BEACON LIGHTS

FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH

DECEMBER, 1983

SELF EXAMINATION

VOLUME XLII DECEMBER, 1983 NUMBER 10

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD
Dan Schipper - President; Bruce Klamer - Vice-President; Denise Van Baren - Secretary; Jane Pastoor - Vice-Secretary; Todd Terpstra - Treasurer; Jerry Kuiper - Vice-Treasurer; Pam Kuiper - Librarian; Jon Bol - Youth Coordinator; Rev. Kortering, Rev. Van Baren - Spiritual Advisors

BEACON LIGHT STAFF
Dave Moelker - Editor-in-Chief; John M. Faber, David Harbach, Ed Lotterman - Associate Editors; Mike Lotterman - Finance Manager; Marcia Lotterman - Secretary; Mike Rau, Grace Faber, Thelma Westra

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
Mrs. H. Brands, Rev. C. Hanko, Rev. R. Harbach, John Kalsbeek Jr., Rev. G. Lubbers, John Ten Haaf, Deane Wassink, Ben Wigger

Collections should be sent to: Mike Lotterman
1382 Su-Lew Dr. S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504

If any material of **Beacon Lights** is reprinted by another periodical, we will appreciate your giving the source.
The articles of **Beacon Lights** do not necessarily indicate the viewpoint of the Editorial Staff. Every author is solely responsible for the contents of his own article.
Contributions of general interest are very welcome.

All material for publication should be addressed to:

Dave Moelker 4625 Juleon S.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49504

News Editor: Paula Faber
4190 Burton S.E., Grand Papids, MI 49506

Michigan subscription dues to Grace Faber
4190 Burton S.E., Grand Rapids, MI 49506
Subscribers outside of Michigan please
forward subscription dues to
Vonda Klamer
10143 Wilson Ave. S.W., Byron Center, MI 49315

Forms 3579 should be returned to:
BEACON LIGHTS
4625 Juleon S.W., Grand Rapids, MI 49504
Second Class Postage paid at
Jenison, Michigan (USPS 046-840)
Subscription Price $5.00

IN THIS ISSUE

Editor's Notes 1
EDITORIAL - Carrying The Burden? - David Harbach 1
FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY - Gems: Self Examination - Rev. C. Hanko 4
The Generations of Jesus' Human Nature - Rev. J. Smith 6
A Blessed Hunger and Thirst - Rev. J. A. Heys 9
Discussion Outlines of I Samuel: Chapters 7 & 8 - Rev. R. Hanko 12
CRITIQUE - Financial Responsibility Within the Covenant - Bernie Kamps 14
TRUTH VS. ERROR - VI. Earnestly Contend For The Faith - Rev. R. C. Harbach 16
Building The Lord's House - Duane Huisken 19
The Sorrows of Conception - Mrs. H. Brands 21
1983 Beacon Lights Index - Volume XLII - Pam Kuiper 22
What's Happening? - Paula Faber 25

Editor's Notes

This issue of **Beacon Lights** marks the end of another year of publication. It has been of the Lord's mercies that we have been able to produce this magazine for another year. For this blessing we give Him our thanks, for again faithful workers, readers, and supporters have been provided.

This issue also marks the end of Volume 42 for which the index may be found.

We would also direct your attention to the fifth in Rev. John Heys' series of articles on the beatitudes "A blessed hunger and thirst." You will find he makes this interesting remark: "You can no more persuade the citizen of the kingdom of heaven to cease hungering and thirsting after righteousness than you can expect the athlete, who has just run a strenuous race that took place in hot weather and lasted for a good length of time, to turn away from a cool drink of water."

Of note also is the contribution entitled "Building the Lord's House" by Duane Huisken of our Redlands, California congregation. It will give interesting insights into their recent construction of a new church building.

Coming in January **Beacon Lights**:
"Depression" by Rev. James Slopsema
"High School girls and Careers" by Prof. Herman Hanko
"What Awaits us Tomorrow?" by Rev. C. Hanko

Editorial

CARRYING THE BURDEN?

by David Harbach

God's people have many needs. God calls us to contribute our time and our money to meet those needs. God calls us to meet those needs because He has supplied us with many gifts and the opportunities to use those gifts to His glory and honor. God has given us so much in the way of gifts and opportunities so that we may also bear one another's burdens and therefore fulfill the law of Christ. Our motive is God's glory and therefore the desire to fulfill the law of Christ. James 2:8 tells us "if ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye do well." We are a people who work together to supply the needs that God purposely brings to us, so that we might give to others what He has so graciously given to us.

I want to emphasize the need of various causes in God's kingdom that need our prayers and money. Isn't it alarming to you to know there is a Protestant Reformed organization needing several thousand dollars in order to pay its bills for 1983? Isn't it alarming to you to know that some of our schools in the Grand Rapids area need unpaid tuition money in order to keep functioning properly and responsibly? Isn't it a fact then that the burdens - the needs - of these causes of God's kingdom are **not** being carried? In the first instance of need, an excuse of "I didn't know" will suffice, but in the second instance of needs in our schools, that same excuse would not be truthful. Our schools should be able to raise enough money during the deficit drives to meet their needs. When there isn't enough money, that also means, that our prayers have fallen short of the needs.

You can understand that writing this is difficult because it also means that my coveted prayers and giving have fallen short of the need. It is difficult to write because there is an age group of young people that has also fallen short of those needs. I am talking about you who have graduated from high school, who have found a nice paying job, and who are either single or recently married or starting a large family. I hear from school board members and consistory members that you are not giving enough in the way of money to carry the burden - the needs - of our schools. Your age group falls short of what is expected of you. The conclusion we can draw from all this information is that we give and do that cheerfully but we do not give enough. We don't give liberally - recklessly. For the whole of our educational life our parents taught us the importance of giving liberally and cheerfully to the cause of covenantal education by being sincerely concerned about our schools and showing that concern in the way of giving liberally and cheerfully to the educational cause. We too must be sincerely concerned. In addition, another conclusion can be drawn that says, if we are not giving enough and yet we still have plenty to give, then we give little because we want the rest for ourselves. We have a long list of reasons why we need the rest for ourselves, I am sure. I don't want to hear that list of reasons. What I do know, is, that we are not carrying the burden of our schools the way we should, therefore our coveted prayers and giving are not fervent enough.

Just this past November we stopped to give thanks to God for supplying us with a great abundance. Didn't it strike you as being shameful that at the same time we thanked God for giving us so much, our schools were falling behind in tuition payments. Certainly, we must thank God for all that He gives to us, but He has given us enough so that our schools don't need to run behind in tuition payments. When we are being faithful in our calling to supply the needs of our schools then we are giving liberally and bearing one another's burdens. Galations 6:2

There are many ways to give and I would like to suggest a way of giving that does not originate with me. Now, we already have special funds to give to that take care of parents needs and teachers needs, but in addition to those special funds, I would like to suggest that our single or even recently married young people pay the tuition of a child in a large family who find it difficult to make tuition payments. There are those among us who do this but I do not know if they are young people. The point is that we give, not out of a desire for our own vain glory but out of a love for God. I will talk about this later.

When Article 21 of the Church Manual states "the consistories shall see to it that there are good Christian Schools in which parents have their children instructed according to the demands of the

Covenant", then the whole church gladly supports our schools in giving not only on the Sabbath but all year long. The Covenant demands that all of us, single, recently married, young and old provide for the needs of our schools. As a part of the Covenant we are responsible for providing a Covenant Education for the seed of the Covenant. This is a blessed privilege which we willingly fulfill, knowing that our Father in heaven provides us with the means to support our schools.

When you were instructed in the fear of the Lord, your parents believed sincerely "that our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth; that our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." Psalm 144:12. You were beautiful olive plants round about the table. That could only be possible through the way of God's people, your parents, being faithful to His everlasting covenant. God is always faithful and He gives to us His love that we might be responsible young people within His covenant. The same responsibility our parents had in instructing us in the fear of the Lord is now our responsibility in regards to all the covenant seed. In that way, we show ourselves to be plants grown up in our youth, corner stones polished after the similitude of a palace, olive plants round about the table. Then too, we are lovers of the neighbor and those who give liberally and cheerfully to the cause of God's kingdom.

