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In this issue...

FEATURE — page 1
“The Lord Has Risen Indeed!”
Jay Kortering

EDITORIAL — page 4
“Easter — A Great Christian Holiday”
Fred Hanko

CHRISTIAN LIVING — page 8
“Confession of Faith”
Mr. Herman Hanko

TRUTH vs. ERROR — page 5
“Giving”
Rev. G. Vanden Berg

CURRENT COMMENTS — page 11
“Our Bomb Shelter”
John H. Haan

“An Examination of Smoking”
Herm Woudenberg

“The Joys of Using Tobacco”
Jim Veldman

“Common Grace”
Gordon A. King
The Lord Has Risen Indeed!

O blessed truth! Glorious victory!

Once again, the joy of our Lord's resurrection permeates our thoughts in this blessed Easter season. True, there was Gethsemane and the anguishing suffering of our Lord. There was the cross and the torrents of hell upon the Son of God. Yea, Christ was even buried. A dark picture you say? O to be sure the picture of Calvary was dark. All seemed to be of no avail. But wait. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher. And they entered in; and found not the body of the Lord Jesus." Luke 24:1-3. The Lord is risen indeed!

The Lord is risen. He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. All power, might, and honor be ascribed unto him. He is the exalted one who owns all things. As our resurrected Lord he has redeemed and delivered us from the power of the devil, and unites us unto himself. We are conquerors! Yea, over death itself.

But how? The Lord is risen. Death hath no power over him for he is the Lord. Negatively, Christ's resurrection does not consist merely of a return to life, but it positively consists of a raised body. It was a very real resurrection. Christ arose with the same body, but a glorified, heavenly, and spiritual one. He no longer could dwell among his brethren as before. His body was prepared for its heavenly abode on the right hand of God the Father. What victorious assurance we have, for,

The Lord is risen indeed. There is no doubt about it. We need not, apologetically, defend this truth. Scripture is abundantly full of proof. Probably more than any other event of Christ's life is the resurrection confined in Scripture. There is the testimony of the women who were going to anoint the body of our Lord. There also is the visitation of Christ to Mary; to the travelers on the road to Emmaus; to the disciples gathered in the upper room; to the assembly of five thousand; and to many others. Thus, hundreds of witnesses testify to us that Christ is risen indeed.

The many fallacious theories of our
day, among which are the swoon theory, that Christ never died, but was unconscious, and upon coming into the cool tomb regained consciousness; the hallucination theory, that the disciples and all that claim they saw Christ never really and actually did see him, but only imagined his presence; and the fraud theory, that the disciples and others lied and deceived a credulous people by telling them that Christ arose; are nothing other than the vain philosophies of men, especially of our present day modernists whose cherished slogan is, “Christ the fairest flower of humanity.” The modernists need no resurrection, for Christ to them is only a model being.

Christ’s suffering and death would have been defective had not Christ risen from the dead. The outward signs of a mocked Christ, a dying Savior, and a dead body, reveal to us nothing but defeat and subjugation. Though it be by his death that we are reconciled to God, satisfaction given to God’s justice, the curse of sin removed, and the penalty of sin paid for, nevertheless it is by Christ’s resurrection that we are begotten unto a living hope. Christ’s death abolished the curse of sin for all his elect, yet by his resurrection, are we made righteous before God.

The resurrection of Christ destroyed the power of the grave, so that it no longer enshackles us. Death has been overcome and Christ is victorious. Christ went through the grave. The grave lost all its power to Christ who conquered it. Not only did he accomplish this personally for himself, but also for all his elect of the ages.

With all ecstasy did Paul extol, “So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin and the strength of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” I Cor. 15:54-57. Through Christ’s resurrection we are freed from death, and have a new life, being partakers with the righteousness that he has purchased for us. Regeneration, conversion, justification, and sanctification are incomplete without the resurrection. When Christ was raised from the dead, his work of redemption had been completed; sin had been paid for; and the just demands of God for retribution had been fulfilled. In I Peter 1:21 we read, “Who by him believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory that your faith and hope might be in God.” Salvation is come through the power of Christ’s resurrection.

But there is more. “Like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father even so we also should walk in newness of life.” Being buried with him in his death, so also are we raised unto the newness of life. Being dead, yet we live. That’s the subjective fruit of the resurrection in our hearts; living unto the glory of our Maker and giving all praise unto Him who worketh all and in all.

Christ’s resurrection is also a sure pledge of our blessed resurrection. What a comfort for us dear reader. Though we be pilgrims and strangers in a foreign land, though the world hates and persecutes us, and tries with all its fervency to destroy us, God shall not forsake us. He shall ever uphold us by his counsel, preserve us, and use us for his divine purpose to the end that we shall be raised with him, to be with him for ever. “My Savior neath thy sheltering wings my soul delights to dwell, still closer to thy side I press for near thee all is wel’
My soul shall conquer every foe upheld by thy hand, thy people shall rejoice in God, thy saints in glory stand." What need we fear? The Lord is with us and salvation is sure. O blessed assurance, The Lord is risen indeed!

