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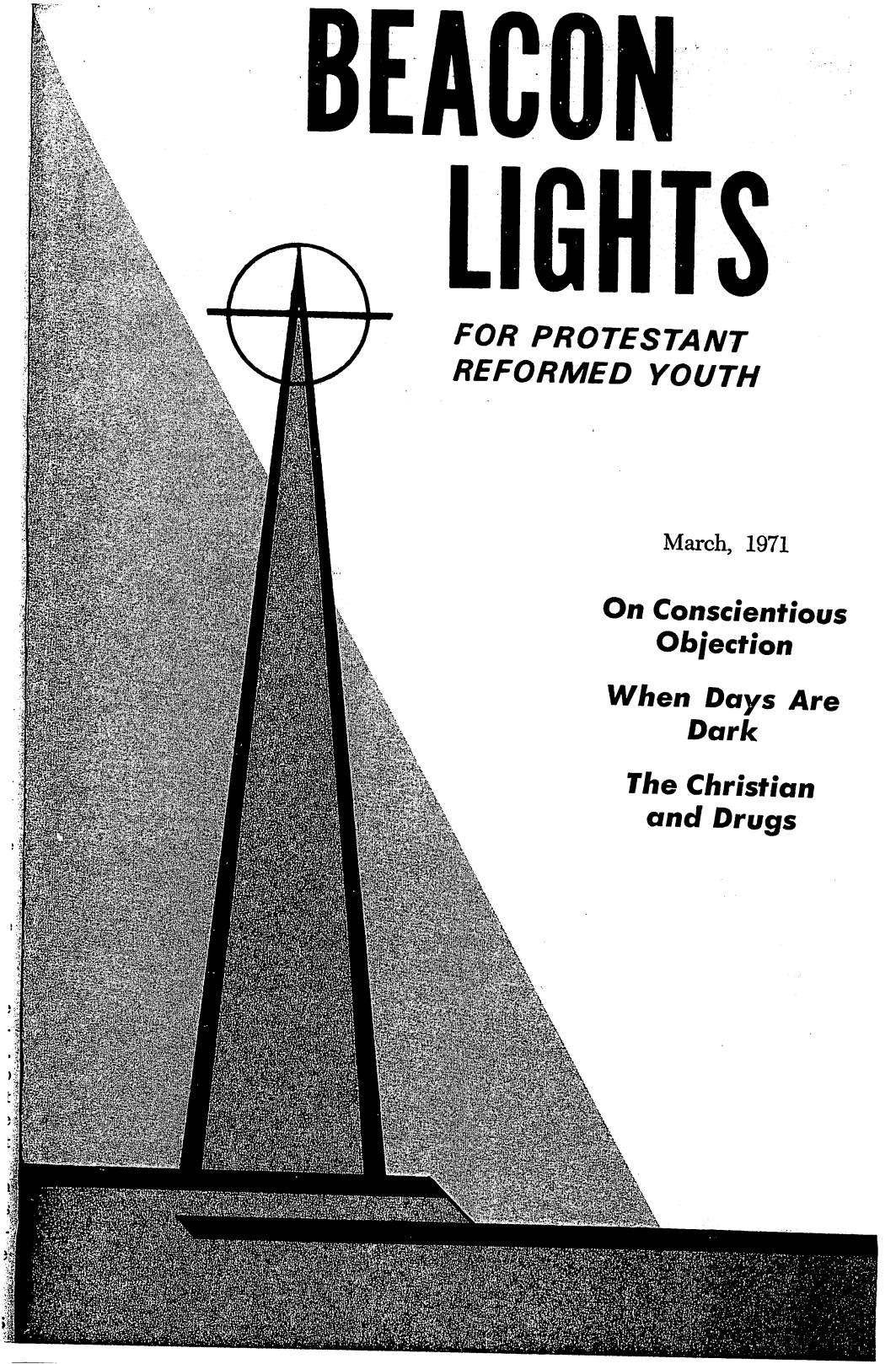
FOR PROTESTANT REFORMED YOUTH



March, 1971

On Conscientious Objection

When Days Are Dark

The Christian and Drugs

BEACON LIGHTS

VOLUME XXXI MARCH 1971 NUMBER 1

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Editorial

ED. NOTE: *We wish to welcome Mr. John Kalsbeek as an associate editor. Mr. Kalsbeek is presently a teacher at Northwest Iowa Protestant Reformed Christian School.*

THE ROCK OF OUR SALVATION

The day, October 21, began as countless days before had begun. The golden orb of the rising sun slowly but certainly rose along the southeastern horizon. As slowly and as certainly as death stalks the living from the moment they enter this world so the rising sun stalks majestically across the sky.

The raucous, ear-shattering clatter of the alarm clock interrupts peaceful dreams and quiet rest and the warm covers lie empty to be embraced by the cold. A new day with new experiences and new ideas to face and consider. Another day of the Lord's whose mercies are new every morning.

Last night's board meeting was conducted with dispatch. Tonight I'll make quick work of the business they gave me to do. I must not forget to finish the paper for the teachers' meeting this coming Friday.

The scrambled eggs for breakfast were delicious. Even the little ones ate up their portions.