The fact that we are able to give freely is based upon the truth that God loves Himself. In the first place that means that God is a giving God. He gave us His love while we were yet sinners. He gave us His Son to die for us. He gave us His Spirit that we might know Him as our faithful covenant God. In the second place that means He gives without expecting any return. God did not first think "Is this going to benefit me?" When God gives, He gives freely. Our giving must also be without thought to ourselves. Finally, through our giving to the cause of God's kingdom we express the love that God has put in our hearts and which returns as love to God.

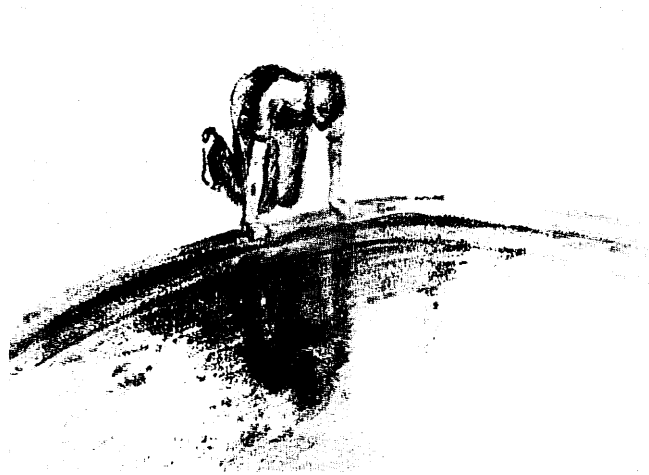
We can carry the burden but only when we are humbled in the dust before God. Then we see our own unworthiness of all that He has provided us. Then our hearts are filled with His love so that we love the neighbor and the causes of His kingdom. Then we see that our giving freely and cheerfully is possible through the wonder in that Christ first loved us while we were yet sinners.

1984 SINGSPIRATION SCHEDULE

February 19 — First
April 22 — Faith
May 20 — Hope
September 16 — Southwest
November 18 — Faith
December 16 — Hudsonville

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

Gems Out of the Gold Mine of God's Word



SELF EXAMINATION

by Rev. C. Hanko

"Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves." II Cor. 13:5

There is an old adage, "See yourself as others see you." It is a known fact that we can see the faults of another much better than we can see our own. On the other hand, others can see our faults much better than we can. Jesus speaks of trying to take the mote (or twig) out of the brother's eye when I have a beam (or block of wood) in my own eye. What obstructs my vision may be far worse than what obstructs his. We should be honest with ourselves and put forth every effort to see ourselves as others see us.

That is true in a natural, but especially in a spiritual sense. Scripture urges us in II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves." The idea is that we put ourselves under intense scrutiny, that we test, search our innermost being. Still more, we must prove ourselves even as gold is tried by the fire, so that all that is impure is put away. This self examination is always properly associated with the Lord's Supper, but should not be limited to that. The idea is certainly not that those who have not yet made profession of their faith need not submit themselves to a serious searching of the soul, and that the rest of us can avoid that until the time of the Lord's Supper. Scripture tells us that we must examine ourselves every day, especially under the preaching of the Word on

the Sabbath.

We have a similar passage in II Timothy 2:15, "Study to show thyself approved of God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth." At one time I had a wall plaque with those words on it in my study. This text is always considered appropriate for a minister. And that it is. But it is no less appropriate for all of us, men and women, young and old.

Some years ago this subject of self examination was rather widely discussed in some groups. I can well recall that there were those who took the position that a believer need not examine himself. He knows that he is a Christian. He knows in whom he believes. He should never question that by asking, "Am I a Christian?" "Am I a child of God?" The argument was raised by one minister, When I get up in the morning I do not pinch myself to see whether I am alive. I do not look in the mirror to see whether I am the same person who went to bed last night. I do not ask my children, "Am I still your father?" As surely as we know who we are, so surely our faith assures us that we are children of God. We need not, in fact, we must not question that.

The fallacy of that entire reasoning is this: Self examination does not imply that we confront ourselves with the question, Am I a child of God? The text referred to above from II Cor. 13:5 does not say that we must examine ourselves whether we **have faith.** That is not the question. That is taken for granted, because the text is directed to believers. The text tells us that we must examine ourselves whether we are **in the faith.** That is something quite different.

The word **faith** in the text has the same meaning as when we speak of the faith of the fathers living still. It refers to that which we believe, the contents of our faith. That contents is found in the Scriptures, the Word of truth. The text implies that we know the Word of God. We believe it. We profess it. But the question still remains "whether we are IN the faith", that is, whether our innermost desires, our thoughts, our spoken words, our acts and deeds are in harmony with the Word of God. Then we do not ask, "Am I a Christian?", but rather, "What kind of Christian am I?"

Actually only a sincere child of God can examine himself. That is simply impossible for an unbeliever. An unbeliever does not know and does not profess the truth of the Scriptures. He always contradicts, despises and rejects the Word of God. He does not possess faith, and therefore cannot even ask himself whether he is in the faith. Besides, he walks in darkness. He can never and will never be honest with himself, He deceives himself all his life long until he ends up in hell.

In a sense, therefore, we may well consider the adage, "See yourself as others see you." Don't let yourself be flattered by your own ego, but consider seriously the opinion of others around you.

Then our first question will be, "What do my parents think of me?" I may have minimized their opinion in the past. I may have rebelled against their short sighted, narrow notions. Yet what do they think and say? In that connection, how about the rest of the family? What is their opinion of me?

The next question must be, What do my friends think and say of me? Do they have good reason to speak well of me, or do they condone their own wrong doing by pointing the finger at me? Am I a good influence on them?

We can also ask, "What impression do I make on the teachers in school or on those for whom I work? Do they consider me to be a Christian by my daily walk of life?

Finally, we must also ask, what do the wicked unbelievers that I rub elbows with from day to day think of me? Do they like me? Do they consider me thier friend, who is one with them? Or do they see and

know that I am different because I am a Christian? Do I experience anything of what Jesus said, that a disciple is not greater than his master, since they have hated Him they will hate me also?

These questions must be asked and answers sought if we shall ever succeed in seeing ourselves as others see us.

That is alright as far as it goes. But is that sufficient for a real self examination? Generally we are the most concerned about what others, especially our peers think of us. We ask ourselves, what will they think? What will they say? Yet even those closest to us are not the perfect standard of right and wrong, good and evil. Even people of the world can be 'nice' to us without actually revealing what they think of us. In II Timothy 2:15, which was mentioned before, we are told, "Study to show thyself approved unto God!" Actually that is what counts. Ultimately it is not the question, what do others think of me? What impression do I make on them? But, do I carry away the approval of God? Does my life give me that peace with God that passes all understanding?

In that connection many interesting matters arise, especially in connection with the passage in II Timothy 2. But that will have to wait until next time.

THE GENERATIONS OF JESUS' HUMAN NATURE

by Rev. Jon Smith

Pastor of the First Protestant Reformed Church of Edgerton, Minn.

The Word of God in the Old Testament promised that the Messiah would be born in the Davidic line. Genesis 49:10 points to this promise in general: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah." Isaiah 11 begins, "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him." But more specifically, God promised that the coming Messiah would be an actual, physical descendant of David. In II Samuel 7:12, the prophet Nathan speaks to David this promise of God: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom." Jesus Christ was to be born of the line of David, i.e., He was to be an actual, physical son of David in David's generations.

There is another promise in the Old Testament that must be considered briefly before we go to Matthew 1 and Luke 3 and deal with the genealogies there. And that promise is this: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Is. 7:14). God promised that Jesus Christ would be

virgin born. Jesus would not have a human father. This promise certainly was fulfilled and Scripture attests to the fulfillment in Matthew 1:18-25. The child Mary conceived was "of the Holy Ghost."

