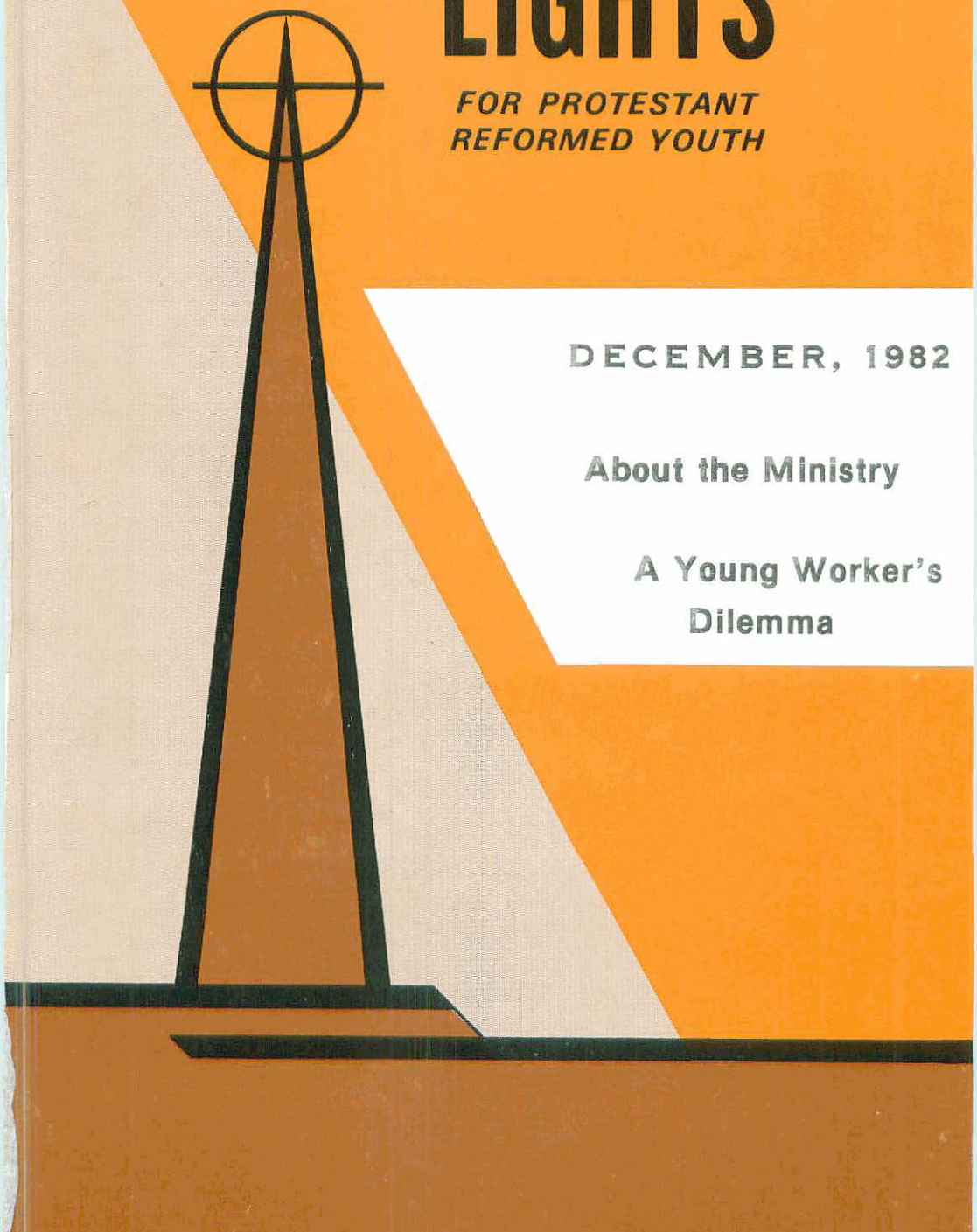
BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



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About the Ministry

A Young Worker's Dilemma

BEACON LIGHTS

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Editorial

Proverbs for Young Pilgrims

THE EYES OF THE BEHOLDER

by Ed Lotterman

"The eyes of the Lord are in everyplace, beholding the evil and the good."
Proverbs. 15:3

Does not this Word of God make you feel uneasy, Young Pilgrim? We have often sung "God the Only Deliverer" and often paid little or no attention to the words.

"Jehovah from His Throne on high
Looks down with clear and searching eye
On all that dwells below;
And He that fashioned heart and mind
Looks ever down on all mankind,
The works of men to know.

The "I AM THAT I AM," the Most High God, the Sovereign Lord of Lords and King of Kings looks and sees each of us; and He beholds both the evil and the good. I repeat: does not this Word of God make you feel uneasy?

The eyes of the Beholder are in every place. As we walk life's pilgrimage, Young Pilgrim, we must be consciously aware of being watched! And life's pilgrimage takes us many places. We are being watched when we obey or disobey our parents either in the home or apart from the home. Sometimes we get the idea that because our parents are not observing us we can "get away with" doing something disobedient.