I wonder how the folks are doing. They hoped to be back from their vacation in New England sometime the middle of this week. It was foolish of me to worry about an accident. I sure hope they had an enjoyable time.

Time to go to work. Better not postpone it any longer. A sloppy wet kiss from the littlest one, warm affectionate kisses from my wife and daughter, cheery good-byes, and I'm on my way to school.

The five minute walk is a thoughtful one. What would be the best way to introduce fractions to fifth graders? How much time should I spend on the French and Indian War? I'm sure glad the tapes of the speeches given at the teachers' convention held in Grand Rapids arrived this morning so that we can use them this Friday. Since I have to go to Sheldon to select books Friday morning I had better forget about going to Dordt College to hear some of the lectures on science. Our little girl, two years old, it hardly seems possible. The dolls the grandmothers sent certainly made her eyes sparkle. To bad they couldn't have been with us Monday night when we celebrated with a little party.

Three-thirty. Another day of work is completed. It sure is good to sit back and relax for a few minutes.

The skies are blue, the sun shines brightly, the day was not much different than any others. As it began so it seemed that it was going to end. No cloud to chill the air or water the ground.

The reverie of the moment was soon to be shattered into thousands of splintered pieces. Dumb silence heard the dreadful news, "Your mother has been killed in an accident." What was there to say? "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth because thou didst it. Remove thy stroke away from me: I am consumed by the blow of thine hand" (Psalm 39:9, 10).

Death, the final enemy, had found itself another victim. With swift violence it overcame, leaving no time for farewells. In an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, as in the last days when the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, death brought to the grave. Sorrow, grief, despair became the lot of us who were left behind.

The next few days were more like a nightmare than reality. The plane ride home. The long delays in Sioux Falls and O'Hare Airports. The late arrival in Grand Rapids in thick fog which closed down the airport about an hour later for eight hours. Meeting the brothers, dad and my sister. Going to the funeral home to make funeral arrangements. Picking out a casket. Seeing mother that evening for the first time since early August and this time in a coffin. Receiving the condolances of relatives and friends. The funeral and the cemetery. It is hard to put into words the feelings that overwhelm a person in a time of sorrow.

Wondering why this had to happen, I remembered a rather large land turtle I met many years ago along a busy highway. He was about to cross it and would have met certain destruction. Before he reached the concrete I stopped him with a heavy

stick and turned him about in the other direction. He determinedly turned about again to face the speeding traffic. Again I stood in the way with the heavy stick. With stubborn persistence he began attacking the stick but all to no avail. Finally, after many unsuccessfull attempts to overcome the stick he lumbered slowly into the safety of the tall grass. Thinking upon this afterward I could imagine the turtle telling his family about the difficulties and afflictions he had suffered that morning – how he couldn't understand why he had to suffer such cruel treatment. Contemplating the actions and the imagined thoughts of the turtle, I no longer wondered why I had to bear this grievous loss but rather, why did I fight so stubbornly against it? Certainly the Lord makes all things work together for our good.

"Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted." How I fought against being comforted. How I dreaded going to the funeral home. My whole being cried out "let me alone – I'll overcome this sorrow and grief in my own way." But the Lord, being gracious, refused to let me go my wayward way. The many expressions of sympathy and consolation that were spoken the two nights in the funeral home brought immeasurable comfort and relief. Wondrously, by means of His people, God sent the comfort that I was hoping to find in my own way.

On Saturday afternoon the funeral was conducted. Together in the church under the direction of the infallible Scripture to be led "to the Rock that is higher than I" (Psalm 61:2). There to find consolation and refuge from the overwhelming storms of this life. There to be sheltered in the time of strife and trial. There to cast our burdens on the Lord. There to receive the blessed assurance that God, who is so much higher than I and who leadeth in the deep ways of death and sorrow, also renews the sorrowing by his comforting grace.

A loved one has been laid to rest. No longer does she have to wage the desperate struggle against sin and death. Her presence is missed but not forgotten, for death brings to an end life, but memories live on. Who is the mother who can forget, or who would wish to forget, the suckling child that was violently taken away by death? Who the husband who can forget the loving wife, the child its loving mother, or the father his growing son? Their memory lives on and the hurt caused by this separation, although relieved by passing time, will never be entirely forgotten. So also the Lord forgets not His own though they be dead in sins and misery. Even in the hour of intense sorrow and grief He leads His own to the rock where they become "more than conquerors through him that loved us" (Romans 8:37). He ministers to their needs and binds up their broken hearts.

J.K.

FEATURE

ON CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTION

DAVID LANTING

Whether or not conscientious objection is a valid and therefore necessary action of the Christian in response to the draft is one of those questions dealing with religion and politics which, after long and diverse discussion, is never completely answerable since it deals with the individual conscience. It is one of those questions that are scrawled on a cement wall with a charred stick, and, although the writing may be obliterated by repeated washings of words, the wall still remains. Nevertheless, the question does not appear to be as concrete and defined as a cement wall might be, since it is shrouded in the ivy of various political, theological, and practical ramifications. Therefore, I will try to find those considerations which I view as basic to the question and which can be established by the Bible and to outline a course of action from them.