Jay Kortering

THE PULPIT — A THRONE OF POWER

We are suffering today from a weak pulpit and pointless preaching. We have clever speakers but few prophets; we have too few fearless speakers for God and the truth. We have the best-paid and best-educated ministry, but too much of it is popular, flabby and insipid and stirs neither heaven nor hell.

We sadly lack men to whom the pulpit is a throne of power; we have too many flying kites of superficial thinking instead of men of fire whose utterances burn and whose sermons scorch the wicked. We have too many who coddle the saints and fail to collar the sinner. The American pulpit needs a great awakening!

—George W. Ridout

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Easter — A Great Christian Holiday

Of all the religious holidays that we celebrate throughout the year, Easter stands out as the most impressive. It is with good reason that we spend the Lenten season in preparation for it and continue to recall it in the Sundays following.

Easter remains untarnished by the tinsel and frivolous gaiety that threatens to ruin the true celebration of Christmas. It does not slip by almost unobserved as do Prayer Day, Good Friday, and several of the other Christian holidays. It is characterized by a deeper, more spiritual joy than is found in the “Christmas Spirit.”

There are dangers in the observance of Easter by the people of God just as there are dangers in the other religious holidays. The dangers in the celebration of Easter, however, are of a different kind. We do not worry about lack of attendance of divine worship on Easter; nor is there as much danger of losing sight of the purpose of Easter in the exchange of gifts. The danger of losing Easter is, of course, in the preoccupation with fashions so that Easter becomes little more than a display of fineries. But this is not the real joy of Easter, nor does it have a place in the celebration of Easter by the Church of God.

The hope of the resurrection is a fundamental part of our faith. So Easter is the celebration of the hope of every true Christian. The strength of the whole of our faith is dependent upon the strength of each of its parts. If we lose the meaning of Easter we have lost everything. As the Apostle Paul says in the beautiful fifteenth chapter of Corinthians “If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.”

Easter is a source of deep joy for every Christian who looks beyond the trials of this earth to the glory of the perfect creation. The Christian is tired of the constant war with the sin of the world and of his own sinful flesh and he lives in the assurance that his fight will never end in defeat for he does not live hopelessly but looks forward eagerly to the time when God will make him incorruptible.

The fear of death is strong in everyone, believer as well as unbeliever. The unbeliever fears death for a very good reason: for him there remains nothing after this life but eternal punishment. The Christian can look forward to death with hope for death is the result of sin and with his freedom from sin he is also free from the sting of death. Only the Christian can say with Paul, “O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” In the resurrection of Christ we see the wonder of our own resurrection.

We will never be able to understand the resurrection on this earth. We can only stand in awe when we read the words “He is not here, but is risen.” And the Apostle Paul says “Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep . . .” Like all of the mystery of salvation, we believe it firmly by faith. Although we will never be able to understand how.

(Continued on page 7)
Giving

"For if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not . . . But by an equality, that now at this time your abundance may be a supply for their want, that their abundance also may be a supply for your want, that there may be equality." II Cor. 8:12, 14

"Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver." II Cor. 9:7

"It is more blessed to give than to receive." Acts 20:35.

Young people, how much do you give? to your church! Parents! Christian Schools! Societies! Beacon Lights! Standard Bearer! Radio! Missions! Etc!?

You would undoubtedly be somewhat shocked and, perhaps, even a bit offended if I would tell you that in spite of what you may say in reply to the above questions, you really give nothing! You might vehemently disagree and point me to the undeniable facts that church budgets are higher than ever before; subscription rates to the above-named periodicals have doubled; society dues and assessments have increased; Christian schools are operating at higher costs; and to all of these things you contribute your proportionate share. How unkind it must seem to have such an insulting accusation hurled against you when you are obviously doing so much!

Yet, I hold to my claim! You really contribute nothing.

And, if this disturbs you and makes your blood temperature rise a few points, you had better now brace yourself and be prepared for a still greater shock, for next I am going to tell you that we not only fail to be real givers but actually we are thieves. We steal from church, home, society, school, etc., instead of give.

Now, faithful member, do not quickly take offence at this but permit me to finish my essay. I am writing under "Truth vs Error," and when I consider the subject of Christian giving I find that, if not in theory, then at least in practice, error abounds much more than truth. The reason for this I find to be two-fold: (1) The sinfulness of our selfish old nature, and (2) Our failure to understand and practice the real and fundamental principles of giving.