Now, we can approach the difficulty of the genealogies of Matthew and Luke. Apparently both genealogies are Joseph's. That is the first difficulty. The second problem of reconciling the geneaolgies in some way, if indeed they are Joseph's, because they do not agree. Also, there are other problems that come up if we find that both genealogies are not Joseph's. It is with these difficulties that we must deal.

There have been many different interpretations of these two genealogies. I think it best that we center our attention on three possible interpretations. I will mention first the two that are mistaken positions and the third will be what I consider to be the correct one.

The first possible interpretation of these genealogies has been held by such men as J. Gresham Machen (**The Virgin Birth of Christ**) and F.F. Bruce. Such men believe that both genealogies present Joseph's ancestry. Matthew 1 gives the line of succession of the throne of David, while Luke 3 traces Joseph's actual descent from David by another branch of the family than that which produced the kings who followed David. The idea behind this interpretation is that the kingly line became extinct and the living collateral line inherited the throne.

There are others who take both genealogies to be of Joseph that think that Matthew 1 traces the actual line of Joseph and that Luke 3 gives the legal line of Joseph through Levirate marriages. This assumes that Heli (Luke 3) and Jacob (Matt. 1) were brothers and that when Jacob (Joseph's real father) died, Heli became his legal father according to the Levirate marriage system.

The other erroneous view holds both genealogies to be Mary's. The basic reasons given for this view are: 1) that Matthew 1 speaks of the generations of Jesus Christ (1:1) and, therefore, the genealogy must refer to Mary; 2) that Luke 3:23 should be translated properly according to the original language, so that it is demonstrated that the genealogy is actually Christ's. Thus, the two genealogies could be Mary's considering both sides of her family.

The basis of this view is intimately associated with an unusual interpretation of Luke 1:34. Mary's question, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?," is taken to mean, "How can the savior be born, when there is not a male in the line of David?" This interpretation is wrong on a number of counts. First, Matthew 1 states categorically that there was a man in the line of David, viz., Joseph. Secondly, it is obvious in the context of Luke 1 that Mary's intent in her question was that she did not know a man sexually to bear a son. The angel answers her question in the next verse, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: Therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." Thirdly, this interpretation assumes that Mary knew that she was the last in the line of David and knew that Christ would be born of her. This contradicts her surprise at the announcement of the angel that she would be the mother of the Messiah. Finally, had Mary been able to know that she was the end of the line of David, surely others would have known as well. And had the Jewish nation known that Mary would be the mother of the promised Messiah, they would have treated her royally. We must not forget that the Jewish concept of the Messiah was perverted from the Scriptural view. They looked for one to come that would conquer their physical, national foes, one who would feed their stomachs with milk and honey, one who would make their sinful living a paradise on earth.

With that corrupt perspective, they would have been overjoyed to know that Mary was the mother of the one which they thought would make their earthly lives heavenly.

So, Mary's question does not force us to make the genealogy of Matthew her own. There was a male descendent of David in Joseph her espoused husband.

The proper view of these genealogies is that Matthew 1 gives Joseph's line and Luke 3 presents Mary's. Both Mary and Joseph were descendents of David.

Matthew 1 must be taken as the genealogy of Joseph. We read through the list of names that one man "begat" another. "Begat" can be taken only in the sense that the one begotten was the natural son of the mentioned father. In verse 16 we read, "And Jacob **begat** Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." There is no mistake here; Joseph's genealogy is given.

Some have argued that Matthew 1:1 begins, "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ," and therefore the genealogy is of Mary. But that term "generation" does not refer to verses 2-17, rather to verses 18-25. Verse 18 picks up that exact term "generation" referring to the origin or conception of Jesus and the narration of the virgin birth proceeds.

Really the genealogy of Luke 3 is the more difficult one, although, the difficulty is only apparent. Let us look at verse 23 of that chapter and get a proper translation from the original. The proper translation should read, "And Jesus Himself, when beginning, was about thirty years old, being a son (as was supposed of Joseph) of Heli." With this translation, the genealogy cannot be of Joseph, since he is mentioned as the "supposed" father. It would be senseless to continue his genealogy in this chapter. Rather Mary's line is given here. There surely is no problem with the fact that her name does not appear in the genealogy itself. The previous two chapters have already given the needed information. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary. It naturally follows that her genealogy is given.

The significance of these genealogies for us is many-fold. I will only list a few of the more outstanding features of their significance. First, as we understand properly these genealogies, we are again impressed with the verbal-plenary inspiration of God's Word. This Word which we have is infallible and inerrant. God never contradicts Himself and never confuses us with His revelation. God's Word is clear and perspicuous. Secondly, God always fulfills His covenant promise to us. God promised that David would have a son who would rule an everlasting kingdom. Never was this promise stated as though it must be realized through the royal line, even though this would be the expected way. But God fulfills His promise of the Messiah and of the establishment of His everlasting covenant through the line of David's son Nathan. And here we see the sovereignty of our covenant God fulfilling His covenant with His elect people. And indeed it is greatly significant that as we grasp with our hearts that God has always been faithful down through the ages past, that surely He will remain faithful unto us and our children in remembering His covenant unto a thousand generations. Thirdly, God is faithful to us graciously as He was to our Lord Jesus Christ. It would have been sufficient for God to have sent Christ through the virgin Mary; but He sent His Christ not only to be an actual descendant of David but God graciously gave the honor and glory of the royal Davidic line to Jesus legally by means of the line of Joseph his father by legal adoption. That is in particular the reason for Joseph's genealogy being given in Matthew 1.

That Jesus Christ "is become the head stone of the corner, this is the LORD'S doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."

A BLESSED HUNGER AND THIRST

by Rev. John A. Heys

One can be aware of the fact that one lacks certain possessions that are generally considered valuable, and yet be glad, because of this poverty. Think of the women in Bethlehem, when the sword of Herod swept through the land to kill all the babies of two years and under, in order to kill the Christ-Child. Although there were childless wives who longed intensely to be blessed with a son or daughter, they were glad that at the moment they had no child, and did not need to suffer the grief of neighbours whose children died in such a brutal and tragic way. Or one may have no interest in that which means so much to others, and not feel poor at all for not having it. Take pets for example, a cat or a dog, which mean so much to some while others are glad they do not have such around the house. It is a relief even to them that they are poor in such possessions.

So it is today that there are those who know that they have no faith in Christ, no desire to please God, no interest in the things of God's kingdom. And they are happy that they do not have the "grief" of living such a narrow, strict life that denies the flesh so many pleasures that it craves. Such are not citizens of the kingdom of heaven, and are glad that they are not. They are spiritually poor but not poor in spirit. Such will not mourn over sin but rather find joy in it. These are not meek before God and live in no meekness before men. By all means they do not hunger and thirst after righteousness, and are not those of whom Jesus speaks in the fourth Beatitude.

You see, in the Beatitudes Jesus does not give us the descriptions of seven different kinds of people who become citizens in the kingdom of heaven. He is not speaking of naturalized citizens who come from seven other kingdoms. Here in the United States we have people who came from England, France and Germany, from the Netherlands, Poland and China, to mention only a few of the nations from which the present citizens in their generations came. But in the kingdom of heaven it is not so that some were poor in spirit, some mourned, some were meek and others hungered and thirsted after righteousness. No, young people, every citizen in that kingdom of God has all seven of the characteristics mentioned in the seven Beatitudes. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness also are poor in spirit, mourn and are meek.

Now those who hunger and thirst after righteousness do so because they are poor in spirit. It is not simply that they are deeply aware of the fact that they have no

righteousness of their own, no works that God calls good, and a whole life of unrighteous deeds behind them. But they also have a burning desire to **be** righteous before God. That awareness of not being righteous because of the guilt imputed to the whole human race in Adam, and for deeds of evil performed personally, is essential. Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. But we can never stop there and take this all by itself. After all the devil is aware of the fact that he does nothing to please God. Not only is he not a citizen in the kingdom of heavenly virtues, but he does not want to be either. The proof that one is not simply spiritually poor but poor in spirit, the evidence that one mourns over sin and in meekness bows before the living God is that one hungers and thirsts after righteousness.