The statement in the form for exemption which the objector must sign to is as follows: "I am, by reason of my religious training and belief, conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form. I,

therefore, claim exemption from combatant training and service in the Armed Forces. . . ." I think the first question we encounter is whether a government has the right to engage in war in any form, or, more generally, to use violence in any way to attain any end. Many C O's hold to the belief that violence in all contexts is wrong. I will certainly agree that all violence from a personal propagation is wrong; but, reading Romans 13:4-5, ". . . for it (the government) does not carry the sword without reason; it is God's agent to bring deserved punishment on the evil doer. It behooves us, therefore, to be submissive not merely because of punishment, but also for conscience' sake," we find that the government can and must rightfully use violence as God's agent in the pursuit of justice.

Now we must examine each aspect of our first basic statement. First, to use violence rightfully is to use it only in the circumstances necessitated by one's obligation of authority and to use it in the least cruel and inhumane way possible. For instance, adherence to such methods as are outlined in the Geneva Conventions, etc. is necessary to a rightful use of violence.

The second consideration of this statement is to determine what justice is in the context of war. A government's authority exists in this: to maintain a system of law and order (that is, justice) for those out of whom and for whom it came into existence. By this standard, those people with power acting as a government become evildoers when they seek to impose their power over other peoples or when they use their power to exploit anyone to their own advantage. I am speaking of justice in the sense of the quote "deserved punishment on the evildoer"; thus, a government can only engage in war when it seeks to destroy these evildoers or to help another government do the same.

Thirdly, to say that one government is more godly than another seems to me to be ridiculous. I can see no difference in moral motivation between a government that murdered millions of Jews and one which, while professing to be "under God" "with liberty and justice for all" murdered tens of thousands of Indians and still today is corrupted in every facet. Therefore, I do not think that we can consider any one government to be God's agent above any other. If you ask, then, how a government can engage in a war against another government, you must distinguish between a legal government and one which is preemptive according to the standard set up in the previous paragraph.

So we see that a government, if it exists in rightful authority, can use the sword if it does it carefully against evil.

Then we face the question of how we can allow ourselves to become agents of the government in war since we personally cannot engage in violence. Just as we are obliged to pay taxes we must allow our physical abilities to be used by the government in order that it can fulfill the obligations which its authority places upon it. I say physical abilities in distinction from the personal identity because, although the government can use a persons body as a weapon, the soldier may never allow the government to determine his actions above the dictates of his personal identity or conscience. In other words, a person can only act as the agent of the government when he determines that the orders he receives issue out of the rightful sphere of authority.

Now that we have dealt with the theoretical basis for our answer, it is time to return to the concrete. Should the Christian conscientiously object to the draft? No, not if the government which calls him exists with authority from God, which I think that the American government does today in a basic although very distorted sense. But now the most difficult problem walks out: to decide whether to conscientiously object to or to *conscientiously* obey every order that is given in the service just as one must conscientiously react to every situation in all of life. For instance, the specific problem of Vietnam definitely requires careful consideration. I do not know if I could fight there at all because of the economic, political, and other motives of Amerikan aggrandizement which seem to be the only reasons why our politicians keep us in Southeast Asia. If I did decide that American involvement in Vietnam was a legal expression of our government's authority, I think that, from stories I have heard of corrruption in the military

power structure, I would find it very hard to "remain in favor" over there. Also, in situations where one must fight against women and children one is faced with an unanswerable question of whom he can kill. I could say now that I would not shoot if in doubt, but I am sure that that has no meaning in the immediate situation.

Such problems face the soldier that I think it would be one of the most difficult positions in life. Therefore, the soldier needs the constant prayer and encouragement of others in order that he too may pray and be critical in all that he does. Also, I think that it would be a very good thing if some sort of instruction would be made available to those about to enter the service of war, in which veterans, ministers, and some people acquainted with political philosophy would participate in order to prepare a young man for this ordeal. May God lead us all to the truth through the complexities of life.

FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

"The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD: but the prayer of the upright is His delight." Proverbs 15:8

"NATIONAL PRAYER BREAKFAST GROUP"

This week I tuned in our Hallicrafter Short-Wave radio to the broadcast of the Armed Forces Radio, Washington, D.C. This station is heard all over the world, including the tiny island of Jamaica. Each morning we tune in and hear the world news, political, national and especially military news – the war in Vietnam, social change, etc. One does not feel very remote on this island when he hears all the news, even the news from home, strikes, lawlessness, the weather, and shortage in electrical power. One is very much aware when he hears all this that the Lamb has taken the Book from the right hand of Him that sitteth on the Throne and issues his commands for the horsemen to ride in the earth. And one thinks: Lord, Thy judgments are a mighty deep and as the mountains high!

This particular morning I shared with the account and report of the "prayer breakfast" which was being held in Washington. Present were the President of the United States, Richard Nixon, his cabinet, the Supreme Court judges, the Congress,

and the members, in great part, of the House of Representatives, and, we were told, the entire Armed Forces. About an estimated 200,000 men were participating besides many groups in the various States, governors and the great and noble in the land.

Furthermore, there were spokes-men who gave their interpretation of the character, aim and benefits of such a Prayer Breakfast. It was emphasized that this prayer breakfast was undenominational and non-partisan. The Scriptures were not cited as motivation, but reference was made to the words of Abraham Lincoln: that "what constitutes the bulwark of a nation is not its embattlements, its weapons, tanks and guns. The greatness of a nation is its spirit, the inner strength and fortitude of the soul." It was during the terrible days of the Civil War that Lincoln uttered those words. Now *we* have our Vietnam with all its sufferings and perplexities. We need spiritual values; we need balance of vision — we must ask God!