Let us begin by discussing the latter of these in order that I may prove the allegations which I have made. To give, means that we freely impart that which is our own unto another. But, whereas we have nothing that we can rightly call our own, it is impossible for us to do this. Our life is not our own and much less the things which we call our possessions. None of us would deny that GOD is the sole Proprietor of all things. He has created them. They are all His and His alone. All things belong unto Him and we have nothing that we have not received. Because of this it is forever impossible for us to impart our own possessions unto another. We have none to give. In all of our giving we can give, not our own goods, but those of God. We can give nothing!

This fact brings us to another funda-
mental principle of giving which is that with respect to all things, we are never more than stewards of God. The Lord has committed much to our keeping, and unto Him we shall give a full account of our stewardship. To Him we are responsible for our use of His goods. When we analyze this concept a bit, we soon come to the conclusion that we are not only poor managers who mishandle much of our Lord’s goods, but from those goods we are constantly stealing. We are thieves!

Consider that the Lord requires of us that we serve Him perfectly with all things. Every moment of every day of every year we owe to Him. Every gift and talent and power He has endowed us with must be put into His service. Every penny of every dollar in our accounts belongs to Him. All that we possess, or call our own, we are to have, only that with it, we may be better equipped to serve Him. And whatever cannot be utilized in His service, we should not have in our custody. “It is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.” (1 Cor. 4:2) That is what GOD demands!

What then do we do? As young people, some of us, undoubtedly do not concern ourselves about church budgets even though we are gainfully employed and have a good income. Some escape giving attention to this matter because they have not yet made “confession of faith” and so have not “joined the church” (?) and, consequently, are not obligated to pay the budget. For them a dime or a quarter per collection is “giving.” Others, confessed members, sometimes figure that they are not obliged because they are not yet “married” and the “head of a family” and church budgets are only things of parental concern. They are figured in the family and the parents then “pay for them.” But is this our christian stewardship? How can we say that we “give” in this way? Read again the texts above our essay!

Again, there are others, young people especially, (and I have seen it,) who have “dollars” for tobacco, bowling, roller-skating, ball games, pleasures of every sort, and useless accessories to adorn their persons (or automobiles). These same folk regard three dollars a year too exhorbitant a price for “Beacon Lights” and when the collection plate is passed, after an hour of catechetical instruction, they try to find a copper or small coin with which to adorn the plate. And if they so happen not to have any of these, they pass it by empty. Would you dare to call that “giving?” I call it stealing.

Then there are those who never have a contribution to their society. They come when they feel like it and stay away more often. They never participate in the programs and activities and use as an excuse, that they have no talent. Poor souls! God has given them nothing! (?) But the truth of the matter is that they don’t want to use what they have in He Lord’s service. These same individuals can do plenty in other spheres. Just observe them sometimes. The trouble is, they haven’t learned “to give.” Poor stewards, they are using the things of the Lord in the service of self. This too, falls into the category of theft!

And so we might add more. If we have stepped on your toes it was not with the intention of hurting you, but rather in order to wake you up. We do not purpose to offend, but rather to instruct. Neither do we beg for the cause of the Lord for that cause needs no begging; but we only call attention to your christian duty. It is your and my calling to “redeem the time for the days are evil.” Learn then to give of your time, talents, powers and possessions unto Him Wh
has given you all these things. Serve His Cause well! And in doing so it is not so much a matter of how much you give but rather a matter of the spirit and manner in which you give. Be faithful always! Don't give grudgingly. It's just as well that you don't give at all, as to give that way. Follow the Divine example Who gave all in love! Remember that you can never begin to approximate such giving; but by grace you can only emulate it in a small measure. Remember, too, that your church, society, etc., needs you, and more important, still, YOU NEED THEM! Give unto them that which you have and do so cheerfully, for that is blessed.

To do so is indeed grace! It is only the regenerated heart that loves God above all that is able to do so. Only the ones who have been freed from sin by the power of the TRUTH, are able to walk in the TRUTH; and the rest walk in darkness and ERROR. As we sow, so we shall reap. Sow, therefore, bountifully and you may expect an abundant harvest, for "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver," and you, who so give, will reap the reward of His love.

G. Vanden Berg

Today every U.S. military plane that flies over water carries a collapsible rubber boat, fully equipped with rations and including a waterproofed, packaged copy of the Bible. As one Army officer expressed it: "Since the rescue of Capt. Eddie Rickenbacker, we know that spiritual equipment can be as important as food and drink in saving lives."


A mere fragment of time taken each morning for prayer and meditation can sweeten the entire day. A moment taken from the task to utter a brief word of commendation may bless and brighten another's life immeasurably. Such are the little things that are really big when the last chapter in our book of life is written.