Other times when we are in the shopping center and escape through the exit door with an item obtained by "five finger discount" we feel that no one observed us. Beware! You are being watched!

The eyes of the Beholder penetrate the intentions of the heart and mind. Consider the Young Pilgrim who, having prepared a box of treats, sets out to visit an elderly, lonely widow. Noble effort? Perhaps. Excellent outward appearance, but with possible evil intention.

Think of yourself, Young Pilgrim, as you experienced thoughts, words, and deeds today. Each of these are reactions to people, places and ideas. In your reactions did you reveal the life and love of Christ which reigns within your heart? Analyze your reactions. Was there a struggle? Were your reactions open or secret? Were you submissive or rebellious? Did you act deliberatly or spontaneously?

There is a popular slogan today, an ungodly, spontaneous reaction. "If it feels good, do it." This current philosophy is to be expelled from the pilgrim's life. It is an encouragement to react in an evil way. It betrays, for, believing that "it will feel good" and having then "done it" we are left miserable with the guilt of sin. We also feel tricked because the experience was not quite the thrill we thought it should have been. The slogan concentrates on ungodly natural self, while the pilgrim is called to have eye contact with the Beholder.

This eye contact is a look of faith. In many places Scripture commands us to "look to Him". Is. 45:22 "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." Another place is Heb. 12:2 "Looking to Jesus the author and finisher of our faith."

We are reminded of at least two Bible characters in connection with this eye contact. First is Lot's wife, who looked not unto Him. You will recall that the Angels rushed Lot and his family out of Sodom. Yet we read of Lot's wife that she looked back and became a pillar of salt. (CF Gen. 19:26) Jesus reminds us of this in Luke 17:32 while giving instruction on when the kingdom of God should come.

The second event involves Peter and his denial of our Lord at the time of Jesus' trial. After the third denial immediately the cock crew (Luke 22:61ff) "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter." Devastated, "Peter went out and wept bitterly."

The contrast in these two stories is obvious. Lot's wife *would* not look to Him Peter *could* not look to Him.

Our Lord yet remembered Peter and made certain His comfort when after the ressurrection the angel commanded the women to "tell His disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee."

Young Pilgrim, can he "Stare you down"? Look to Him!

A YOUNG WORKER'S DILEMMA

by Ben Wigger

Perhaps most of you already have some work experience under your belts,

and if you don't you no doubt anticipate getting a job sometime in the future. Work is a very important aspect of our lives. After all, we will spend the majority of our lives working. God created us this way, and we need to work. Adam in paradise was even required to dress and keep the garden.

Having worked a few years myself, it seems that there is a definite change going on around me that I was not aware of a few years ago. There seems to be a definite lack of regard for authority in today's young person when he comes to work.

At least this seems to be true where I work. And maybe some of our older readers would agree with me, that generally, the young people who are just entering the work force have a very negative attitude when they come to work. Just give them any kind of opportunity to get away with something at work and they will take it. And that's not all, just listen to them talk when they know that the boss can not hear them and you wonder what they are doing working for a company and boss that are in their words no good.

Now we are faced with a very real dilemma. Perhaps some of what others say with regard to where they work, who they work for, how much money they make, etc., is true. But does that mean then that we can go along with them when it comes to their disregard for authority? Do their ends justify their means?

We are really no different than those of the world, and it is real easy to go along with them, especially when money and how you feel about your employer are concerned. And without the saving grace of Jesus Christ in our lives we would follow in the footsteps of the worldly worker who says, "I'm going to get what's coming to me, no matter who gets hurt".

We can be very thankful to God who in His infinite wisdom has given us His Word. The Bible has a lot to say on this subject, and that is what I would like to close this article with. For God's Word can say it in a way that all of us can understand and appreciate.

The following is a list of some verses which were included in a list which I came across in an article in *Signs of the Times*. I am sure that there are more verses which could be added to this list. But if tomorrow when you go to work and some of these problems surface, you will remember what God's Word has to say about this.

Be Respectful

> "Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ. Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Ephesians 6:5-8

Be Trustworthy

> "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart fearing God."

Colossians 3:22

For a Day's Wages Give a Day's Work

"That if any would not work, neither should he eat." II Thessalonians 3:10

Submit Respectfully Whether Employers are Kind or Overbearing

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward." I Peter 2:18

Be Willing to Put Up With Injustices

"For this is thankworthy, if any man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully." I Peter 2:19

The Employee is Not Greater than His Employer

"Verily, Verily I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him." John 13:16

Follow Christ's Example

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth, he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Isaiah 53:7

Do Not Retaliate

"Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." Romans 12:17, 18

Do Not Take Revenge

"Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, vengeance is mine, I will repay saith the Lord." Romans 12:19

Feed Your Opponents

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:20, 21

Don't Quarrel But be Kind

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient." II Timothy 2:24

Leave God to Give Bad Employers What They Deserve

"But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons." Colossians 3:25

Don't Criticize Other Employees

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Romans 14:4

Faithful Employees are Entrusted with Greater Responsibilities

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom the lord hath made ruler over his household to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant whom the lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods." Matthew 24:45-47

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

Teaching Children as Holy Mothers

"The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, . . . teachers of good things; that they teach the young women to be sober . . . keepers at home . . . that the word of God be not blasphemed."