A prayer breakfast is conducive to make better congressmen and is effective for religious fellowship. And it is good to listen to the Bible which is the record written by men of their experiences of the divine!!

However, when Mr. John S. Wheeler began to read his selected passage from the prophecy of Isaiah, the great of the world must have trembled just a bit. He read from the New English Version of the Bible. Nevertheless the thunder of God in this passage was rather discomfitting for any who came that morning to pray, to bring his abominable sacrifice. He read the verses 10-20, and there we read KJV: "Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah. For what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD. . . . When ye come to appear before me, who required this at your hand, to tread my courts? . . . And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. . . ." When I heard this read I trembled before the Almighty God. I could not stomach the New English Version that had the audacity to read, "Come now let us *argue this out together* . . .," instead of "come let us reason together."

And in another breakfast group of the House of Representatives, a woman read Matthew 26:32, 33. "And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them from one another, as a shepherd divided the sheep from the goats, and he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. . . ."

This reading too gave cause for pause and reflection!

Here was Jew and Catholic, Scottish Rite Masons, lily white Protestants and stark non-church men all coming together to pray! And the remarkable thing about it all was that they did not pray. They had breakfast, applauded the spokes-men, and talked about the need of prayer, and how erstwhile great Americans had seen the need of prayer.

The only prayer I heard was when one was going to lead in prayer and he read the twenty-third Psalm. And when he had finished there was not the silence in heaven and earth which is depicted in Rev. 8:1-3 where the seven angels which stood before God with their seven trumpets, stood at attention, while the one angel comes with the golden censer to whom is given much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which is before the Throne. . . . !

There was cheap applause!

President Nixon too, spoke. When he arose there was a long and loud applause. He spoke soberly. He was impressed with the personnel, the dignitaries, all the concentration of power in that one large room gathered in a prayer breakfast session. Then he asked the sobering question: What

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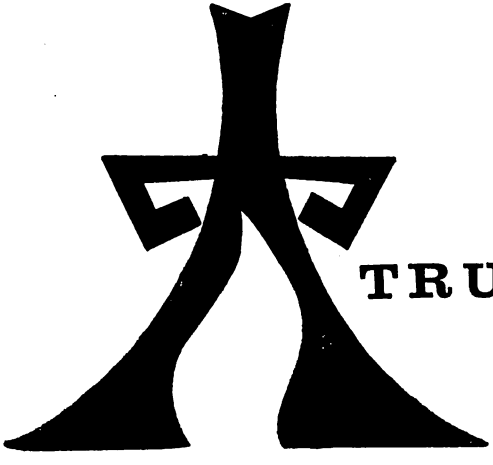
will America be in the year 2000? Strongest country, richest and most prosperous country in the world? But strength alone is not greatness, neither riches. In the small beginnings America was the hope of the world, she stood for spiritual wealth. Yes, there is still a great deal of goodness and moral fibre left in this country. He ended by citing the request of Solomon which is found in I Chron. 1:9: "Now, O LORD GOD . . . give me now wisdom and knowledge, that I may go out and come in before this people . . ." But he did not pray this as did Solomon who stood in the midst of the Kingdom of Israel and not in the midst of giant America with its far-flung armies all over the world.

Prayer is the gift of grace to the righteous. It is the portion of the upright. It is not the portion of the nations of the world. The prayer of the upright is God's delight. It is the prayer of childlike faith that says: "Thy Kingdom come, that is, rule us so by thy Word and Spirit, that we may submit ourselves more and more unto Thee; preserve and increase Thy church, destroy the works of the devil, and all violence which would exalt itself against Thee; and also all wicked counsels devised against Thy word; till the full perfection of Thy kingdom come, wherein Thou shalt be all in all" (Question 123, H. Catechism).

Meanwhile the prayers of the saints ascend before the throne, and the fire of the altar is cast on the earth, and "there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake."

The delightful prayers of the elect are heard speedily; for their cry is music in the ears of the Most High!



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

Prudence

"I, Wisdom, dwell with Prudence"
— Solomon

So many wasted steps! How far I could have been by now! Three times over the same way, which, had it not been for my sleeping in the midst of Difficulty, would have been passed over but once! Now I must walk without the sun! Darkness . . . lions . . . How escape? . . . Christian mumbling to himself. Then he spied them. . . . Two lions loitering farther down the road . . . the occasion of Timorous' and Mistrust's flight in reverse. . . . What was that you'd said a little while ago? *I must venture.* Hm-mm! *I* said that? I *said* that! I *said* that! Christian hastened to admit it. His friendly dialog with self continued, Come pluck up, heart. Then with the Palace Beautiful in sight the weary pilgrim did so, at the same time singing,

Difficulty is behind, fear is before,
Though he's got up the hill, the lion's roar;
A Christian man is never long at ease;
When one fright's gone, another doth him seize.

