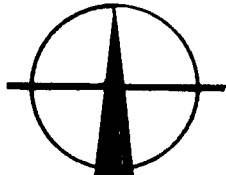


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*



June-July, 1973

Faithful Servant

*Birth Control—
A Christian
Alternative*



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WHAT IS MAN? WHO AM I?

What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason, how infinite in faculties! In form and moving how express and admirable! In action how like an angel, in apprehension how like a god! The beauty of the world, the paragon of animals.

Hamlet, Act II, Scene 2

MAN?

A self-balancing, 28-jointed adapter-base biped; an electro-chemical reduction-plant, integral with segregated stowages of special energy extracts in storage batteries, for subsequent actuation of thousands of hydraulic and pneumatic pumps, with motors attached; 62,000 miles of capillaries; millions of warning signals, railroad and conveyor systems; crushers and cranes (of which the arms are magnificent 23-jointed affairs with self-surfacing and lubricating systems, and a universally distributed telephone system needing no service for 70 years, if well managed); the whole, extraordinarily complex mechanism guided with exquisite precision from a turret in which are located telescopic and microscopic self-registering and recording range finders, a spectroscope, et cetera, the turret control being closely allied with an air conditioning intake and exhaust, and a main fuel intake.

Buckminster Fuller

Nine Chains to the Moon

Therefore all men are conceived in sin, and by nature children of wrath, incapable of saving good, prone to evil, dead in sin, and in bondage thereto, and without the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit, they are neither able nor willing to return to God, to reform the depravity of their nature nor to dispose themselves to reformation.

Canons of Dordt

3rd and 4th Heads, Art. 3

As is evident from the quotations above,

the answer to the question in our title is not all that easily and quickly answered. Throughout the history of philosophical and theological ideas there have been many anthropologies proposed. But the question does have an answer and the Christian has always had one. The question, furthermore, is extremely important and it behooves you as Christian young people and us as Christian older people to know in detail what that answer is. For if you answer this question correctly, many of the other questions concerning who God is and what salvation is will also be correctly answered. That is not a guarantee, you understand, but as a general rule if one has his anthropology straight, if he knows who he really is, then the rest of his thinking will be straight as well. If one is to get to the heart of another man's religion, then one of the most basic questions which he must ask is, "What is man?" to this particular individual. As you read your philosophy and your theology, ask that question and you will see how quickly many other ideas fall into place as well.

The asking and answering of this question has been going on for quite some time. Generally, however, there are four main notions of man that have come down to us through history. You must realize, of course, that I must needs oversimplify — I will leave the amplification to your own time and study. Most philosophical and theological systems can be, I think, grouped around these main ideas. There is first (not in time) the Greek idea that man is a rational animal, living by natural law, seeking happiness by knowledge (Plato, *et al*). Secondly there is what is known in the history of ideas as the Hebraic notion of man. Man was a free individual living by divine law seeking righteousness by obedience to the law (The Pharisees). Thirdly, there is what can be called the "modern," post-Enlightenment view of man. Man is a sensitive animal living by social law seeking security by adjustment to his environment. Finally, there has been running throughout all of history the Christian view of man.

To the Christian, man is a moral-rational creature who, by virtue of his creation, is adapted to the service of God; by nature he reveals the image of his father, the devil, and is restored to the image of God only by the power of God's grace. All of these concepts could be treated in book-length form and many of them have, but the above must suffice for now.

To know one's anthropology, then, is important, for there are different anthropologies extant. And, the point I wish to bring to you is that this is true even today. This point came home to me as I was reading the April 2nd, 1973 issue of *Time*. There we are given the earth-shattering news that a new breed of psychologists, sociologists, and anthropologists are in the process of rediscovering human nature. They have had enough of behavioral and Freudian psychology. Don't begin to clap your hands too loudly, however, and shout from the rooftops, "Haven't we all?" The fight is the behaviorists and Freudian psychologists versus the new breed called the humanistic psychologists. The behaviorist anthropology, propagandized most persuasively by B. F. Skinner, especially in his recent *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, adopts the position of the "modern" above. Especially to be noted is the fact that man's nature is changeable — there is nothing fixed or constant; he is completely fluid. This makes him subject to change and his environment is the agent that does exactly that. Man, then, is basically good; there is no evil inherent in him. The evil is due to environmental influences. The Freudian anthropology was somewhat different in emphasis. The Freudian placed a great deal of emphasis on the "inner man" (non-existent to Skinner). But to the Freudian as well, man is basically good and the evil within him is due to past influences. And now, enter the humanistic psychologist. "There is," says the *Time* article, "a sneaking reappearance of the old notion that certain fixed elements in man (once unscientifically known as 'human nature') are not susceptible to environmental changes." The humanistic psychologists have challenged the behavioral belief that man is infinitely changeable and are now beginning to speak of man having "an ir-

reducible core of evil (another unscientific term)."