Titus 2:3-5

Paul is giving Titus instruction how to teach the different levels of church-saints in the island of Crete. (1:5) he must set certain things in order in this church which has recently been converted from heathendom to the faith in Christ Jesus.

Paul has here specific instructions how he must address the "aged" women in this church. The term "aged" in the Greek text does not suggest that these women were senile women in a "rest home", but rather that they have arrived at a certain age of authority in the midst of their family; they are "*Presoutidas*"; they are come to the years of seniority, and who should be respected as mothers in Israel. Their station under their husbands, (if he still lived) was that of being instructors, teachers in the family. They were particularly teachers of their daughters, the "young women". These were women, who had to have the necessary instruction how to conduct themselves as Christian young women, wives of their husbands, and mothers to their

children. They must be different from the women of their world, who do not confess godliness.

Full well do I realize that this passage from the pen of Paul refers to what *Titus must teach* the elderly women. At the same time this refers to what the "young women" must learn in the pattern of sound doctrine. (Titus 2:1) And so this is a very relevant word to our young people, not excluding our young men. And married fathers, who are still young, can very well sit down and listen in. For it deeply affects their lives too in relationship to their youthful wives, mothers of their children.

Now it is very noteworthy that the Holy Spirit has a definite word of instruction and a word of correction for these elderly wives. And these elderly women in the church are to be teachers of good things. These "good things" are the beautiful words, the doctrine which is sound, health-giving words. They are words which are basically words of the Gospel; they are not some Ann Lander's advice, which cannot give spiritual health, but which are simply some worldly wisdom, which is from below: earthly, natural, devilish, (James 3:15) but they are the words of the wisdom of God, which are rooted in the power of the Holy Spirit working sanctification in our life. They are not merely some practical morality, but they are practical Christianity of those who are prophetesses, priestesses and queens of God! It is instruction in the "newness of life," and not instruction in the oldness of the letter!

Yes, it must be instruction of such women who walk as "becometh holiness". Perhaps the term in the Greek could more accurately be translated "reverent in demeanor". The term really means that they must conduct themselves as if they were servants in God's temple. "For such indeed they are," says the late Dr. W. Hendriksen! Now these women instructors can take the shoes from off their feet, and the Lord will need to take coals of fire from the altar to purify their lips.

Now such is your future calling as mothers in the family, young maidens and youthful girls in the church. Yours is a great and important and responsible future next to your husband, under him, in claiming the "honor" which must be given to father and mother, according to the Fifth Commandment! You must conduct yourselves as priestesses, as servants in the temple of God. And this temple is the church of Jesus Christ!!

Now the spiritual sobriety which characterizes a teacher of good things in the family is that she be not a slanderer. She must not be a veritable she-devil. The Greek term is exactly that. Her tongue must be set entirely in the service of truth, and her words must be seasoned with salt, and she must know the Scriptures very well, and be able to speak good, beautiful teachings from the heart.

Then, too, she must not be enslaved with much wine. She must live a sober life of one who has her eye fixed upon heaven, and who is filled with the Spirit and not with wine, wherein is excess. (Eph. 5:17, 18) It seems that this drunkenness among women was prevalent on the island of Crete; we are told that drunken women, are such slaves of this sin that it is a very hard battle for

converted drunkards, if women, to truly live sober lives away from this erstwhile slavery. The little wine for the stomach's sake, is a far cry from the "much wine" here spoken of. And a social drinking woman is like a very wretched haggard, a wanton woman, who has lost all her natural beauty, and even social grace. Such every woman in the church in Crete must *cease* being. Only thus will they be servants in God's temple!!

Do not think that any mother can teach effectively if she does not have a demeanor which befits the holiness of those teaching in God's redeemed Church, His temple! Such sobriety becomes all of us, in a world that reels and reeks with drunkeness and, contextually, this refers to all future women and present women teachers in God's sanctified homes.

What young women must be taught by their mothers is that they be lovers of their husbands. They must not be mere lovers of men, which is the cursed sin of those who are slaves of much wine. They must love the yoke of the "bondage" of holy matrimony. I have lived in a matriarchal culture where children were born generally outside of wedlock, and where the "aged mothers" did not love their own husbands, and where mothers lacked the spiritual-psychological aptitude to teach their daughters to love likewise. These "daughters" grew up in a situation where they never had a father in the home, and if so, they did not have a father who was husband to their mother. I remember a young man who said: "Rev. Lubbers, I am sorry, but I do not have a father." I told him, "you have a father, young man, but your mother has no husband." And these situations call for specific instruction that daughters be taught to have a husband, and to love him as a "husband" and not simply as a "man". Then this quasi-marriage is not far above beastiality, although the ordinance of God, that a man leave his father and mother, and that he cleave to his wife and thus become one flesh, can never be totally eradicated. If this were true the wicked in hell would not be punishable, and those repenting to Christ could not have the new leaven of grace purify their marriage as a picture of the eternal covenant of God in Christ with His church, in the Mystery of marriage.