Watchful stood at the gate of the

palace. He, when Christian made application for lodging there over night, politely requested him to identify himself. Complying, he gave his race – Japhetic, his national origin – Hittite-Amorite, his country – Sodomegyptia, his home-city – Destruction, his name at birth – Graceless, his given name – Christian, his destination – Zion. Watchful then rang a servant bell and a very beautiful but serious-looking young woman appeared, Discretion by name. She warmly took Christian in charge, calling to assist her three others of her family, Prudence, Piety and Charity. These were the keepers of the threshold (II K. 12:9; 22:4, margin). The admitting of members into the church ought to be done with Discretion. Those in the church with the most Prudence, Piety and Love must be appointed to examine candidates for church membership, for the Lord's Table and for the ministry of the Word. Soon they had him in to meet the rest of the family. Supper was being prepared, but first they gave him something to drink, while they all discussed together the most edifying and in-depth subjects. In those days, the administration of the Lord's Supper was introduced in this very Prudent way: refreshment was provided before Supper, i.e., preparatory sermons and private preparatory devotions were a common practice. Their conversation with Christian was very revealing. Especially the interrogation of Prudence was most penetrating and stimulating.

She first of all asked him concerning the country he had exited like a man from a burning building, whether he ever thought of it any more. Yes, he did so, frequently, recalling his bitter slavery, the biting lash of the hard-taskmasters, the fiery brick-kiln furnaces tended, the red dust from the clay-and-straw mortar which colored his skin to the roots of his hair, the iron yoke marks still weltering his flesh. But you'd never believe with what shame and detestation I recall that country and its past life. For so degraded was I, so inebriated from the vine of Sodom, that I wallowed in Nily mire, insensible to the yoke which kept me pressed face down in it, hugged my shackles, and fanatically, even maniacally, refused to leave my stinking dungeon.

Turning the vein of the subject slightly, Prudence then asked whether there were yet some remnants of that old, past, destroyed life still clinging to him. Prudence was aiming to bring out Christian's misery, which he felt was a continual death, part of which was his inward sickness, especially in the form of "my inward and carnal cogitations." It was a common thing for him in those days and for his countrymen in Sodomegyptia to turn themselves on, or to turn on their own mental TV, by delighting and titilating themselves with their own carnal dreams. Christian confessed that he still was plagued with sinful thoughts, but that they were no longer entertained and doted on, as before, intruding, as they did, against his will, and now regarded with shame and detestation. What is more, he added, evil thoughts are, as a matter of fact, always with me. There is something incessantly wrong going on in my mind and heart. Hordes of filthy Diabolonians invade the town of Mansoul and must continually be hunted down and put to death like the five kings executed at the cave of Makkedah. O, yes, replied Christian, ten times a day I choke on those rotten morsels, and ten times a day I spit out sinful thoughts like poison.

Prudence sensed that there was a man, a rare man, who appreciated her type of dis-

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course, for he understood it and responded to it with serious ardor. She admitted, too, that even we of this household must cry, Woe unto us! For we are all spoiled. O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved. How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? It is not a question of whether you *have* vain thoughts. Everyone has. It is a question about *your* vain thoughts. What do you do about them? It is a question of how *long* shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee? It is a question whether you know what Prudence and Christian were talking about. If not, perhaps you had better wonder whether you have even entered the vestibule of Christianity's Palace Beautiful. It is good to sit down and have a talk with Prudence, especially before coming to the Lord's Supper. Prudence is preparatory to our passover. Could you satisfy Prudence and her questioning? Could you say, as David did, I hate vain thoughts, but Thy law do I love? Could you tell Prudence where David says that?

No one, went on Christian, knows better than my Lord, who is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart, how out of my heart proceed evil thoughts, and how much blushing to the roots of my soul I suffer for them. What shame I feel over the stab of jealousy I get at the blooming prosperity of a friend! Or, I'm hungry for his delicacies, thirsty for his drink, sick at his health, cramped at his liberty, sorry at his pleasure, pleased at his sorrow. My evil heart wants everything for itself. What a misery, a grief it is to me! If I could choose my own things, I would choose never to think of those things any more, but, when I would do what's best, then what's worst is present with me. And so, Prudence, you do me good, with your heart-searching, flesh-withering exposure of my hell-rooted, heaven-towering pride!

Do you, replied Prudence, sometimes find those things conquered which at other times are your perplexity? Yes, but seldom; such times are golden hours to me. Many a leaden hour, but some golden! Christian sums things up in: his misery, his choice and his golden hours. The latter are fleeting but precious down-payments on the eternal joys of heaven. Hear another allegory. Brother Thomas, a monk in a Middle-Ages monastery, went out early into the forest to gather sticks. He paused, entranced at the sight and song of a beautiful woods bird. With the song ended, the bird disappeared in a flash of striking color. Gathering up his bundle, the monk returned to his cloister. At the gate he was amazed to have the doorkeeper ask who he was. Brother Thomas? The doorkeeper was now amazed. There is no Brother Thomas in this community. But, protested Thomas, I left the monastery not an hour ago to gather sticks in the woods. The doorkeeper, making closer scrutiny, replied, Many years ago one of our aged brothers died, a Brother Thomas, who had gone out into the woods and never returned. They thought he had become lost and devoured by wild beasts. . . . Thomas, entranced at the sight and song of a bird thought *that* only a few minutes which was a hundred years. So the music, joys and golden minutes of heaven will really be hundreds of years.