In that kingdom, wherein all revolves around God and His glory, all the citizens love God and want to be righteous. They do not want to do anything that is not right in His sight. And exactly because they are poor in spirit and so painfully aware of the fact that they never perform any good works in their own strength, they long for the righteousness of Christ to be imputed to them. They are so very eager to know that in Him they are righteous before God. And, what is more, they want to be able to walk in righteousness and to please God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength.

Now righteousness is rightness. It means being on the right side of God's law. It means being right in God's sight. I want to emphasize that a moment. You young people certainly do have peer pressure. You want to be accepted by other young people. In fact we all want to be sure that our clothes are right for the occasion. If we play the piano or organ we want to be sure that our fingers strike the right keys at the right time. We are careful to drive on the right side of the road. We want to be sure that the proper side of our dress or skirt is outside and not inside touching the body. In so many ways we want to be right. But all this has to do with what is right or wrong materially and as far as man's standards are concerned. What counts, what is important is that we do what is right in God's sight. The question is whether our conduct, our thinking, our willing conforms with that of Christ, Who in I John 2:1 is called "The Righteous."

To hunger and thirst after righteousness means to desire it intensely. It means to desire it as a necessity of life. For the things not actually essential for our life we soon lose the desire; and we change our likes and dislikes. One thing we cannot change, and this is our desire for food and drink. This can diminish when we are ill, but it does not leave us until we die. Hunger and thirst never leave the living. This desire cannot be transferred to other objects. And though in later life one will lose some of one's appetite for food and drink, the same is true of all earthly things. And the body still continues to need that food and drink.

You can no more persuade the citizen of the kingdom of heaven to cease hungering and thirsting after righteousness than you can expect the athlete, who has just run a strenuous race that took place in hot weather and lasted for a good length of time, to turn away from a cool drink of water. You can no more expect a lion, that is ravenously hungry, to ignore the careless deer that came within range of the lion's leap, than you can expect one whose life comes out of heaven to have no hunger and thirst for the righteousness of that kingdom.

Hunger and thirst are powers that drive a man from within his being. And they are powers that tell man that he needs food and drink for his wellbeing and life. So the child of God is driven by an inner power, by the built-in force of the new life, to want to be righteous before God. That force, that power that drives

the citizen of the kingdom of heaven to want righteousness is the love of God, which God implants in this citizen the moment he is born again with life out of that kingdom. Thus those who hunger and thirst after righteousness are those who love God.

Such are blessed now, as Jesus said, He did not say that they would be blessed, but that they are. Indeed they will enter into all the blessedness of God's kingdom. Did He not say that the poor in spirit are blessed because theirs is the kingdom of heaven? But they are blessed now in that they have this precious gift of that new life and of the love of God shed abroad in their hearts. They have treasures the world will never know, treasures that abide forever, and which moth and rust cannot corrupt, and thieves cannot break through to steal.

The important question for us is whether we do hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is not a question of whether we want to be in that kingdom of glory. It is a question of whether we want to be in that kingdom of righteousness. All men want to be in a kingdom where there are no aches and pains. They all want to sin and yet escape the punishment of sin. Actually, you and I as well, as far as our flesh is concerned, would call a kingdom of heaven that realm where we can sin and never know the wages of sin. The kingdom of heaven for us would not be the kingdom of God but of man. And we had better examine ourselves carefully as to whether we want to be in a kingdom that is one glorious realm of righteousness. And whether we want to go to heaven in order to escape all unrighteousness and be able to serve God with every breath of life, every heart beat, every thought, desire and deed.

This new gospel, that is all around us and is no gospel, speaks of a wonderful plan that God has for everybody, and of a Christ Whose chief concern is to get us out of pain and suffering, and sings of the street of gold in the new Jerusalem, and all the fleshly joys that are there. We must emphasize, as Jesus does here, that the gospel is that Christ makes us righteous, able and willing to walk in a way that is right in God's sight, and that salvation is delivering us from the power and love of sin.

Many claim that they hunger and thirst after righteousness but mean thereby that they hunger and thirst after fleshly happiness. But hungering and thirsting after righteousness manifest themselves in a walk that shows a desire to walk in God's sight. That means that you young people when looking for a life's partner are going to look for one who will help you walk in righteousness and train your children in it. A pretty face, a pleasing personality, athletic prowess or a dynamic character are not what attract and move to want one as life's partner. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness will make righteousness the all-controlling factor in the choice.

Sports and amusement will not be that which takes your time away from catechism preparation and society attendance and preparation. Learn a lesson from the hungry cat or dog. Does anything distract from the dish of meat set out and within reach? If we hunger for righteousness and thirst for it, it will show in what we seek, where we go, what we say as well as what we will not seek—by means of the TV knob—where we will not go, and will not say. What do men, who see you at school, at work, on week days as well as on Sunday, judge to be the thing which an inner hunger and thirst drives you to seek?

If it is righteousness—and it must be—then rest assured that you will be filled. You will not get little bites of it now and then. You will be filled in the day of Christ so that YOU CANNOT DO ANYTHING BUT WHAT IS RIGHT IN GOD'S EYES. He will fill you with it. Do you want that?

Discussion Outlines of I Samuel Chapters 7 and 8

by Rev. R. Hanko

A. Israel's repentance.
   1. The worship of Jehovah during this period:
      a. Why was not the ark brought back to Shiloh where it had been since the days of Joshua (Ps. 78:59, 60)?
      b. What very likely happened to the worship at the tabernacle because of the absence of the ark?
      c. What place of worship was substituted for the tabernacle at Shiloh (I Sam. 7:17)?
      d. In light of Lev. 17:8, 9 and Deut. 12:13, 14 do you think it was wrong for Samuel to build an altar in Ramah?
      e. Does verse 2 of chapter 7 establish a connection between the ark's being gone from Shiloh and Israel's repentance?
   2. A national repentance:
      a. Did the many troubles that Israel suffered during the days of Eli have anything to do with her repentance (Judges 2:20-23, Heb. 12:5-10)?
      b. In connection with the previous question, is there a difference between punishment and chastisement? Cf. also Ps. 11:5.
      c. How long did it take before this severity accomplished its purpose?
      d. Are there any indications in chapter 7 that Israel's repentance was sincere?
      e. Why does the Heidelberg Catechism in Lord's Day XXX speak of sincerity? Is there a difference between a sincere and a perfect repentance? Cf. also II Cor. 7:9-11.

B. Israel's victory over the Philistines.
   1. The story:
      a. When and why did the Philistines come to Mizpeh to fight against Israel?
      b. Why were the Israelites so afraid (Ps. 44:20-25)?

c. How does verse 10 prove that the storm which defeated the Philistines was no ordinary storm? Cf. Ps. 83:15.
d. What was the result of this victory for Israel? Was it the great victory toward which He was leading them (Ps. 78:65-72)?

2. The significance of this history:
a. How are Israel's repentance and the victory God gave them related (I Kings 8:33, 34)?
b. Of what great victory given by God to His church is this victory over the Philistines a picture (Matt. 27:45, Acts 2:19, 20, Matt. 24:27-30)?
c. Is repentance also the way in which we become partakers of the victory over our enemies? Cf. II Cor. 7:9-11.
d. What does the name Ebenezer mean and what is the significance of that name? Cf. Deut. 32:4, 15-18, 30, 31, Ps. 95:1, 61:2, 62:2, Is. 51:1, etc.
e. Who is our Ebenezer (I Cor. 10:4, Rom. 9:33, I Peter 2:6-8)?

C. Israel's request for a King.

1. The circumstances:
a. Approximately how long a time intervenes between chapters 7 and 8?
b. Who did Samuel appoint to succeed him as Israel's judges? Were these men worthy of that position (Duet. 16:18-20)?
c. Why do we read nothing of Samuel being rebuked and punished like Eli for the conduct of his sons? Cf. Ez. 33:17-19 for a possible answer.