And such the young women are *to be!* This must not be a fleeting love of the wife to her lawful husband, but an ever more holy and sactified relationship. This is emphasized in the Greek text!

Yes, they must be sober in the purity of grace. And they must not be gadabouts, ever flitting about in social activities. They must be *workers* at home! They must be like the "virtuous woman" in Proverbs 31:10-31. She must be the woman who "layeth her hands to the spindle, and her hands hold the distaff". She must be working out her salvation in the midst of her home, her children, loving her husband. And unto this course of life young girls must be trained and instructed! Such a woman is "virtuous". She is strong in mind and body. She has the faculty and power to produce something, she can show and exert strength. Wealth and property are in her hands, and her family, children and servants suffer no lack. She is a skilled housewife, mighty in the battle. Such is a worker at home. She is not a weakling, a mere clinging vine.

She has two feet and stands on them, and is the "glory" of her husband! She is brave and courageous in the battle of life. Her own works praise her in the gates!

Such a woman is submissive to her *own* husband!

No, she does not cower before every man, nor does she cower before her husband, her *own* husband. She has an own. (*idios andron*) She is proud of him because he is her husband, who is her only head amongst men in this world. She acknowledges none other. Such is her great courageous bearing; she is a gallant woman in loving obedience to her own husband.

Teach your daughters to be such women in their families, their homes, as the spiritual adornment of their husbands. Teach them thus, mothers; more you can not do, less you may not!

And have the high motive that you would not have your daughters by sinful conduct "blaspheme the word of God." The word of the Gospel must be glorified in our lives! And thus they must adorn the Gospel; others must be drawn to Christ by their exemplary lives. Yes in this island of Crete where men are designated by their own poets as "always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies". That was true of both men and women!

Now they must be some firstfruits of God's creation!

Light of the world and city on a hilltop!

Aged mothers, teach your daughters.

Young women, learn your lessons well!

Focus on Christian Women
ON EVE AS FEMALE REPRESENTATIVE

by Mrs. H. Brands

In the August-September issue of the *Beacon Lights*, in the article entitled "The Sorrows of Conception: We Deserve Them!", three of the paragraphs read as follows:

> "We suffer in Eve's suffering because we were in the garden in Eve. Eve was our mother. As our mother, she was our biological source. Biologically, through birth, we come from her, inheriting her flesh, her genes and chromosomes. And since her flesh sinned, we inherit a sinful flesh.
>
> "Being our mother, Eve also represented us. Now the fact is, had Adam exercised his role as authority over the woman, he as ultimate representative of mankind would have covered and removed the woman's sin. But nonetheless, Eve represented all women in her role.
>
> "And so we inherit Eve's sin from two viewpoints: (1) biologically as we

receive her corrupted flesh and (2) representatively as she, our mother, represented us in her actions.

Since this article went into print, two brothers from our church have questioned the Scriptural accuracy of these statements. I believe these brothers are correct and that these paragraphs need correction. I plan to restudy this issue and later write a second article on this matter.

For the present, I am unable to do this. I would like to finish the series I am writing on the Sorrows of Conception and then return to this matter. But I wanted to write a prompt short response for two reasons. First, I believe those paragraphs were erroneous instruction and then indeed ought to be promptly corrected. Second, I would like to hear from our readers on this matter, young people as well as adults. My own resources for study are limited so that I would appreciate not only any thoughts you wish to write but also any reading material you have to offer. Further, communion of the saints means that we encourage each other on that which is right and admonish and correct each other in error, so that we also grow through such sharing. Please write!

As I said, later I will write another article—possibly several—on this matter. I believe that in these later articles at least these points should be considered: 1. Exactly how were Adam and Eve related to each other before the fall into sin? How was Adam's role as head of the woman different after the fall into sin? 2. Exactly what was the nature of the curse on the woman as it relates to her husband? 3. Exactly how do we as women relate to Eve? In this article needing correction, I said we were represented in her. *I did not mean that we were legally represented, only that our female nature was represented.* To what extent is this false? Did only Adam represent us in any sense of the word? Is our biological corruption received only from Adam or also from Eve? (Notice that it is the man who determines what sex a child shall be; perhaps then also our biologically inherited corruption comes from him?) I think there is room here for lots of study.

Again, please respond. I would like to study and be carefully prepared before I start those article.