Prudence continues. By what means do you find your annoyances, at times, as if they were vanquished? My sight of the cross will do it. When I look upon my embroidered coat, that will do it. Also when I look at the scroll I carry in my bosom, that will do it; and when I wax eloquent in thought about where I am going, that will do it! Then it is that I stand to watch some bird of paradise; then it is I feel I could never again have an evil heart within me. That's what the Cross does for me. That's what the Christ does for me. That's what the Heavenly Dove does for me.

Blest Cross! blest sepulchre! blest rather be
The Man that was there put to shame for me.

That's how evil thoughts are banished. Also by reading the scroll of the Book; in the volume of the Book it is written of Him. There, too, it is written of me, of what sometimes I can see nothing else of, my sin; but where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, and golden hours have come to me. In those golden hours I have outlived Methuselah, passed through eternities. My annoyances also have been vanquished by dipping down into such refreshing wells as John Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion,* John Brown's *Discourses and Sayings of Our Lord,* John Gill's *Body of Divinity,* John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Prog-*

ress and *The Holy War*, Pink's *Studies in the Scriptures* and Edwards' *Strict Inquiry Into the Freedom of the Will.* These provide golden hours along my pilgrimage.

Then, concluded Prudence, what makes you so desirous to go to Mount Zion? Why, there I hope to see Him alive who did hang dead on the cross. There I hope to be rid of all those things that to this day are in me an annoyance to me. There, they say, there is no death; and there I shall dwell with company as I like best. For, to tell you the truth, I love Him because I was by Him eased of my burden; and I am weary of my inward sickness. I would be where I shall die no more, and with the company that shall continually cry, "Holy, holy, holy!"

DONNA VAN UFFELEN

WHEN DAYS ARE DARK

God hath not promised skies always blue
Flower-strewn pathways all our lives through,
God hath not promised sun without rain
Joy without sorrow, peace without pain.

But God hath promised strength for the day
Rest for the labor, light on the way;
Grace for the trial, help from above;
Unfailing kindness, undying love.

In Romans 8:28, we find stated one of the greatest promises of God. In this epistle, Paul writes "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose." If Paul had said "some things work together for good" or "most things work together for good," it would not be so difficult for us to understand. However, that little word "all" is most important to this text.

When we read this verse, our first thoughts usually turn to our heartaches, disappointments, pain, inconvenience of life, poverty, and persecution. And why do we first tend to think along this line? Because we are too human to see how our "Dark Days" can possibly work for our good. Even though it is often hard for us to see the hand of God working for our good in the difficult things of life, we must trust where we cannot see. To try to seek out reasons for our sorrows is to doubt the wisdom, the love, and the power of God. It is through faith only that we can, and must, accept these things; for, they too, are given us out of the loving hand of God.

The meaning of this verse is that all things work together unto the salvation of the children of God. This verse applies, in general, to the suffering of this present time which we endure in the flesh. More particularly, however, the text applies to the suffering which we endure for Christ's sake. Texts which can be related to this suffering are found in Romans 5:3-4, where we read that "tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope," and in James 1:2, where it is stated that we must count it all joy when we fall into divers temptations.

The verses which follow in Romans 8 further explain how "all things work together for good." For example, in verse 31, we read that "if God be for us, who can be against us?" When we are in the midst of experiencing one of our "Dark Days," we should realize that this affliction can in

no way be against us, even though from every human point of view, we wonder how this particular suffering can possibly be *for* us.

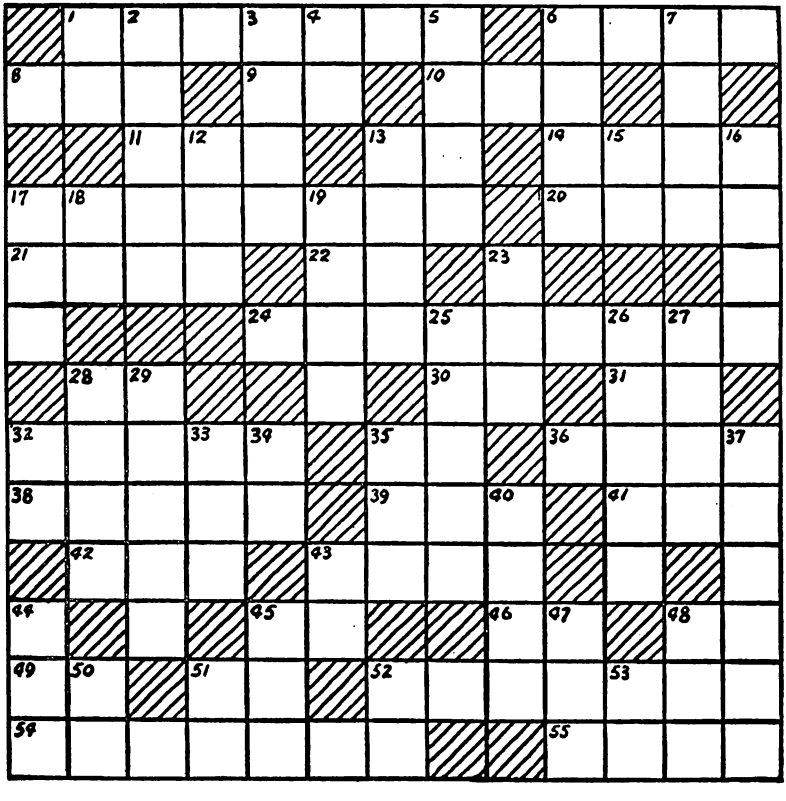
Further in this chapter (verse 36), Paul says, "As it is written, for thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." Although we lie in the midst of death and taste death in all the sufferings of this present time, it is no punishment or satisfaction for sin. Christ fully atoned for all our iniquities; and therefore, the sufferings which we endure must be sufferings as servants of Christ, and tend unto our eternal good.