Without further study, this appears to be an enlightening and proper move. What in reality is happening, however, is that the new humanists are working to reinstate man to his rightful place so that he can determine his own fate. The age of scientism with its emphasis upon technology and a technocratic man is facing its demise, man's environment is no longer regarded to be the primary force in determining man's nature but man must again assert himself as man and realize that he himself is the most active force in shaping his life and nature. Rollo May, the most noted of the new humanists, is optimistic about this new charge against the "academy." Says May, "My faith is that the human being will be rediscovered." But do not be fooled, we have merely moved from the "modern" to the "Greek." Evil, though contended to be an "irreducible core," will be controlled by man himself through the assertion of his will.

It is striking, is it not, that man is not progressing but constantly reverting? Solomon's wisdom of "there is nothing new under the sun" is evident in all of this psychologizing and philosophizing.

Let me close with a bit of advice. Never make the mistake and conclude that somehow man, without the grace of God, and without acknowledgment of his sin and depravity with its resultant repentance, will ever pull himself up again by his bootstraps. Romans 1 cannot be quoted too often or studied too much these days. Arm yourselves with the Word for in the Word is revealed to us who we really are and what man really is. Read and study your confessions — they are too often neglected these days. Finally, by all means find out who you are. Stand before the mirror of God's Word; align yourselves with the plumb line of God's precepts. If this is done we will thank God that He does not deal with us according to our natures, but according to the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ.

JON HUISKEN



CRITIQUE

VI VAN DEN TOP

"Faithful Servant"

Psychologists today say that one problem that most plagues adolescents is the problem of a vocation. What are you going to do when you get out of school? What are you going to school for? What would you like to do the rest of your life? These questions constantly bombard us as Christian youth. Less frequently heard, but more important than all of the above, is the question: What does God want you to do? As Christian youth we are called to consider all of the first questions in light of the last one. God calls each of us to do a specific task, and when a Christian considers this seriously, all the priorities of the money and prestige of this world fall away.

In Matthew 25, Christ tells the parable of the Ten Talents. Verse 15 tells us that different amounts of talents were given to each man. One received two, another five, and still another ten. God today has given each of us a certain number of talents, and these are entrusted to our care to do with as best we can. Everyone has different abilities and in different amounts. This is nothing new; you have heard it all before, but maybe that is our problem. We know so well that God has created us as individuals with individual talents that we forget to stop and think exactly what that belief entails. We get so engrossed in what we should do with our life that we overlook the most important part: God our Creator.

God today no longer speaks to us in visions or by prophets. That dispensation has passed. He does not come to Joe in a vision and say, "You are called to be a businessman." Nor does He come to Jane and say, "You must be a housewife." But do not let this lead you to believe that

God does not speak to us concerning a vocation. On the contrary, God speaks to us through the talents He has given us. By giving Joe the abilities of meeting people easily and being able to work well with others, God can call him to be a businessman. The same can be said of any profession. God will not be mocked! Do not think that you will "get by" with saying, "I can't do anything" or "I'm so dumb." That is not humility, that is blasphemy. God has created each with talents, and for you to take the opposite stand is lying in the face of God your Creator.

God holds each of us responsible for the talents we have received and "burying" them will only bring God's wrath upon us. Young people, awake to the realization that God calls you to your vocation through what you are able to do and what you like to do. Then God demands that you do all to His glory.

The question of a vocation is awesome — it is a lifetime decision, but never should it be seen as impossible or as resting entirely on your shoulders. God calls you to your place in life and He promises His sovereign blessing on His people. Certainly, we can take courage in the promise that God is an ever present help in time of need — even in the question of a vocation. If, after much prayerful consideration, you come to the vocation which you believe God has set for you, rest assured that you will hear your Lord say to you, "Thou good and faithful servant . . . enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Matt. 25:21).

Basically we are all called to be faithful servants, but it is in carrying out that task that we find the will of God for us. In the

way of faith, God calls each of us to a specific task. God leads us to this task through the work of His Spirit and there-

by through prayer and diligent use of the talents entrusted to us.