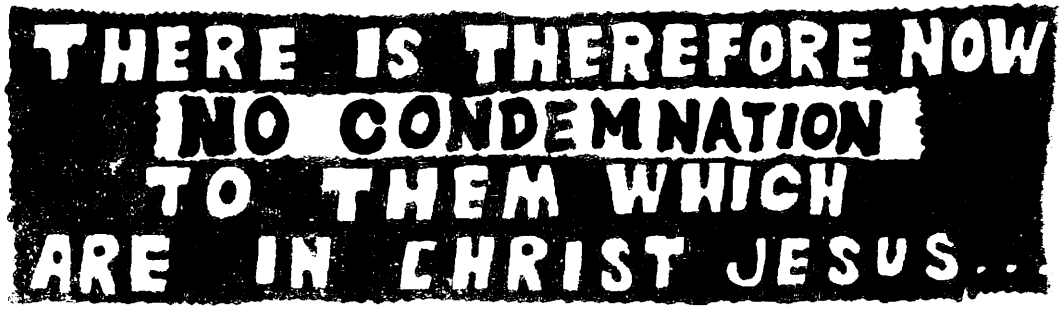
Meanwhile, please accept my apologies for this error. And remember, since all things do work together for good, that includes this mistake. God uses error and correction as one strong means for the instruction of His saints. May He also bless us through this further study of Eve as our mother and Adam as our representative head.

THE SORROWS OF CONCEPTION: V. Deserved, Yes! Judgment, No!

No earthly suffering is judgment on me.

What a wonderful, almost unbelievable statement! How incredible that I

should experience no judgment on my sin! Can I believe that?



Romans 8:1

No condemnation! *None!*

In the context of these articles, that means that neither are the sorrows of conception to be understood as judgment on us anymore. Real Sorrows? Yes, indeed they are. Really deserved? Oh yes, indeed they are. But judgment on us? Thank God, they are not! Our judgment has forever taken place on the cross of Calvary; our sin is forever paid for. Our righteous God never demands double payment for sin. Yes, we deserve judgment but that judgment has already occurred on the cross and we cannot be punished again.

The Bible teaches it.

We are taught it from infancy.

Now in the midst of our real, personal suffering, the doctrine comes to life. Can it really be? If I so surely *deserve* my suffering, how can I *not* see it as judgment on me?

or the unbeliever, these sorrows are a judgment. They are already a temporal judgment on sin, precursor to full and eternal punishment to follow death.

There is no other Biblical conclusion.

The sorrows of conception are a result of God's curse upon the woman's original sin. This curse and these sorrows carry one message: God's wrath upon sin, God's anger, God's punishment. God must punish sin. God promised to punish sin both eternally and temporally. And God's temporal punishment on the woman's fall into sin is her sufferings as a wife and as a mother.

or the believer, this condemnation is gone. This is the truly amazing truth of Scripture. We, too, deserve to receive these sufferings in God's wrath. We do still receive these sufferings. But *God's wrath is no longer in them!* In His unspeakable, eternal wisdom, God has taken these sufferings which *look* just the same and made them into entirely different things. These same sufferings carry no condemnation at all anymore. They, too, are changed by

God for the believer into new things so that suffering by the world of unbelievers has nothing in common with suffering by believers.

e still receive suffering but receive it from the hand of love. No longer do we deal with an angry God. Oh, we know the reality of His anger. We know He cannot tolerate sin and is angry with the wicked every day. We know that He will not suffer sin to go unpunished. But His wrath on sin, even when it is we who sin, is no longer experienced by us. His wrath against our sin was borne by Christ!

And so, only His hand of love ever deals with us. Toward us He deals always as a Father, with tender, pitying love. Never does He deal harshly but rather as gently as He possibly can. In Christ Jesus, God loves us with a bottomless love.

hy then, if God loves us and controls all circumstances of our lives, do we still receive such suffering? The difficult but beautiful answer is: *God sends these sorrows now only for purposes of blessing!* The unbeliever has a miscarriage and experiences wrath while the believer who has a miscarriage experiences blessing instead. Oh, it may seem harsh—it is still suffering!—but in reality it is all new. God's motives and His intended results in our lives are the exact opposite of His motives and of the results in the lives of unbelievers. We believe this even when all circumstances contradict our belief; later on, we will understand and see what blessings God was bestowing on us. Now, as we suffer, we simply confess that God still loves us; later, we will se what love was doing in us.

ow hard it is to believe and confess that God's love will still send us suffering! How hard it is to believe that suffering can be anything other than wrath and judgment! Why is this so hard to believe?

At bottom, our reluctance to rest content in God's mysterious ways is rooted in our pride. *Our reluctance to find comfort in suffering, too, is basically sinful pride.* We *want* our suffering to be experiencing God's wrath. We want this because we still want to *merit* something on our own. How we resist in daily practice the truth that God saves completely! It is easier and more self-satisfying to feel that by various accomplishments, suffering included, we merit a little bit of His favor. Since suffering gives us merit only if it is judgment, we can hardly rid ourselves of this insidious error.

Pride has a second route of resistance, too, in our hearts. In Route 2, pride refuses to acknowledge that our new lives in Christ still contain sins which

need eradication. *I* need no suffering, says this pride; *I* am so renewed I can get to heaven better on a road of ease and sunshine.

Be thankful that God does not succomb to our murmurs. Be thankful that He still in love sends us suffering, the perfect amount to each individual child of His. God willing, next time we will look at some of the blessings which God sends us through our suffering in His tender love.