2. The request of Israel's elders:
a. What reasons did the elders give for their request that they be allowed to have a king? Which was the real reason?
b. In the light of Deut. 17:14, 15, was it wrong for Israel to ask for a King?
c. What was wrong with the reasons they gave (I Samuel 10:19, 12:17-19, Hosea 13:9-11)? Cf. also Ps. 20:7, etc.
d. What do you think that Israel saw in the Kings of the nations that made them want a king? Cf. for example Dan. 4:30.
e. Was it true that by asking a king they were rejecting Samuel as he himself thought?

3. God's response to their request?
a. How was Israel punished for this rejection of God? Cf. Ps. 106:14, 15, the example of Israel in the wilderness and apply that to this story.
b. What did Samuel tell them their king would be like?
c. By giving them a King after their own hearts, for whom was God preparing the way (Ps. 78:70)?
d. What does this whole incident teach us about our great King? Is He a king like the Kings of the nations, the kind of King we would choose? Is He King by our request and choice? Cf. Matt. 27:11, 29, 37, John 12:15.

Financial Responsibility Within the Covenant

by Bernie Kamps

What obligation do we have as young people to support our church and Christian schools? Why would we want to support them?

To answer these questions, let's go to the Scripture and use what it has to say in regard to tithing and how to view our money.

I Timothy 6:17, 18 "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." And the result of being rich in good works and having a proper spiritual attitude toward giving is the reward of grace. Verse 19 "Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." May we know for certain that if we are not willing to give abundantly because of our love for money we will not share in God's love or His riches. I John 3:17 "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" May we know too, that by nature we love money and the earthly joy it can bring. When we have extra time and extra money the temptation to live as the world is very great. Christ said "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven."

In II Corinthians, Chapters 8 and 9 the apostle Paul is exhorting the church of Corinth to be generous in their giving to the fellow saints in Jerusalem. At this time Jerusalem was experiencing a famine. Paul had collected alms from the churches in Macedonia. These churches we understand from verse 2 were experiencing deep poverty themselves, but gave liberally. Apostle Paul tells the church of Corinth in verse 1 "Moreover, brethren, we do you to wit of the grace of God bestowed on the churches of Macedonia". Grace of God bestowed not on Jerusalem (although this they received also) but on the churches of Macedonia Paul points out. They gave with such willing hearts that we read in verse 4

"with much entreaty that we would receive the gift." Can you imagine, they are poor themselves and they, **press** upon Paul their collections! May we pray for such benevolent hearts. In verse 9 we read "though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich."

Now Christ's poverty is not only lack of material goods, but He was made poor by taking upon Himself our corruption. We are, of course, made rich, spiritually. Now, if we are made rich in this manner, shall we not rise above the love of this life and its fleeting pleasures and abound in good works? Because of God's grace, let us exercise our priestly office and bring our offerings to His Kingdom with great joy. When our hearts are right with God, in regard to giving, then what follows, it seems, is a love and concern for the brother in need, a deep interest in having our churches, Christian schools, ministers and teachers well supported. We are then concerned about our covenantal responsibility. One which we all share, young and old. Whether you have brothers or sisters, children of your own, or are grandparents of children in our Christian schools and churches. The church throughout all ages has shared and must continue to share the financial and spiritual burdens of the covenant. As young people may we never say, I don't have children in school, or when I get older, then I'll contribute. We must view ourselves as one people, God's elect within His covenant, commanding us all to share of our wealth.

Pity those who selfishly spend money on material things. As they continue to find deceiving happiness there, they will become spiritually weaker and weaker. Envy not the rich man who hoards his gain, never receiving God's grace through the blessedness of giving. We must understand too, that God rewards our charity. It is His grace which enabled us to give, and he rewards the child of God with more grace. In chapter 9 of II Corinthians, verse 6, we read "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully." Reaping the bounties of Christ are not to be minimized. Christ affords us true heartfelt joy when we give. Knowing that we are only stewards over God's money, helps keep in perspective that we may not be selfish toward supporting God's kingdom causes. Remember the words of II Cor. 9:7 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give."

May the purposing be done with our **new** hearts. The old heart of flesh which hateth God, our neighbor and loveth only self, will never be inclined to share.

When the widow gave her two mites, which is mere pennies in contrast to the rich who cast in much, Christ who was watching as they threw their money into the treasury said "That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury" Mark 12:43. Why? Because they shared of their abundance - it wasn't a sacrifice.

God, who knows the heart, blesses the poor elect sinner equally as a wealthy elect simner as they both tithe. Don't construe size of donations and sacrifices with blessings. We are blest because of the Holy Spirit in our hearts and knowing we are forgiven of our sins through Christ, thus giving us comfort and contentment only Jehovah can afford.

The results of proper giving are many. The poor in the church are well cared for, the high cost of tuition is brought lower through ample donations, Christian schools and churches can be built. The rich man in the church doesn't live lavishly causing the poor to stumble and the poor man doesn't covet the wealth of the rich because he knows that wealth is being used for the causes of the kingdom.

II Corinthians 9:7b "for God loveth the cheerful giver."

Truth vs. Error

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

VI. Earnestly Contend For The Faith

Mystery

In the study of the Bible we come face to face with mystery. But we must warn against an unbiblical conception of "mystery" in which some defenders of the faith think of it in terms of "secret things," paradoxes or "seeming contradictions." We quote from **the Standard Bearer.** ". . . there are two wrong conceptions of the biblical idea of **mystery** which are prevalent in the church today. First, . . . the scriptural idea of mystery is something which is hidden, something which is concealed from us. It is especially those who are addicted to this view who are always ready to admonish those who would seek to penetrate into the mysteries of God, and of His Word, with the words of Moses . . . Duet. 29:29 . . .

The second wrong conception is that the scriptural idea of mystery refers to that which is contrary to human reason and logic and emphasizes that childlike faith in scripture demands that we accept propositions that are directly contradictory to each other and in conflict with our logical mind. Not to do this (they say, rch) is to deny the biblical idea of mystery. They accuse those who seek to harmonize the seeming contradictions of scripture of being rationalists (and as those) who refuse to bow before the mysteries of th Word of God. Over against them w maintain that the scriptural idea o. mystery always far transcends the limits of the finite mind and our boldest comprehension, but firmly deny that it is ever in conflict with the logic of the human mind . . . Faith in scripture never demands that **yea** is **nay**, that black is also white, that in respect to the same object and the same thing, God wills and . . . wills not.

". . . Christianity has no secret doctrines which must be kept cautiously concealed, as some" view for example "the doctrine of predestination. . . Just the opposite is true, for the scripture idea of **mystery** is always, without exception, identified with **revelation.** The mysteries

of Christianity are its revealed doctrine. They refer not to the hidden but to the revealed things of God. Indeed, they **were** hidden in the eternal decrees of God, but now they are revealed . . .

". . . But why then does scripture speak of that which is **revealed** . . . as a **mystery**? The answer is self-evident, viz., **just because** that which is revealed is not the product of intellectual research or human reasoning, but of **divine revelation** . . .

"And the reason this divine mystery is hid from the wise and prudent (Mt. 11:25) . . . is not due to the fact that this revelation of the mysteries is veiled in such enigmatical and esoteric language that they cannot understand it . . . but it is due to the fact that their carnal minds are blinded . . . II Cor. 4:3, 4 . . . I Cor. 2:14. On the other hand, the ability to . . . understand the mysteries of God is a gift of grace . . . (Mk 4:11)."—**The Biblical Idea of Mystery**, TSB, XIX, 226.