EDITORIALS

(Continued from page 4)

the body that was dead is able to live again, we have the assurance on Easter that what is impossible with man is possible with God.

This, then, is the joy of Easter: for the Christian it is a deep spiritual joy that the work of salvation that Christ has merited is surely carried to its fulfillment in the eternal salvation of every one of the elect. It is the certain knowledge that we also shall be raised even as Christ was raised. Easter is the continuation of Christmas and Good Friday. Easter is a day of great spiritual rejoicing; the fulfillment of all the hope and mystery of salvation.

Let's keep Easter, this year and every year. It must never become a day of display. Let us not be like the world, so that Easter is more than a time for everyone to display the newest fashions or to take part in all the mythology that the world likes to attach to Easter. If we take any part in it, we show a definite lack in our spiritual life. Let us stand in awe, on Easter, before the wonder of the resurrection and of our own salvation. Let us stand in awe and amazement with the women before the empty tomb to hear the words "He is not here: for he is risen, as he said."

Fred Hanko
Confession of Faith
(Continued)

b) But in the second place you promise to adhere to the doctrine of your church by rejecting all heresies repugnant to the doctrine that is taught there. That, too, is important. Any heresy which arises in the church or any heresy on the outside which threatens the church, you promise to reject. And that doesn't only mean that you pronounce your "No" overagainst that heresy, and then cease to worry about it; that means that you use all your ability to combat that heresy as long as it remains a threat to the church.

c) And in the third place you promise to lead a new, godly life. You understand again that you confess that this is possible only by the grace of God. And that your confession and resolve to walk a new, godly life is the fruit of His grace within you. This part of the question does not imply that you have not walked a holy life before this, but that now you resolve to do this; but rather that you resolve to walk in the path of the doctrine in which you have confessed to believe, and to which you have professed to adhere. And your walk must be in the full implications of that doctrine with all its instruction in the holy walk of a Christian. In reality when you confess that "you acknowledge the doctrine... taught here in this Christian Church to be the true and complete doctrine of salvation" then you have already confessed a desire to walk in a new, godly life.

But there is yet one more question: "Will you submit to church government, and in case you should become delinquent (which may God graciously forbid) to church discipline?" This question, too, is worthy of some consideration.

1) We may remark in the first place that the purpose of this article is to bring before the consciousness of the confessing youth that the elders and deacons which are the instruments of church government are lawfully called by God and qualified by God to rule over the flock of Christ. Therefore what they perform in the sphere of your church they do as servants of Christ. Therefore it is very really Christ Himself Who rules over the flock through the consistory, and what the consistory does is what Christ does.

2) Also we may notice in this connection that the purpose of church discipline to which this article refers is the salvation of the soul. As Rev. Ophoff remarks in his notes on church polity, in connection with article 71 of the Church Order, in answer to the question, What is the purpose of Church discipline, "The purpose of the church is the salvation of the spirit of the censured one. If the censured one is a reprobate, this purpose, of course, is not achieved."

3) Because these two things are true, a member of Christ's church may never refuse the discipline of the church. This often happens. When a member walks in paths of sin, and the consistory begins the censure of that individual because he refuses to repent and leave his sin, he often asks for his papers and goes to another church. This is a very serious sin. Not only does one break
the vow which he took at the time when he confesses his faith, but he also turns his back on the work of the church whose desire is to save him from his sin. He very plainly says by this remark that he refuses that which Christ does through His church, and that he loves his sin too much to forsake it.

Thus all these things only emphasize the fact that confession of faith is a very important step in the life of the child of God, and should not be taken lightly.

There are several more remarks which we may make about confession of faith as a whole.

1) Although we speak of confession of faith as the time when a person becomes a full member of the church, we must understand what we mean by this. Possibly the term “full member” is not very good one to use, because the term implies that we were part members, but now we become full members. That is hardly the case. An elect child of God is always, even from birth a full member of the church, because the church is itself a manifestation on this earth of the body of Christ. He cannot at one time be partly a member of the body of Christ, and then at a latter date, become a full member. But if we mean by this expression that the individual believing youth who has not confessed his faith has manifested his earnest desire to partake more fully of the blessings of Christ through the sacraments, and enjoy more fully and richly his life in Christ, then the expression can be retained.