ABOUT THE MINISTRY

by Rev. Ron Cammenga

Rev. Ron Cammenga is Pastor of the Hull Protestant Reformed Church, Hull, Iowa.

Pastor: "Come in Ron. Have a seat. What's on your mind?"
Ron: "Well, pastor, I wanted to talk to you, uh . . ., about something I've been thinking quite a bit about lately. I'm just not sure what to do. I thought maybe you could give me some help. It's about the ministry. I've been thinking quite a bit lately about the ministry, whether or not I should study for the ministry. I'm just not sure."
Pastor: "I'm glad to hear that you've been thinking about this. As you know, I've mentioned this to you on more than one occasion."
Ron: "Yes, pastor, I know. The folks have talked to me about it too."
Pastor: "That's good. I'm convinced that this is what pastors and elders and parents ought to do. They ought to lay the call to the ministry before our young men. Article 19 of our Church Order, you know, says that 'The churches shall exert themselves, as far as necessary, that there may be students supported by them to be trained for the ministry of the Word.' Because of this frequently in the sermons and even in the congregational prayer, I bring this subject before the young men. For this reason, I've spoken to you at family visitation and even privately about the call to the ministry."
Ron: "That's true, pastor. Sometimes it seems as if everybody else is more convinced of my calling than I am."
Pastor: "Oh, I don't know about that. You mustn't get the impression that you're being pressured into the ministry. Really, I'm not too fearful of that, either. You must remember that in all our discussions with you, you never flatly said "No." If you had, I'm sure we would have dropped the subject.

Besides, you must understand our motivation. Our motivation isn't only that to us you appear to possess the gifts which the ministry requires. Our motivation is also a deep love for God's Church, and the desire to see the pure preaching of God's Word continue in our Protestant Reformed Churches."

Ron: "I can understand that. But I'm just not sure."

Pastor: "And I can understand that. From a certain point of view, I appreciate your hesitation. There's an old saying that fools rush in where angels fear to tread. I assure you, that applies to the ministry."

Ron: "But how, then, can I be sure that I should go to the Seminary and prepare for the ministry?"

Pastor: "I can remember the advice that one old preacher gave to me. My few years in the ministry have brought me to understand his advice as I could never have understood it when he gave it. His advice was: 'If you can do something else in life, do it.' His point was that if you simply cannot serve the Lord in any other calling in life, if the Lord shuts the door so that you cannot and simply do not desire to enter any other calling, then you can be assured that He has called you to the ministry."

Ron: "I can understand that, at least somewhat. Even though I have reservations about the ministry, I have as many or more reservations about every other vocation I've considered."

Pastor: "That's a good indication. I don't mean to deny, of course, that there is not joy to the ministry, and great blessing from God in laboring as a pastor and a preacher. But the rigors of the ministry, both from a spiritual and psychological viewpoint, are extreme. Of that I assure you. I've often said that I wouldn't wish the ministry on anyone. Even though that's not completely true, that does at least express the point that I'm trying to make. Besides, you must remember that the ministry if for life. This is how you must view the ministry. This adds weight and seriousness to entering the ministry. It's not something you go into to try for awhile to see whether or not you like it. It's a life calling."

Ron: "That's the way I see it, too. Perhaps that's one of the very things that makes me hesitate."

Pastor: "At the same time, Ron, you mustn't expect God to give you a sign from heaven to confirm your calling and dispel all your doubts. Even though you could wish that God would do that, He won't. I remember the story of the farm-boy who is said to have entered the Seminary because one day he looked up into the sky and beheld the letters PC written very plainly before his eyes. He interpreted that as a sign from God; PC meant that he must preach Christ. After a year in the Seminary one of his professors told him that he thought PC meant that he should plant corn. That illustrates the point that you must not look for some direct, outward, miraculous sign from heaven confirming your call to the ministry."

Ron: "I can understand that. As you said, I could wish that it were so."

Pastor: "Oh, I don't know. I think that even then you would feel the same reluctance to carry out the Lord's will. Look at Jonah."

Ron: "You're probably right."
Pastor: "I think there's no question that you possess the gifts necessary for the ministry. You are strongly convinced of the truth as we as Protestant Reformed Churches maintain it. Spiritually and intellectually you have the abilities that the ministry requires. This is important. It simply cannot be denied that one requires certain gifts for the work of the preaching of the gospel. Is this something that you have prayed about?"