Paul, in his epistle to the Philippians, said that the things which happened to him were unto the furtherance of the gospel (chapter 1:12). Paul's experiences are but only one proof of God's promise that "all things work together for good." Every trial which we endure is but another proof of God's divine personal interest. Trials are the tools in the hands of the Divine Architect as He builds us into His eternal plan.

When we experience a "Dark Day," we must realize that these winds of adversity will cause us to become more firmly grounded in the depths of God's love. The fiery trials which we must face from day to day will only cause us to seek more often the eternal springs of grace. It is only by grace and through faith that we can fully understand how "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are called according to His purpose."

Crossword Puzzle*

Try your hand at this. (Solution will be in the next issue.)



*Taken from *The New Testament in Crossword Puzzles* by Lucile Johnson and reprinted by permission of Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Mich.

JOHN AND JAMES

Mark 10

ACROSS

1 "and be baptized with the . . . that I am baptized with" :38
6 "as the . . . man which was healed held Peter and John" Acts 3:11
8 "displeased with James . . . John" :41
9 "And . . . said unto them, What would ye" :36
10 First woman
11 "their great . . .s exercise authority" :42
13 Manganese (chem. abbr.)
14 Annihilation of the individual will before the will of God (Moham. relig.)
17 James and John were . . . Boanerges
20 "exercise lordship over . . . " :42
21 Roman highway
22 Bone
24 Surname of John and James
28 Warehouse receipts (abbr.)
30 Northcentral State (abbr.)
31 Railroad (abbr.)
32 "they . . . are accounted to rule over the Gentiles" :42
35 "given to them for whom it . . . prepared" Matt. 20:23
36 "one on thy right . . ." :37
38 Ardent
39 Toe (Scot.)
41 Born
42 "even . . . Son of man came not to be ministered unto" :45
43 "James and John, the . . . of Zebedee" :35
45 Bachelor of Oratory (abbr.)
46 Royal city of the Canaanites Josh. 8:1
48 Seventh tone in the scale
49 Place Abram lived before going to Canaan Gen. 11:28
51 "Ye shall indeed drink . . . the cup" :39
52 'Boanerges' means Sons of . . .
54 "sent Peter and John, saying, Go and . . . us the passover" Luke 22:8
55 Not any

Our text is 8, 9, 17, 20, 24, 32, 35, 42, 43, 51 and 52 combined

DOWN

1 Bank note (abbr.)
2 Love excessively
3 Feminine proper name
4 Indian Empire (abbr.)
5 "were in the ship, . . .ing their nets" Mark 1:19
6 "and the other on thy . . . hand, in thy glory" :37
7 "is not . . . to give" :40
12 New and nonofficial remedies (abbr.)
13 Flat-topped hill
15 Exclamation
16 One of the prophets
17 "But to . . . on my right hand and on my left hand" :40
18 Western State (abbr.)
19 Heavenly body
23 James and John were fishermen on the . . . of Galilee
25 Month in the Jewish calendar
26 ". . . unto us that we may sit, one on" :37
27 Sea eagle
28 "Ye know not . . . ye ask" :38
29 "but to sit on my . . . hand, and on my left" Matt. 20:23
32 "they said unto him, . . .can" :39
33 The letter C
34 Part of the day (abbr.)
35 Jewish Organization
37 "do for us whatsoever we shall . . ." :35
40 Brother of Jacob
43 "But . . . shall it not be among you" :43
44 "can ye drink of the . . . that I drink of" :38
45 Bachelor of Fine Arts (abbr.)
47 Hotel
48 "when the . . . heard it, they began to be much displeased" :41
50 Same as 31 across
51 Observation post (abbr.)
52 Topographical Engineer (abbr.)
53 "What would ye that I should . . . for you" :36

"And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets." Mark 1:19

CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

THE CHRISTIAN AND DRUGS

KATHY BYLSMA

With the possible exception of speeding on the highways, possession of drugs is almost certainly the most widely committed crime in the United States. It is said that as many as 20 million Americans have at one time or another tried drugs. The Pentagon states that about 30% of the U.S. troops in Vietnam and over 50% of undergraduates in several large universities have tried marijuana.[1]

You may ask, "What do these facts and statistics have to do with me, a Protestant Reformed young person?" This is a good question and one, I think, that should not be overlooked.