2) In the second place it is generally the custom in our churches that before the public profession of faith is made, the ones who desire to make such a confession must first be quizzed by the consistory as to their knowledge of doctrine and their walk of life. I imagine there is no reason why this could not just as well take place in the presence of the congregation. And in times past this was also done. But because the ones who desire to make such a confession are often a bit nervous and tense, it was thought better to have the quiz take place in the presence of the consistory alone. But the quiz itself is very important. For by it the consistory determines if the young person is sufficiently informed of the doctrines of the church to answer the questions put to him in sincerity, and in the full consciousness of what he is doing. And also the consistory must determine whether the walk of the person is of a nature that he can partake of the sacraments without polluting them. After the person has successfully passed his quiz, the name of the person is announced to the congregation to seek the approbation of the congregation. This is done because oftentimes members themselves are more closely acquainted with the individual than the consistory, and may have knowledge that the consistory does not have about the walk of the individual. This is not done in order to make it as difficult as possible for a person to make confession of faith, but in order that the individual himself may be firmly assured of his salvation, and in order that he may not pollute the table of the Lord’s communion.

3) Why must this confession take place in public? The answer is that he must dwell in communion with the congregation, especially when he partakes of the means of grace, and that therefore in the presence of that same congregation he may give testimony of his godly walk. For after he has publicly testified of his faith, he may more fully enjoy fellowship with those in whose presence he dwells.

4) When must a person make confes-
tion of faith? This question is very difficult to answer and varies with the individual. Negatively, it may be said that he must not wait until he has the knowledge of a theologian in respect to the Word of God. And also when he makes confession of faith, he does not thereby declare that he is perfect. Positively, therefore, he may make confession of faith when he is fully acquainted with the fundamental doctrines of the church of which he is a member, and when he comes to a consciousness of the fruit of the grace of God in His life as manifested in a godly walk. With some that may be very early in life; with others that may be later in life. I sometimes think that we do not confess our faith early enough. When they have shown a basic knowledge of the faith of the church, and when they have expressed a firm faith in Christ manifested in a godly walk, there is no reason why they should be prevented from publicly confessing their faith. And the opposite is also true. If a young man or young woman becomes twenty five or thirty years old, and has shown no desire to confess his or her faith, there is something radically wrong in their spiritual life. The consciousness of the work of grace comes very early in the life of a child of God.

Therefore, when a person confesses his or her faith, that allows that one to take a more active part in the fellowship of believers. He has the right to serve in office in the church; he has the right to exercise his privilege of voting for office bearers and for voting for ministers of the Word; he has the right to exercise his privileges as a member of the body of Christ; for he believes that God uses him so that His church on earth may prosper. He has the obligation to make use of the means of grace—the sacraments as a strengthening of his faith.

The time when young people feel the need of confessing their faith in the presence of God and His church is a very happy time in the lives of covenant youth. It is a very serious step; and yet it is a necessary step as the believer grows in grace. It is a step that must be approached with much thought and prayer and preparation; but it is also a step that can be a very spiritually enriching experience, and a very joyful occasion in the way that God has ordained for us in this world.

Herman Hanko

"SPRING-UP" WATER

There is one characteristic of water which is often overlooked, and which gives us one of Christianity's most powerful lessons. To remain fresh, it must be flowing, "springing up into everlasting life." The best way to purify a city's water supply is to keep it in motion under the rays of sunlight. Stagnant water breeds germs and scum.

One of my favorite stories was told by an old Southern preacher who had seen the effect of stagnation in many a mosquito-filled pond. He said that one day, in a testimony meeting, a sour old church member, who was noted for his stand-pat attitude, rose up to tell of his experience. "Forty years ago," he said, "the Lord filled my cup with the water of life. Since then, not a drop has run in and not a drop has run out."

A little boy on the front row said in a stage whisper, "My, I bet there's a heap of wiggle-tails in it!"

I think the boy was right, for an experience that had not been freshened up in forty years is fit only for a breeding place for wiggle-tails!

—The War Cr-
Fourteen years ago on December 7, 1941—a date which will live in infamy—the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by the forces of the Empire of Japan. Japanese planes swept down on Pearl Harbor, our great naval base in Hawaii, while submarines sank many of our battleships, killing almost five thousand men. Soon the whole world was in the Second World War and everyone was experiencing the terror and horrors of war. Mighty battles that will live on in the memories of many were fought, such as "The battle of the bulge, D-Day, Corregidor and Iwo Jima," until finally on September 2, 1945, one Japanese came aboard the USS Missouri and formally surrendered to General Douglas MacArthur "unconditionally."

Two great empires that had been flourishing and heading for greater power than was ever seen before, were totally crushed and disbanded as the defeated remnant of "world conquest."

Today all around us we hear and read news articles on such things as "German rearmament, the fall of another French Premier, the dangerous Formosa situation, and a new series of A-bomb tests." After hearing these things, the question is often asked, "Just what is this all about?" Ten years ago, we became the victors over two nations whose aim was to conquer the world for themselves, and now we turn right around and propose to rearm these nations. After three years of futile fighting in Korea, we finally agreed on a "cease fire" that gained us nothing as far as territory is concerned, and now we become involved in the Formosa situation, a situation just like the one of Korea. In the southern part of our country, our government is holding a series of tests with weapons that are powerful enough to wipe man off the face of this earth.