Logic

Logic, according to Funk and Wagnalls New Standard Dictionary (1913), is "the science and doctrine of correct thinking; the principles governing the reasoning faculties in the pursuit and exposition of truth." Both believers and unbelievers alike deal with **formal logic**. Christians and non-Christians work with the same rules and principles governing correct reasoning. Just as with regard to arithmetic and the multiplication table, Christians and non-Christians have to deal with the same science of numbers and the same art of computation, or, in other words, with the same facts and figures, and facts are facts and figures are figures. True, but there is a Christian and a non-Christian view (interpretation) and use (application) of these sciences (arithmetic and logic). That being so, would we regard the teaching of arithmetic just as well either, with or without any reference to the God of numbers? Would we accept it that 2 + 2 = 4 whether or not God exists? or that the rules of logic are true whether or not there is a God of truth? Would we as Christians agree with Hegel that logic is "an exposition of the self-development of rational being"? Is that true of the intellectual development of men and of angels? We must rather maintain that logic, to be valid, must be in harmony with the biblical Creator-creature distinction. We must not view logic and its rules as though endowed inherently with the divine attributes of independence or autonomy.

Logic is not on a par with God, not superior to Him, nor is it in itself God. It is **in** God, in His omniscient mind and eternal counsel, where it has its origin and from where it is reflected in man's mind. It is therefore impossible for man to discover or formulate rules of logic so superior to God that even He must conform. There is no sphere of truth above (the God of) Truth. Rather, logic, being the creature that it is, finite, must yield in submission of the infinite mind of God, the God of all knowledge. "Logic alone" can never be determinative of truth and error. The Spirit of knowledge has already done that. Therefore, to deduce a truth by logic, for the Christian, does not mean to do so "from (or by) logic alone." Logic is but a tool to be used to aid us in apprehension, judgment, reasoning and scientifically systematizing. Therefore, for the Christian, logic must be made to rest within the framework of the divine revelation found in holy scripture. The rules of formal logic as they come to us from a non-Christian logician are deistic or atheistic; and therefore to use them we must take them out of their pagan context and place then within a Reformed context suffused with Christian principles and presuppositions. The reason and necessity for this is that within what we call the glimmerings of natural light which remain in man since the fall there is also included Formal Logic whereby the natural man retains some natural know-

ledge of God, of natural things, of the difference between good and evil, and by which he discovers some regard for virtue and good order in society . . . But this light of nature, including that of formal logic, is not sufficient to bring the natural man to a saving knowledge of God, nor to true conversion. For he is incapable of using aright formal logic, arithmetic or any other of the things natural and civil. For what he does in his use of these sciences is to render them wholly polluted, holding them down in the unrighteousnesses of atheism, deism, dualism (etc.), and doing so he becomes inexcusable before God. (Canons of Dort, III-IV, 4). Therefore, the Christian can never hold a logic divorced from divine revelation. Nor is there knowledge based on "logic alone." It is not possible to prove the existence of God without God. God cannot be proved to exist by a method that puts Him out of existence. That would be like attempting to prove the existence of a painting whether the artist exists or not, or whether the wall it hangs on exists or not. A. W. Pink is to the point here when he says, "The so-called argument from design by well-meaning 'apologists' has, we believe, done much more harm than good, for it has attempted to bring down the great God to the level of finite comprehension, and thereby has lost sight of His solitary excellence." (A.W.P., **The Attributes of God**, "The Solitariness of God."). From what we have said, then, the authority of logic is not our starting-point; the authority of God alone is! And while it is a deduction of formal logic to maintain that "man is the measure of all things," we can as Christians by no means go along with that proposition, for the reasons already shown. Nor can we bring ourselves to the strange position that we must be prepared to believe paradoxes or contradictions. Such a contention is not only illogical but anti-logical. As to that impossible contention, Rev. H. Hoeksema said, "I deny this. For . . . the Bible is the revelation of God to us, adapted to our understanding. God, who created our logical mind, also adapted His own revelation to that mind. Hence there surely cannot be contradiction in the Word of God (nor in the truth deduced from the Word of God, rch). There are no contradictions in God. How could there be contradictions in His revelation to us?" (**The Standard Bearer**, XIX, Feb. 15, 1943).

Rev. H. Hoeksema, in the **Reformed Dogmatics**, (pp. 43, 44, 47) pointedly remarks, "From all that has been said on the knowability and incomprehensibility of God, it must have become quite evident (1) that it is absurd to speak of proofs for the existence of God, and (2) that there is no need of them. No one is able to demonstrate with mathematical certainty that God exists; not can reason (logic, rch) reach out to Him by means of a syllogism . . . Nor is there need of proof to convince man that God is. For He reveals himself . . ." These arguments for the existence of God begin with the creature and try to reason on up to the Creator. So that, strictly, they are not evidences of revelation, but of man's attempt to prove God's existence without revelation, by logic alone. Rev. Hoeksema also discusses the cosmological argument for the existence of God, which briefly is: 1. All things have a cause. 2. Then the universe, too, must have a cause. 3. And the ultimate cause of the universe is God. On this Rev. Hoeksema remarks, "One could turn the entire argument in favor of Atheism, as follows: 1. All things have a cause. . . 2. If there be a God, He must be uncaused. 3. There is no God! . . . But faith does not reach out for God in the way of a logical argument (apart from revelation, rch), but hears and believes His speech . . . by the Word of God! . . . these so-called 'proofs' . . . as strictly logical proofs that must have convincing reason . . . must be said to lack all power (to do this, rch). The fool will continue to say . . . there is no God . . .

Only faith, humbly listening to God's own Word will be able to confess: **Credo in Deum!**" The trouble with this cosmological argument for the existence of God is that it is based on so called neutral, non-theistic grounds, which, step by step, from the natural and creatural, would end in theism. But since this argument points to a god, not the God of scripture, it points to an idol. Proof in Christian theism consists in showing that God's existence is itself the first postulate of reason, and the ultimate basis on which all other knowledge rests.

*

Suggestions for Further Study

Read the editorials in **the Standard Bearer**, Vols. 19 and 20, against "Common Grace."

BUILDING THE LORD'S HOUSE

by Duane Hulsken

"Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it:" Psalm 127:1a

For more than two years now, the Redlands' congregation has been building a place of worship that we can call our own. This building differs from other churches, in that the majority of the work has been donated by the men of the church. Ordinary men, many with limited construction experience, building a place wherein to worship the Lord. We have donated the majority of our time away from our regular jobs to build a sanctuary that will be enjoyed for many years to come.

Faced with the high construction costs of California and armed with the knowledge that we could build a school for our children in less than 30 working days (the building actually took more than six months to complete, but most of the work was done on Saturdays), we felt that we could also build our own church.

A committee was formed, plans were drawn up, these plans approved by the congregation, and then sent on to the city for their approval. One vital ingredient was missing, however, it was determined that we would need to retain a contractor to advise us on all phases of the building, and ideally, one who would allow us to use his tools. In the Lord's own magnificent way, He provided us with just such a man and at a very reasonable cost. As it turned out, our contractor agreed to be a full-time employee of the church, devoting much of his time to the task at hand.

Turning this group into builders took much time and patience; it is a safe estimate that everyone has learned something new about construction. From the digging of the footings to the shingling of the roof, our contractor demanded that we do the very best job that we were capable of performing. This constant pressure for "perfection" caused many tense moments and bruised egos.

From the outset, it was assumed that the building should be completed in one year from the start-up day, twice the time that was needed to build our school. But in a building this size and complexity, the completion date was pushed back from the 50th anniversary of the Redlands congregation—all the way back to late summer 1983. This not meeting up to original expectations was a disappointment to those who looked forward to the dedication of the church before their wedding or their children's baptism.

As the building became more and more complex, more and more problems would rise. For as many people that were involved and the number of different opinions expressed, it is a wonder by human standards that anything was ever accomplished. I am certain that except for the common love of Christ in the members of the church, things could have been much worse for a longer period of time. The knowledge of the need for unity in the body of Christ's church is the necessary ingredient for putting many of these inflated differences back into their proper perspective.

But the building of this church was not without its very positive experiences. The good times far outweigh the bad times. When the huge crane came out to lift the A-frames into place—everyone who could, took the day off work to participate in this milestone. Some memories: the six weeks we poured concrete every morning before going to work; all the gallons of coffee and cold drinks that the women brought and we consumed during the twice a Saturday coffee breaks; and all the joking and kidding around we did in order to make some of the more tedious and boring jobs pass more quickly. Generally, we got to know each other better - we became a more cohesive "family-like" unit. The list of good times goes on and on. And without too much effort we can recall how rewarding an experience this building has been, adding much to the feeling of unity in our congregation.