Ron: "Yes, pastor, often."
Pastor: "Good, I'm glad to hear that. You must continue to do this. You must be assured that God will answer that prayer. That's His promise to His people. He always answers our prayers. He'll answer yours, too. Even though He won't do that by means of some sort of direct revelation, in a very concrete and real way you may expect that also in this matter He will reveal His will to you."
Ron: "I hope so. I guess that I believe that He will."
Pastor: "In the meantime, I would recommend that you write to one of the professors in the Seminary and discuss the matter with him. It would also be a good idea to send for the Catalogue of the Seminary. That will give you some acquaintance with the Seminary and the courses which you will have to take in order to be prepared for the ministry. You can obtain the Catalogue by writing to: Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches; 4949 Ivanrest Ave.; Grandville, MI 49418.
Ron: "One more thing. Sometimes I think that right now we have plenty of ministers. Nearly all our congregations are filled."
Pastor: "You shouldn't let that concern you. For one thing, Christ Himself taught that the harvest is always great and the laborers few. That's true for all time. Besides, the Lord has given us many contacts round the world. Now, at present perhaps he hasn't concretely opened any new doors. But several things are developing and who knows the work to which the Lord will call us in the next few years. You can be sure that if the Lord has called you to the ministry, He'll also provide a place for you in His Church to labor. At the same time, I think that the Churches should seriously exert themselves in providing places for the men who come out of the Seminary."
Ron: "Pastor, I'd like to thank you for the help. I'll give it some more serious thought. I think our talk itself has helped me to make the decision."
Pastor: "I'm glad you came to talk. I hope I could have helped you at least a little. May the Lord make His will known to you and then give you the grace to carry it out. Before you leave, let's pray. 'Heavenly Father, we pray thy blessing on the discussion that we have had. Reveal Thy will as regards the ministry to this young brother. We pray that, if it be Thy will, Thou wilt open the way for his preparation for the entrance into the ministry of Thy Word in our Churches. Lord of the harvest, put the call to the ministry of Thy Word into the hearts of other young men also. Continue to bless our Seminary, and use it that it may be a blessing in the midst of our Churches. Hear our prayer and graciously forgive our sins. For Jesus' sake, AMEN.' "

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

The Christian, Truth and Holiness

"Thy Word is truth." Jn. 17:17. In the Lord's (high priestly) prayer the complete thought is, "Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth." People are always saying, Why so much doctrine? We need more practical teaching on how to live the Christian life! But why this separation of doctrinal truth from practical truth? For neither the Bible nor the gospel in it make such a disjunction. This text and all the Bible join inseparably holiness and truth. So that it is far from right to have as a maxim or motto, No creed but Christ! Or to think Christianity is not a creed, but a life. Christianity is the right kind of life which grows out of right doctrine. So that without truth there is no holiness. Truth always promotes holiness. False doctrine and error lead to sin. Paul in writing to Timothy (I Tim. 1:6, 7) warned of certain would-be teachers warped with a twisted understanding. From the simplicity of faith they "turned aside", or "twisted out" of the way, and as a result their life and conduct was dislocated and distorted. Therefore, the mind must be filled with truth or the life will be filled with filth. Truth must be conceived as a straight line which, drawn through the heart, sets man, from the very center of his being, to walking (living) in the truth. It is just not possible to go ahead and live a godly life while neglecting sound doctrine. Where good doctrine flies out a vacuum sets in which poisonous error will fill. It is plain from this chapter that a sanctified life is a reality only when God sanctifies us through His truth.

Truth, or what we mean by "doctrine", is brought to us from God's Word as revealed in holy scripture. False doctrine is a perversion of the truth of God's Word, has no congruence to truth and cannot sanctify nor be a means to sanctification. There are all kinds of sophisticated errors in doctrine which inflate your pride to make you think you are sanctified. Will we be satisfied

with the boast of sanctification when the fact of it is not a reality? The religious cults boast a spurious morality. Their boasted acceptance before God is just as counterfeit. For God sanctifies His people by the truth and by nothing but the truth.

The question is, What is the truth? Is that the truth which comes to men by some private medium? That is the way the "Mooneys" get their "truth." Is that the truth which comes by some bizarre, extra-biblical revelation? Will we be imposed upon by some silly story of a self-made prophet who found a "divine revelation" written in re-formed Egyptian (whatever that is) on golden plates? Do we today get the truth via dreams, visions, voices or extra-sensory perception? Is it possible that genuine revelation from the true and triune God may come from some ancient, scrawny "holy" man under the influence of peyote? Such delusions are for the deceiver and the deceived. For us, God's word of truth is to be found in the canonical scripture. Truth which sanctifies in a godly life is, and is found in, God's Word. Religious cult members come to our doors saying, Lo, here is Christ! Believe it not. They tell us that they are sent of God to us with His message. We may answer them with the reply that the Lord has already been here for years and remains the Head of our home. Further, He has already written the eternal truth of His word upon our hearts. They tell us that Christ is not the true God, but was the first creature which later became a man. Then answer them, You tell us what the Spirit does not tell us. How then can you be sent servants of God's Spirit? Tell them that although they go from door to door with the old lies of the Arian, Socinian and unitarianistic heresies which deny the deity of Christ, the church has always fought and repudiated these heresies and it will continue to do so. But to answer the question at the beginning of this paragraph, we say, "Thy word is truth!" Forty-one years ago a seminary professor faithfully taught me the meaning of these beautiful words from John 17. More recently, in connection with a sermon of his entitled, "What is Truth?", he composed the following poem.