Protestant Reformed youth are curious and love excitement and adventure, just as all young people do. This curiosity may be pricked when reports of drugs and their effects are heard. It is reported that by taking drugs, a person may experience a state of euphoria, with different objects taking on new shapes and colors. New smells and sounds may flood the senses and new thoughts about oneself and his relationship to others arise in the mind.[2] Don't reports like these stir up excitement in you? Wouldn't it be fun to try drugs just once? When thoughts like these arise in your mind, the words of God in I Corinthians 6:19 and 20 must be remembered. "What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God; and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." This is one of the many ways that Satan employs to tempt a child of God and, through the grace and strength of God, we must reply, "Get thee behind me, Satan."

But curiosity is not the only reason for experimentation with drugs. Pressures and tensions are also basic reasons. Protestant Reformed youth, like all other young people of our generation, also feel the pressures that come from living in this busy age. There is no getting away from them. There are pressures in school, at our jobs, in society, and sometimes even in our own homes that may plague us. Other times life in general makes us depressed. It is natural to want to be rid of these crushing feelings but is it natural to turn to drugs as a deliverer? To a child of the world it may be. Drugs such as barbiturates are said to be able to attain a feeling of well-being and security. Other drugs help the taker to become more relaxed and get him away from the tension and pressure of everyday living.[3] What more could a person ask for? Oh, yes, it is stated that a bad "trip" can occur and also psychological dependency but those are just the chances a person has to take. It is also illegal to have some drugs in your possession and could cause a person to end up in jail. But this, again, is just one more hurdle that can be jumped. How can a Christian answer to these temptations and how can he cope with all the pressures and tensions that are part of life on this earth?

The answer is found in prayer. Go to God with your problems. Go to Him with the assurance that He will hear you and provide peace and tranquility in your soul in His own way. It is wonderful how He can lift the pressing burden from off your shoulders and onto His own. Remember His promise that He has given you in Psalms 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved."

FOOTNOTES

1. *Reader's Digest*, "The Drug Scene," Dec. 1970, pp. 88.
2. American Medical Association, "The Crutch That Cripples: Drug Dependence."
3. *Ibid.*

NEWS from, for, and about our churches

KAREN LUBBERS

From Loveland, Colorado:

Confessicn of faith was made by the following young people: Eddie Bruinsma, Etta Bruinsma, Patty Dotson, Shelly Greer, David Griess, Dennis Griess, Glenn Griess, and Sandy Vande Vegte.

From South Holland, Illinois:

A son was born to Mr. and Mrs. John Busker.

Mr. and Mrs. Robert Hoving rejoice in the birth of a daughter.

Rev. and Mrs. Decker also rejoice in the birth of a son.

The young people sponsored a Singspiration on January 24 to help raise funds for the 1971 Convention. It was centered around the theme "Hope for the New Year" and included special numbers from the society. David Zandstra, a member of the society, led the singing.

The Federation Board traveled to South Holland during the week-end of January 23 to assist the young people in the planning of the Convention. They were lodged by members of the congregation, took communion with the members of the South Holland church on Sunday morning, and met with the Young People's Society on Sunday afternoon. The visit was profitable and very enjoyable.

From Hull, Iowa:

Mrs. Carl Jansma was received from the First Ref. Church of Doon.

Mrs. Gerb De Jong was received from the First Ref. Church of Boyden.

An "Inspiration Evening" was sponsored by the North West Prot. Ref. Chr. School in the Hull church auditorium. Rev. Decker spoke on the topic "Parental Values."

A new Church Extension Committee was formed through the combined efforts of the Hull, Doon, and Edgerton Churches. They put out pamphlets and work in co-operation with the Church Extension Committees of Pella, Loveland, and Redlands.

A remodeling of the church's pulpit area was approved and is, at the present, in progress.

From Hope in Walker, Michigan:

Mr. and Mrs. Ed Holleman and their three baptized children were received from the South Holland Church.

Dick Eerdmans has left for military duty. His address is:

Pvt. Dick Eerdmans 379-56-3060
Co. A, 18th Bn. 5th Bde.
Fort Knox, Kentucky 40121
2nd Plt.

From First, Grand Rapids, Michigan

Welcome to the News article! Your bulletins are much appreciated!

Congratulations to our editor and his wife! Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Reitsma rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Alice Jane!

Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Vink rejoice in the birth of a son and Mr. and Mrs. R. Pastoor also rejoice in the birth of a son.

Miss Sue Noordyke and John Vanden Berg were united in marriage on Feb. 5.

The address of Jim Dykstra is:

S.N. Jim Dykstra B68-28-52
P.O. Box 460 N.A.S.
F.P.O. San Francisco, Calif. 96611

Mr. Bob Brigstock has been discharged from military service duty.

Miscellaneous News:

A double-header basket ball game was held on February 18 in Hudsonville. Sponsored by the Federation Board, the game consisted of two games, "East" against the "West." The "West" included players from the Hope-Holland-Hudsonville area churches and the "East" included the Grand Rapids area churches. The "West," by very narrow margins, defeated the "East" in both games.

A note of congratulations is also in order for the Covenant Chr. High Varsity Basketball Team which won the Pioneer League Trophy. This league consists of three other Class D School teams.

SCHOLARSHIPS

- Applicable to College Tuition
- Prospective P.R. Ministers & Teachers may apply
- Apply before May 1st
- Obtain blanks from your Y.P. Society secretary ...or your Pastor

Sponsored by the Protestant Reformed Scholarship Fund and the Federation Board