We knew we wanted to build the best church we possibly could, but oftentimes human nature would get in the way of our goals. It was only by Christ's love of His church and our knowledge that we would one day complete the building that allowed us to accomplish our goals. Our church has been toured by quite a number of private contractors in the area, either out of curiosity of those looking to subcontract various activities, these outsiders were suprised by the ingenuity of the scaffolding and the high quality work that was being done by amateurs.

The building of this church could have caused great splintering in the congregation, quite often we were the "weary builders," but the Lord did build the house, that we will one day dedicate to the worship of Christ. By remembering the good times of the building and forgetting the bad times, our building project has been a positive growing experience. Each one of the members growing more spiritually unified to the other members of the church; growing in their knowledge of themselves, their fellow members and their bond with the Lord.

It has now been over two years in building, and, the Lord willing, will be dedicated by the time of this publication, still the dedication will be quite an evening for all those involved in the building of this House of God.

• • •
• • • • •
• • • • • • •

The Sorrows of Conception

by Mrs. H. Brands

In the last Ladies' Society held in Edgerton this past season, our pastor asked us the question: "Why does God give us the struggle with sin in this life? He could, when He regenerates and converts us, make us so perfect that we would never again sin even in this life. . .and we could then be such a much greater witness to His grace to the others around us, we would think. So why does God **not** regenerate us perfectly right away and why **does** He make us fight a lifelong battle which we hate, against sin?"

In just the same way, we ask this question: "**Why** does God give to us, His children, the sorrows of conception? Once we are God's children, wouldn't we be a better testimony to His grace and power if we could face child-bearing only with light-hearted pleasure, never having any pain to complain of, never struggling with fatigue, never sorrowing because of sin in the lives of our children? Why does God still send us, His children by grace, these sorrows? Why doesn't He only give us joy in conception?"

Why do we need the sorrows of conception? Apart from them we could never learn the depths of joy which are to be found in God alone. Through our sorrows we learn to appreciate our children as **gifts** alone—nothing of ourselves, nothing for ourselves, purely gifts of God for God.

Most things are clear if we keep returning to our basic startingpoint: our God of salvation. God is our joy. God alone is our real joy. Apart from Him all other "joys" are illusory, for the moment only, not real joys at all.

Flip open your concordance and fingerwalk through the columns on "joy". There are roughly 200 places in Scripture where some reference to the word joy is found. Now, what are the sources of joy found in Scripture? A study of the list makes clear that joy is always essentially in God Himself and in His works. The majority of the references to joy are to the Church of God, Mount Zion, the City of the Great King, Jerusalem. And in many of the references, godly joy is contrasted to sorrow; joy is most abundant in contrast to great sorrows. The more God's people experience deprivation of God in genuine sorrow, the greater by contrast is their joy in experiencing His favor and blessedness.

There is joy, real joy, in the conception of a covenant child. But the joy is not merely in the birth of a precious and tiny and "innocent" baby. No, the joy is in another work of God, His giving of life to children through whom He calls His Church. If this basic joy is not the heart of our joy, then our joy is illusory and will vanish as soon as our child begins to give us any kind of troubles. If we do not see God at work—often contrary to the ways we expect—then we have no true, Scriptural joy.

If we really understand this doctrine of true, Scriptural joy which is found in God alone, then more truths follow. Not only is our joy in God rather than in conception as such, but we are **grateful** for the very sorrows that accompany conception. We thank God—and that from our hearts, sincerely—that He loves us enough to send us sorrows. . .because these very sorrows are a means of His to

glorify Himself rather than us.

This concluding article doesn't have space to get into this more deeply. But this must be the emphasis of the whole seven articles to follow on the joy of conception. **Apart from our sorrows, we could not learn godly joy.** Apart from our sorrows, our delight and attention would focus on ourselves rather than on God.

So many easily twisted truths need to be clear in this connection. It needs to be clear that the Fall into sin and its resultant suffering are necessary as means to a better joy in God than was possible before the Fall. It should be clear that sin itself is the focusing on ourselves rather than on God. It should be clear that when we focus on ourselves, we love and delight in our children **for our own selves** rather than for God, and that this is false joy. But God has ordained our **highest** joy—a joy wholly in Him and His wonder of grace, so that in no way can we look to ourselves but only to Him for all our needs.

What a host of doctrines become involved! Even in the series to follow, we cannot get into all the doctrines involved. Nor is this writer qualified for that. Nor need we do that. But we must emphasize one point: we need our sorrows in order to learn to joy in God's works alone. May He as our faithful Redeemer lead us more and more in the path of trusting Him fully whatever He sends, knowing that in Him alone is joy.

1983 Beacon Lights Index
Volume XLII

Article	Author	No.	Page
-A-			
Admonishing One Another For God's Sake (CRIT)	BK	5	19
Are You Listening? (CRIT)	BW	6	7
Attitude (CRIT)	BW	4	1
-B-			
Bible Study (CEC)	DW	6	9
Blessed Hunger and Thirst, A	RJAH	10	9
Blessedness of Heavenly Citizenship, The	RJAH	5	4
Blessings of God's Love, The	CB	7	5
Building the Lord's House	DHu	10	19
-C-			
Carrying the Burden (EDIT)	DH	10	1
Choosing Friends (Outline for YP Conv.)	RWB	6	22
Christian and the Omnipresent God, The (TVE)	RRCH	2	7
Christian Buying the Truth, The (TVE)	RRCH	1	9
Convention Impressions	DS	8	4
Convention Impressions	CT	8	20
Convention Reflections	VK	8	13
CONVENTION SPEECHES:			
I. Saved to Speak	RDE	8	5
II. Saved in the Way of Suffering	RMK	8	14
III. Saved to Serve	RCHa	8	21
Cultural Mandate, The	RGVB	2	18
-D-			
Death Penalty, The (CEC)	JKJ	5	12
Desparately Poor, Yet Extremely Rich	RJAH	6	10

Article	Author	No.	Page
DISCUSSION GROUP REFLECTIONS (1983 Convention)			
I. Choosing Friends	DWe	8	12
II. Stewardwhip		8	18
III. Youth Serving God in the Family	TT	8	25
Drama - Should We Use It?	JJ	1	13
-E-			
I. Earnestly Contend For the Faith (TVE)	RRCH	3	15
II. Earnestly Contend For the Faith: The Rock (TVE)	RRCH	4	13
III. Earnestly Contend For the Faith (TVE)	RRCH	5	15
IV. Earnestly Contend For the Faith (TVE)	RRCH	6	15
V. Earnestly Contend For the Faith (TVE)	RRCH	9	15
VI. Earnestly Contend For the Faith: Mystery (TVE)	RRCH	10	16
Emily (EDIT)	DH	2	2
Eternal Truth	RRCH	3	19
-F-			
Fight the Good Fight of Faith (CRIT)	BK	3	14
Financial Responsibility Within the Covenant (CRIT)	BK	10	14
Fingery Pistle to my Grandchildren, A (EDIT)	JMF	1	1
-G-			
Gems From the Gold Mine of Scriptures (FTPS)	RCH	7	12
Gems From the Gold Mine of Scripture (FTPS)	RCH	10	4
Generations of Jesus' Human Nature, The	RJSm	10	6
God's Unique Gift to Us (FTPS)	RCH	6	4
Golden Nuggets From the Gold Mine of Scripture (FTPS)	RCH	1	5
-H-			
Hope For A Fool (EDIT)	EL	6	2
Human Engineering: A Christian Concern (CEC)	JK	9	18
-I-			
I Believe. . .	EH	9	5
Index of the 1983 B.L.	PK	10	22
Israel Remembered in Covenant Mercy (FTPS)	RGL	3	11
-L-			
Letter about Letters, A (EDIT)	JMF	9	1
Looking Away From Self: True Thanksgiving	PD	9	10
Love the Lord Thy God	JK	1	3
-M-			
Make Up Your Mind (CRIT)	BW	2	4
Making Confession of Faith (CRIT)	BK	7	3
Man of Understanding, The (PFYP)	EL	3	2
Meek, But By No Means Weak	RJAH	9	12
Minutes of the 43rd Annual PRYP Convention	DVB	8	1
Miracle Tool, The (EDIT)	DH	5	1
Miracles of Jesus, The	RZ	5	2
Music in the Church (1)	RDE	2	11
Music in the Church (2)	RDE	3	5
Music in the Church (3)	RDE	4	10
-N-			
New King James Version, The	RRCH	4	18
New Year's Musings and Aspirations	RGL	2	15

