. Herman C. Hanko, *Mysteries of the Kingdom*, p. 86.

NEWS From, For, and About Our Churches

by Cindi Dykstra

BIRTHS

Mr. and Mrs. Daniel Van Dyken of Lynden were blessed in the birth of Alyssa Beth on Dec. 4.

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Abma of Doon were blessed with the birth of Jodi Lynn on Jan. 4.

Mr. and Mrs. Alan De Boer of Doon rejoice in the birth of a son on March 23.

Mr. and Mrs. Joe E. Brummel of Edgerton were blessed with the birth of Theodore Thomas.

Mr. and Mrs. Alvin Bleyenberg of Hull rejoice in the birth of Sara Lynn on April 4.

Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Timmer of First rejoice in the birth of Rachel Lynn on April 6.

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Bleyenberg of Edgerton were blessed in the birth of a son, Cory Allen on April 13.

Mr. and Mrs. L. Vittenbogaard of Hull were blessed in the birth of Jeffrey Alan on April 22.

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Zandstra of South Holland were blessed in the birth of Dale Peter.

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Scholten of Hope rejoice in the birth of a daughter on May 14.

Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Brummel of Hull were blessed in the birth of Jessica Marie on May 15.

Mr. and Mrs. James Bruinsma of South Holland rejoice in the birth of Ryan Henry.

Mr. and Mrs. Bill Bruinsma of Southwest rejoice in the birth of Brad Michael on June 7.

Mr. and Mrs. Steve Hauck were blessed with the birth of Nathaniel Norman.

CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

Southeast has received the membership of Mr. John Bylsma from Southwest.

Doon has received the membership of Merlin Driesen from First Christian Reformed Church of Rock Valley.

Edmonton has received the membership of Mr. and Mrs. Bob Gordon and their baptized children from Crestwood Reformed Presbyterian Church.

First has received the membership of Mr. Walter Griffioen and of Mrs. Henry Reukema and her baptized son, Sam from Faith Christian Reformed Church. They have also received the membership of Rev. and Mrs. M. Joostens and their children, Faith, Timothy, and Steven from Faith Church.

Hope Church has received the membership of Mrs. Ron Koole (nee Sherry Van Beek) from Southwest.

Faith has received the membership of Rev. and Mrs. G. Lubbers and Mr. and Mrs. John Veldman and their daughter Pamela.

Hope Church has sent Miss Cari Sugg's membership back to her home church, Trinity Protestant Reformed in Houston.

First Church in Edmonton has received the membership of Mrs. Richard Talsma (nee Sharon Nelson) from Loveland.

Doon has received the membership of Mrs. Gene Van Den Top from Calvin Christian Reformed Church of Rock Valley.

Faith has transferred the membership of Mr. and Mrs. John Van Baren and family to Southwest.

First has received the membership of

Mr. Gerlof Vander Baan from Grandville Ave. Christian Reformed Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Henry Wiersma have been received into the fellowship of our South Holland congregation. They come from Calvary Independent Church of South Holland.

Doon has received the membership of Darlo J. Zeutenhorst from First Reformed Church of Orange City. They have also received the membership of Mr. and Mrs. John Bouma and four baptized children from our church in Hull.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Dave Buiter, Sally Ekema, Linda Feenstra, Steve Feenstra, Lori Kortering, and Berend Meelker made public confession of their faith in Redlands on April 2.

Chuck Booth, Sharon Bylsma, Dan Kamphuis, Tom Kamphuis, Sheryl Oomkes, Dan Pastoor, Mary Pastoor, Cheryl Peters, and June Veltman made public confession of their faith in First Church on April 23.

Herm De Vries and Mark Engelsma made public confession of faith in Hope Church on April 30. Jim Bloem, Julie De Wald, Steve Hanko, and Bern Zandstra made confession of their faith on May 28.

Mary Lanting made public confession of her faith in Loveland on May 21.

MARRIAGES

Steve Ezinga and Jodi Wolf were united in marriage in Loveland.

Darlo Zeutenhorst and Nancy Den Besten were united in marriage in Doon on May 8.

David Kamminga and Wanda Dykstra were united in marriage in Hudsonville Church on June 16.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S ACTIVITIES

Doon's Young People sponsored a rollerskating party for the congregation at Valley High roller rink in Sioux Falls on April 5.

Hull's Young People held their annual Spring Banquet on April 27 at the Chuck Wagon in Hull. Rev. Hoeksema spoke on "Our Proper Use of Leisure Time".

A Beacon Lights Singspiration was held May 7 at Southeast Church. The theme was "A Faithful Creator."

Hull's Young People sponsored a rollerskating party for the young people and Mr. and Mrs. Society members at Sioux Falls on May 8.

Loveland's Young People held a singspiration on May 9. Refreshments were served afterwards and proceeds were for the 1978 convention.

First's Senior Young People's Society held a clothing drive for the Jamaican Churches on May 23.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Randolph's Annual Spring Lecture was held on April 6. Rev. Kamps spoke on "The Proper Method of Interpreting the Bible."

On April 11, the people of our Randolph Church got together, rented a gym and played volleyball and basketball. Refreshments were served in the church basement afterwards.

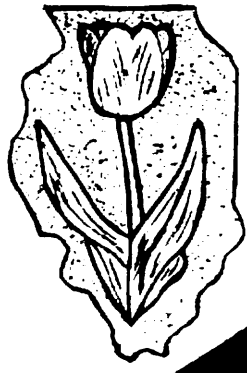
Prof. Hanko spoke on "The Pleasures of Babylon in Jerusalem" (an analysis of the entertainment problem) in Hudsonville Church on April 27.

Covenant's Senior Class sponsored a Western Travelogue on May 17 in Grandville Junior High gym.

A program consisting of slides on Singapore and information on the work there was given by Rev. Slopsema in Doon on May 17 and in Edgerton on May 18.

Covenant's Senior Choir presented their Spring Concert on May 21 in Hudsonville Church.

Rev. Van Baren spoke on "The Pleasures of Babylon: Dancing" in Hudsonville Church on May 25. (a good informative lecture available to you on tape).



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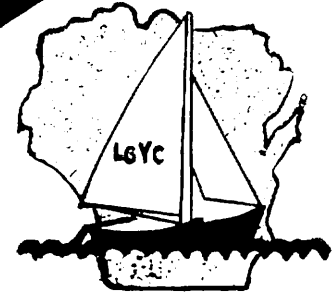

THE 1978 P.R.Y.P.S. CONVENTION

SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS

LAKE GENEVA, WISCONSIN