To the world this life becomes more of a "survival of the fittest" everyday. The more powerful we remain, the longer we will survive. Millions of dollars are spent every year on atomic research, a research that has given our country weapons that cause our aggressors to hesitate and think twice before becoming involved in an all out war with us. The Formosa situation as far as our country is concerned, is good for business. It causes our economy to remain at a high level. The rearming of Germany to the United Nations is simply another step in holding back the ever increasing fear of the Communist, even though it means giving arms to a nation that fifteen years ago tried to destroy us. In all these matters it becomes very evident that the world does not look to God for their protection, but rather, they seek to control their own fate.

As Christians we do not place our trust in the destructive power of the atomic bomb as earthly protection from our enemies, nor do we feel that the rearming of Germany would give us greater security against Communist aggression, but rather we put our trust in God to Whom we can flee for refuge in time of trouble. Dent. 33:27, "The eternal God is thy refuge and underneath are the everlasting arms." To seek refuge in the powers of this world is folly, for there is no peace or refuge apart from the living
God. Many times the troubles and cares of this life overtake us and all would seem as though we are in this world without any protection at all, therefore let us not fear, but let us heed the words of the Psalmist in chapter 27 of the Book of Psalms: “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion in the secret of his tabernacles shall he hide me he shall set me up upon a rock.”

John H. Haan

AN EXAMINATION OF SMOKING

Many articles have been written showing a relationship between smoking and illness. To many people this is a good enough reason to stop smoking. To other people, this appears to have no effect. Since everyone has read the many articles linking smoking and illness and still many people persist in the habit, let us look at some of the reason that have been given for smoking.

Psychologists claim that a person’s character traits are shown by his smoking habits. They attach considerable meaning to all of a person’s habits and the habit of smoking is one of their favorite targets. They claim in the first place that smoking is an element that remains of a person’s childhood. Since the child finds it necessary to suck on some object, so the adult finds satisfaction in sucking on his cigarette without receiving criticism. As the child has a strong urge to play with fire, so adults satisfy this urge by holding the glowing torch of a cigarette in front of them. Smokers also seem to derive a tremendous satisfaction from watching the smoke curl from the end of twenty cigarettes daily, at twenty-five cents a pack.

The Psychologists also claim that the smoker who has done a job well needs the psychological pat-on-the-back that the cigarette gives him. He takes a cigarette as a reward when he feels that he has done a job well. So, smokers, beware; psychologists are trying to prove that you are indulging in nothing but a childish habit.

Smoking becomes a means for young people to test their maturity. Does the child sneak off behind the garage with some of his playmates because he likes the taste of corn silk or ragweed? The high school student imagines that he looks much older when he is smoking; the college student takes on a sophisticated look as he puffs on his pipe. The ability to smoke proves that a young person is now grown up and fit to take his place in the world of adults.

Have you ever noticed the strange and unusual characteristics of the smoker? When he loses his temper he needs the smoke to relax himself. When he becomes depressed he needs a cigarette to lift his spirits again. When he is confronted with a problem, he needs the cigarette to solve it. And he desperately needs that cigarette to calm his unsteady nerves.
We have considered the relation between smoking and the smoker, but smoking also has an effect upon the non-smoker. Supposing your neighbor had a habit of burning tires. We could well imagine our indignation with this neighbor for his lack of consideration. But if the neighbor puts it in a handy roll or a miniature furnace it is looked upon as influenced by custom it is considered as one of his rights. The lame excuse that he enjoys the odor would appear ridiculous from the tire-burning neighbor. One person’s pleasure may prove to be the discomfort of a large number of other people.

When anything is said against smoking, smokers come shouting to their own defense. But the surprising, and inconsistent part is that they forget that, only yesterday, they had firmly resolved never to smoke again. But the smoker always forgets that this pack is always going to be his last.

But let us non-smokers practice toleration toward the smoker. Remember that we also have irritating habits, and we will probably never be able to reform all the confirmed smokers.

Herm Woudenberg

THE JOYS OF USING TOBACCO

“Cigarettes are a blot on the whole human race;
A man is a monkey with one in his face.
Now here’s my definition of a cigarette, brother;
It’s a fire on one end and a fool on t’other.”

Now isn’t that disgusting! Can you imagine that any man could be so prejudiced and hateful as to compose a verse like that? To my mind it’s a venomous assault upon us gentlemen who indulge in the delightful art of smoking. Therefore, I feel it my duty to defend us smokers against such a biased and vile attack.