Truth
(John 18:38)

(Pilate thinking)

Oh, Rabbi-Youth,
How glib thou witnesseth to Truth!
The aged Athenians' wisdom's skill
Have sought to mine *that* hill,
One nugget of certainty to find,
But could not with *their* mind!
Speakest thou thus to me—so soon to be thy judge
To live—or kill?
I'll answer with the question that ends all,
For nought we find 'til first we frame its shape
Within the mind:

What is truth, O Youth?
(Christ thinking)
How can his officer of Rome behold and see
That I, even I, am He?
The one Eternal God who knows and sees
Myself eternally to be,
The ground and Cause of All—
Invisible to eye—
Yet Man, I came to die!
Out from the Father's Throne I've come
To reveal His truth to men—
And caused them to know
By My words written true,
In Revelation's Book,
Mine through and through,
The One to whom no man can come
But by his faith in Me.
Yea, I am the Truth, and He
Who with Me didst command
So all things came to be—
E'en souls and lands and sea—
The truth are we!
In Him I am, and He in Me!
The Bible is God's Book
For everyone to see
Eternal, changeless things.
The truth men seek;
But faith's the fee!

—Rev. Prof. R. K. Rudolph

The truth is fixed. The scripture cannot be changed or broken. The eternal truth has always been in the world. Not so error, heresy and the lie. They crept into the church; but every form of them on the basis of scripture has been refuted and condemned as false. These heresies change, take new forms, creep back into the church, if they can. But the truth remains the same, remains perfect! The Holy Spirit, the Author of scripture, has never had to revise or retract anything He has said. He never adds nor subtracts from His Word. But He pronounces plagues on those who do.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth" expresses the motto and stand of our families, our churches, our Christian schools, our seminary, our missions, our publication and Reformed committees. This is *not* the stand of the religious cults, of theological modernism or of the public schools. It is also different in the modernist seminaries and in the universities. Very different it has always been with the various schools of philosophy. These all operate on the basis of presuppositions which have absolutely no place for

the being of God, His creation of the universe and His upholding and governing it all. Nor do their presuppositions include the fact that God has in His word of truth also given an infallible interpretation of all created reality. This is sadly wrong. But nothing of this shakes us one bit from our stand on the impregnable rock of holy scripture. As to the enemies of the truth, Psalm One tells us that they shall not stand in the Judgment. But he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

That brings us to say that we must be just as unbending in our stand that not only does the truth make us free, but it also surely makes us holy. "Ye shall know the truth" means to hold and prize the truth in more than an intellectual knowledge of it. It means to understand it in the love of it. So that we just do not know the truth aright unless it makes us holy. We do not walk in the truth unless it directs us in a sanctified life. Dare we claim to be men of truth, unless we are a holy people? Where there is a failure in the holiness of our church members, or in the sanctified conduct of our Christian school pupils, what has happened to the truth among us? Has it fallen in the streets? When behavior in these spheres is not according to scripture, shall we say that in such a case there is no doctrinal issue? Can it be that the truth is still held even though true godliness is in a serious decline? We can never be without a doctrinal issue, for the truth, and faith in the truth, must always motivate our every thought, speech, action and emotion. Where this is not the case, then on the practical side too there is decline from *the truth*! Looking everywhere in the Reformed community we still find the Reformed confessions, the creeds, the Three Forms of Unity; but are we, practically, walking in obedience to that glorious body of truth? We have lost our testimony to the truth before the world when we cannot commend it with a holy life. We have the infallibly inspired Book and the faithful preaching of the Book. Do we also have the hallowed influence of the Book and the pulpit in the pew? A minister friend, now in Glory, loved to say, "I believe the Bible from cover to cover. I believe the cover too. It says, *Holy* Bible." He was a man who longed and strove for perfect holiness. Do I? Do you?

News From, For and About Our Churches

by Marcia Hanko

BIRTHS

Mr. & Mrs. Clare Kuiper , of Hope were blessed with the birth of a daughter, on October 2.

Mr. & Mrs. Roger Grevengoed, of Hull, rejoice in the birth of a son, Bradley Evan, on September 3.

Mr. & Mrs. Gerald Vandenberg, of Holland were blessed with the birth of a son, Eric Scott on September 17.

Mr. & Mrs. John Van Baren, of Southwest were blessed with the birth of a son James Michael on September 23.

CONFESSIONS OF FAITH

Lynn Kamps, Dianne Heyboer and Marcia Lotterman of Hope made public confession of their faith on September 26.

MARRIAGES

Marv Van Den Top and La Donna Hoksbergen of Hull were united in marriage.

ACTIVITIES

A singspiration was held on September 19, in Southwest church.

A Fall Retreat was held on October 8 and 9 at Camp Blodgett.

A chicken bar-b-q was held at Adams School on September 25.

A Spaghetti Supper was held in South Holland Church on September 24.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS

The membership papers of Mrs. Bob Faber were transferred from Ridgewood CRC to First.

First received the membership papers of James Koll from Creston CRC.

Hull received the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Doug DeBoer, and their daughter, Sarah Lynn, from Loveland.

The membership papers of Joann Kortering were transferred from Loveland to Hope.

The membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Dave Rau were received by Southwest, from Hope & Faith.

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