Article	Author	No.	Page
News From, For and About Our Churches	KV	1	15
News From, For and About Our Churches	KV	2	20
News From, For and About Our Churches	KV	3	20
News From, For and About Our Churches	KV	4	16
News From, For and About Our Churches	PF	7	20
-O-			
Open Letter Concerning Ref. Higher Education, An	RDE. JL & LL	9	7
Our Communal Responsibility (FTPS)	RCH	4	3
-P-			
Put off Until Tomorrow (CRIT)	BW	9	3
-S-			
Sadness Turned to Gladness	RJAH	7	7
Sorrows of Conception: The Blessings Result From Them	CB	4	6
Sorrows of Conception: Blessings of Patience	CB	5	7
Sorrows of Conception: Necessary for the Joys Conception	CB	9	9
Sorrows of Conception:	CB	10	21
Spiritual Sensitivity	HK	3	8
Stewardship (1983 Convention Outline)		6	20
Study Outlines on I Samuel 1&2	RRH	6	18
Study Outlines on I Samuel 3&4	RRH	7	15
Study Outlines on I Samuel 5&6	RRH	9	21
Study Outlines on I Samuel 7&8	RRH	10	12
-T-			
Tears	SK	7	10
Thanksgiving Day	RRC	9	23
Tribute to Someone Else, A	AU	3	21
True Repentance of Sin	RJS	7	17
-W-			
Walking Worthily of the Gospel of Christ (FTPS)	RGL	5	9
Whys Letter to My Grandchildren, A (EDIT)	JMF	7	1
Winning Souls	RRVO	6	13
What's Happening?	PF	8	26
What's Happening?	PF	9	25
What's Happening?	PF	10	25
-Y-			
Youth Serving God in the Family (1983 Convention Disc. Outline	RRGM	6	24

Pam Kuiper, Federation Board Librarian

AUTHOR KEY

RWB	Rev. W. Bekkering	RJAH	Rev. J. A. Heys
CB	Carol Brands	EH	Everett Hoekstra
RRC	Rev. R. Cammenga	DHu	Duane Hulsken
PD	Phil Dykstra	JJ	Jim Jonker
RDE	Rev. D. Engelsma	JK	John Kalsbeek
JMF	John M. Faber	BK	Bernie Kamps
PF	Paula Faber	RMK	Rev. M. Kamps
RCHa	Rev. C. Haak	VK	Vonda Klamer
RCH	Rev. C. Hanko	JKo	Jim Koole
RRH	Rev. R. Hanko	SK	Sherry Koole
DH	David Harbach	HK	Hariow Kuiper
RRCH	Rev. R. C. Harbach	PK	Pam Kuiper

JL	James Lanting
EL	Ed Lotterman
RGL	Rev. G. Lubbers
LL	Lamm Lubbers
RRGM	Rev. R. G. Moore
DS	Dan Schipper
RJS	Rev. J. Slopsema
RJSm	Rev. J. Smith
CT	Chuck Terpstra
TT	Todd Terpstra
AU	Author Unknown
DVB	Denise Van Baren
RGVB	Rev. G. Van Baren
RRVO	Rev. R. Van Overloop
KV	Karen Vink
DW	Dean Wassink
DWe	Dirk Westra
BW	Ben Wigger
RZ	Rhoda Zylstra

ABBREVIATION KEY

CRIT	Critique
EDIT	Editorial
TVE	Truth vs. Error
CEC	Current Events and Comments
FTPS	From The Pastor's Study
PFYP	Proverbs For Young Pilgrims

What's Happening

NEWCOMERS

God Blessed:

Mr. and Mrs. H. Spencer, of First Church in Grand Rapids, with a daughter, Lisa Beth.

Mr. and Mrs. J. den Hartog, of Lynden, Wash. Church, with a daughter, Molly Sue.

Mr. and Mrs. T. Vander Meulen, of Lynden Church, with a daughter, Jacki Lynn.

Mr. and Mrs. L. VanDen Top, of Lynden Church, with a son, Daniel Frank.

Mr. and Mrs. K. Hoksbergen, of Hull Church, with a daughter, Bethany Ruth.

Mr. and Mrs. G. Westra, of Hull Church, with a son, Steven Dale.

Mr. and Mrs. R. Lenting, of South Holland Church, with a daughter, Denise Renae.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Straayer, of Loveland Church, with a daughter, Brenda Jo.

Mr. and Mrs. P. Zandstra, of South Holland Church, with a daughter.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Cnossen, of Hudsonville Church, with a son, Derek Robert.

Mr. and Mrs. P. Dykstra, of Hudsonville Church, with a son, Jordan Lee.

Mr. and Mrs. C. Kalsbeek, of Hope Church, with a son, Gregory David.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Van Baren, of Hope Church, with a son, Jordan Gise.

Mr. and Mrs. H. DeVries, of Hope Church, with a daughter, Amy Lynn.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Dykstra, of Hope Church, with a daughter, Michelle Lynn.

Mr. and Mrs. B. Clason, of Southeast Church, with a son, William Henry.

Mr. and Mrs. M. Engelsma, of Southeast Church, with a son, Luke Kenneth.

Mr. and Mrs. T. Faber, of Southeast Church, with a son, Travis Lee.

MARRIAGES

Wayne Vander Maten and Janice Van Maanen were joined in marriage October 28.

Arlin and Sheri Driesen were joined in marriage.

Craig Glashower and Sandra Miedema were joined in marriage.

Craig Tinklenberg and Jackie Van Overloop were joined in marriage on September 30.

CONFESSION OF FAITH

Sue Campbell, Donna Dotson, and Dan Moore made public confession of faith on November 20, in Loveland Church.

1720 BURTON ST. S.E.
GRAND RAPIDS MI 49506

Jan Dempsey, Deb Knoper, Faith Ophoff, and Jane Pastoor made public confession of faith on November 6 in First Church of Grand Rapids.

Dennis Boer, Brenda Haak, and Mark Van Baren made public confession of faith on October 30 in South Holland Church.

Mr. and Mrs. Loren VanDen Top, and Mrs. Ernie Tjoelker made public confession of faith on September 25 in Lynden Church.

Miss Cathy Smit made public confession of faith on October 16 in Lynden Church.

Glenn Kooima made public confession of faith in Hull Church.

MEMBERSHIP TRANSFERS

Hudsonville Church received the papers of Mr. Craig Tinklenberg from our Faith Church.

Loveland Church received the papers of Joel Van Ginkel from our Doon Church.

Hudsonville Church received the papers of Carlyle Miersma from our Pella Church.

The following papers have been sent to our new Byron Center Church:

Bruce and Rosanne Van Solkema from Southeast Church.

Hilbert Kuiper, Jr., Jay Holstege, Terry Kamminga, Bernard Lubbers, Bruce Lubbers, Sid Miedema, and Sid Miedema Jr., Duane Mingerink, John Zandstra, Len Holstege Jr., K. Elzinga and families from Hudsonville Church.

Mr. and Mrs. D. Gunnink and family from First Church in Grand Rapids.

Mr. and Mrs. E. Alofs and family from our Southwest Church.

ACTIVITIES

On October 21 and 22 was the fall retreat at Camp Pendalleuan.

On November 12 was the Faith Young People's Society pancake breakfast.

On November 18 there was a Young People's Fall Banquet.

On November 20 the Federation Board sponsored a Singspiration at Faith Church.