This article is not written, friends, to induce you non-smokers to begin smoking. After all, as long as you don’t know what you’re missing, there’s no use starting. If you can enjoy life without this wonderful habit, so much the better. Nor is this article written to justify female smoking. I consider it unladylike and thoroughly distasteful. (This article is strictly logical and unprejudiced.) I speak only that you male smokers may attempt to soothe your conscience.

It has been said that a good Dutchman can be distinguished from a bad one by whether or not he smokes. (Naturally if he smokes, he’s a good Dutchman.) Smoking has been a luxury that the good Reformed people throughout the ages have never considered wrong. If our great Reformed fathers found no evil in smoking, why must we condemn it? Because of recent scientific “discoveries?” I’ll come to that in a moment.

One of the greatest boons that smoking has brought to mankind is the art of relaxation. I contend that no non-smoker can refute this point, because only a smoker knows the ecstasy of the first deep drag after a hard day’s work. Mind and body are soothed into a dreamy lull with each delicious puff. Renewed energy to perform any task is the smoker’s reward.

Psychologists and psychiatrists believe smoking has still other virtues. A smoker receives a sense of security from his cigarette or pipe; without them he is lost. If two strangers meet and they both smoke, they instinctively feel a bond between them. Strange it may seem, but, nevertheless, it is true.
Is smoking harmful? Many religious sects who violently condemn smoking base all their arguments upon this one point. However, I certainly would not give an unequivocal "yes" in answer to this question. In the first place, there is wide dissension among eminent scientists as to whether or not smoking harms the body. A majority of experts agree that excessive smoking is harmful, but one cannot condemn smoking itself on that ground. Excessive eating also is harmful. No conclusive evidence, whatsoever, has been advanced to prove moderate smoking harmful. I'm inclined to agree with the old sage who remarked, "I've been smoking all my life and I ain't dead yet!"

Smoking is said to be a dirty and expensive habit. Well, I don't feel especially dirty after having smoked a cigarette. And I don't mind the smell either. It seems only the non-smokers detest the smell of tobacco. The best solution, evidently is for non-smokers to begin smoking. I don't see any other solution. Is it expensive? I've never heard of smoking ruining the family budget as is sometimes the case in excessive drinking. Besides, you can't take it with you. And very few conscientious objectors put the money saved by not smoking into the collection plate. Maybe it's better to spend the same amount of money on cigarettes than to spend it on movies and dances. Just a thought of course.

The objection is raised also, that because smoking is habit forming one tends to smoke more and more heavily. Nonsense. That depends on the strength or weakness of character of each person. Any smoker can discipline himself to smoke just a pack of cigarettes a day. And even leaving cigarettes altogether is not impossible. If one really desires, he can quit smoking. I've quit—hundred of times.

Therefore, I exhort you, brothers of the short breath, to cling firmly to your conviction that smoking brings no ill. And remember our goal—a cigarette in every pocket! And now, having expended a great deal of energy in writing this nonsense, I think I'll light up.

Jim Veldman

COMMON GRACE

1. The Arminian Doctrine of Common Grace—

The Arminian doctrine of Common Grace is as follows:

1. That God ordained Jesus Christ to be Mediator. The statement in itself is not wrong, but it is vague and not clear-cut. In its general form it could very well be subscribed to by all of the Reformed Faith.

2. That God determined to accept in Christ all penitent and believing sinners, to condemn all that remained impenitent and unbelieving under the preaching of the gospel. Here, according to Arminius, it depended not on the sovereignty of God, nor God's determined counsel, but on the free-will of man whether or not he would repent and believe in Christ in order to be saved.

3. That God ordained the means of grace unto salvation. Here again, rejection of the statement as it stands, does not seem possible. However, the meaning set forth by Arminius implied that God earnestly set forth salvation to all that hear the gospel and provided all with an equal part of the means of grace. This means of grace, therefore, constituted a general and well-meaning offer of salvation to all that hear the word preached.
4. That God foreknowing who would believe and repent and who would not believe in Christ, foreordained particular persons unto salvation. Here, Arminius, by stating that God's election and rejection (election and reprobation), depended upon his foreknowledge, he actually made the decree of God dependent on the will of man.

II. The Kuyperian Doctrine of Common Grace

What is considered Kuyper's chief purpose in developing the theory of common grace? Kuyper sought to show that there is still a positively good world-life and development of the human race in connection with all created things and by the theory of common grace he offered an explanation of the positively good in the world in connection with the fact of the fall and the curse of God in the world and the total depravity of the natural man.

What is Kuyper's basis? The covenant that God established with Noah after the flood. This covenant, says Kuyper, is not to be regarded as a covenant of grace but as a covenant of universal friendship with the entire and fallen race as such.

What then are the three chief elements in Kuyper's viewpoint of common grace?

1. That God with a view to the Kingdom and eternity is gracious only to the elect; but with a view to the things earthly and temporal He is gracious to all men.

2. That there is a restraining influence of the common grace of God upon the physical and ethical corruption of the world and of the heart of man, ever since the fall of man, so that the principle of total depravity cannot work through.

3. That God's common grace has such an influence on the mind and will of man, that he is so improved of himself that he can still live a positively good world-life.

III. The Three Points

1. Relative to the first point which concerns the favorable attitude of God towards humanity in general and not only towards the elect, synod declares it to be established according to Scripture and the Confession that, apart from the saving grace of God shown only to those that are elect unto eternal life, there is also a certain favor or grace of God which He shows to His creatures in general. This is evident from the Scriptural passages quoted and from the Canons of Dordrecht, II, 5 and III, IV, 8 and 9, which deals with the general offer of the Gospel, while it also appears from the citations made from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed Theology that our Reformed writers from the past favored this view.

2. Relative to the second point, which is concerned with the restraint of sin in the life of the individual man and in the community, the synod declares that there is such a restraint of sin according to Scripture and the Confession. This is evident from the citations from Scripture and from the Netherlands Confession, Art. 13 and 36, which teach that God by the general operations of His Spirit, without renewing the heart of man, restrains the unimpeded breaking out of sin, by which human life in society remains possible; while it is also evident
from the quotations from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed Theology that from ancient times our Reformed fathers were of the same opinion.

3. Relative to the third point which is concerned with the question of civil righteousness as performed by the unregenerate, synod declares that according to Scripture and the Confessions the unregenerate, though incapable of doing any saving good, can do civil good. This evident from the quotations from Scripture and the Canons of Dordrecht, III, IV, 4, and from the Netherland Confessions Art. 36, which teach that God without renewing the heart so influences man that he is able to perform civil good, while it appears from the citations from Reformed writers of the most flourishing period of Reformed Theology that our Reformed fathers from ancient times were of the same opinion.

IV. Objection to the First Point

The common grace theorists have taken Acts 14:16, 17 which reads as follows for a support of their doctrine.

"Who in time past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless, He left not himself without a witness, in that he did good and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." However, in the first place this text merely teaches that God did not leave Himself as the One that must be thanked and served, for He did good from heaven giving rain and fruitful seasons, filling them with food and gladness. And, naturally, by means of these testimonies the heathen knew that God is to be thanked and served.

Secondly, however, the text states plainly, that God let them walk in their own sinful way; the ways of iniquity and destruction. Though they knew God and received His witness, they received no grace and with their rain, fruitful seasons, and food and gladness they served sin and were the objects of his wrath and damnation. Fruitful seasons, food and gladness with material things are not grace, neither are they a manifestation of grace.

V. Objection to Second Point

The principle objection to the second point and its implications is that it is Pelagian in that it is a very evident denial of the total depravity of the natural man. The second point can be characterized with its theory of the restraint of sin as a purely philosophic invention to apologize for the severity of the doctrine of total depravity and to compromise with the world.

However, the truth of the Word of God on this point is that ever since the fall of our first parents in paradise, the natural man is wholly darkness and foolishness, corrupt before God, incapable of doing any good, inclined to all evil, until he is regenerated by the Spirit of Christ.
VI. Objection to the Third Point —

1. It lowers the standard of moral, ethical good, and thus necessarily obliterates the distinction between good and evil, righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness.

2. It implies and impugnment, or calls into question the holiness of God.

3. It is a teaching of moral determinism and it destroys the freedom of man as a moral agent. According to the interpretation by the leaders of the Christian Reformed Churches, man is no moral agent at all in performing the good he does and for that reason he can lay no claim to any reward.

4. It attacks the justice of God. God’s justice is always manifest in this that He strictly rewards the good with good, and He punishes the evil. The third point would have us adhere to the view that the natural man performs much good in this world for which he is never rewarded.

However, the principle objection is that it is Pelagian in that when one sets aside all sophistical arguments by which it is attempted to defend the third point and to show that it is in harmony with the Reformed view of the truth, it is nothing but a denial of the total depravity of the natural man.

VII. The Dangers of the Three Points —

The theology of common grace and the three points are very dangerous in that they imply all the fundamental errors of Arminius and Pelagius. The first point is principally a denial that the grace of God is particular, since it teaches that the preaching of the gospel is grace to all that hear the gospel; the second and third points are fundamentally a denial of the Scriptural doctrine of the total depravity of the natural man. And these errors are all the more dangerous because they pretend to be in conformity with the Reformed Confessions. It is no exaggeration to maintain that they are the wolf in sheeps-clothing; the devil presenting himself as an angel of light.

Gordon A. King

The end of our prayers is often gained by an answer very different from what we expect. “Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?” was the question of Paul; and a large part of the answer was, “I will shown him how great things he must suffer.”
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