FEATURES

DISTORTED VISIONS-

The Greening of America

by CHARLES REICH

433 pages: Bantam Books

BERTHA DEN HARTOG

The Greening of America is Charles Reich's vision of an attainable utopia. America, Reich proposes, is not getting worse; instead as after night follows day, a new light is dawning in the form of the "Wood-stock generation." Reich optimistically envisions America reaching the end of a bitter winter, ahead he sees the budding of new life, the virtual "Greening of America."

Reich, under the assumption that we will be assured of the bright future only when we examine the darkness of the past, divides American history into three Consciousnesses of three different awarenesses (or lack of awareness). The first he classifies as Consciousness I. Consciousness I began almost before the ink on the constitution was dry. Americans faced with nearly limitless opportunities of economic and social advancement, for some strange reason, misused this privilege allowing greed and self-interest to over-rule their concern for fellow man. The struggle to reach the top over-ruled any other interests and those at the top had an insatiable appetite for more power. The scale of power and wealth leaned heavily to an ever diminishing group while the frustrated majority in their unrewarded scramble for success began to lose interest of the means only pressing for the ends. In short they lost interest in work itself.

As technology and industrialization increased, it unobtrusively began to replace personal power; so that economic success was no longer possible in terms of personal achievement. The victim of Consciousness I however was not aware of this, and even today there are still believers in the logs to presidency success. Characteristics of

these deceived Americans are: (1) they assumed that "human nature is fundamentally bad," and (2) "they vote for a candidate who seems to possess personal moral virtues and who promises to return earlier conditions of life and order, rectitude and lower taxes."

The birth of Consciousness II began with the social and economic reforms of the 30's; in main the Roosevelt reforms. Although these reforms were slightly effective in that they did such things as prohibit child labor, enforce minimum wages and introduce industrial safety laws, they were for the large part ineffectual. First of all, Reich says, these reforms came too late. They were designed to stem increased private power but private power was no longer a problem. The real problem was that the inanimate system held the reins of power and the reforms did nothing to curb the system. Secondly, the controls were not strong enough, the New Deal abandoned many of its radical reforms e.g. redistribution of income, and programs to improve the quality of life.

With the reforms came the beginning of Consciousness II which has extended into the present. Those under the influence of Consciousness II stressed reason or the rationality of man as the means to resolving all problems. Liberals, Communist Party members and many intellectuals are all products of Consciousness II. The epitome of Consciousness II are people like the Kennedys, who believe in reforms within the system. This reform can be achieved by complete dedication and excellence within the system. Highly respected people become those who excelled in their field, such as excellent lawyers and excellent surgeons,

people to whom personal interest was secondary to public interest.

The handicap of Consciousness II is, says Reich, that first of all it is impossible to improve conditions by working within a system that is in itself corrupt. The second handicap is that the emphasis on excellence forces role playing. One does those things such as tennis, skiing, listening to Mozart when they are in vogue. This, along with increased pressure to become a cog in the system interested only in the general good, caused people to stifle any individuality or self-awareness they might have had. Consciousness II people are then those whose senses have been robotized and who are forced to conform to vogue standards and who are rendered incapable of independent freedom.

In the latter 60's, the bleak winter was over and the spring of freedom in the form of the hip generation came bursting through like an unexpected reprieve. The now generation is responsible for developing Consciousness III. How it came about is a mystery to even Reich.

Consciousness III is a break-through in role playing, in competition, in the impersonal corporate state; it wipes away all petty anxieties with a simple statement. "I'm glad I'm me" breaks all the chains and makes personal freedom possible.

No longer are the Consciousness III members subject to petty self-interest and economic status; in fact, they seem admirably free from vices. They live mainly by three commandments (ten being of course too many): "One, be true to oneself . . . two, no one judges anyone else . . . third, everyone is entitled to pride in himself, and no one should act in a way that is servile or produces a feeling of inferiority . . ."

Reich cannot control his admiration of

this idealistic, free, self-aware generation; he blatantly condones everything they do. He goes into great length about the self-expressiveness of blue jeans, acclaiming them as the social levelers. Of Marijuana and other psychedelic drugs he has this to say: "One of the most important means for restoring dulled consciousness is psychedelic drugs . . . extending to deep self knowledge, to the religious, and to vision."

The real "Greening of America" can only come about when this freedom and self-awareness is integrated into the whole of American society so that the system breaks down and ugliness, injustice, and the plastic of technology are abolished. In Reich's vision everyone is happy together and the world is a beautiful place to live in.

In defense of Reich, I would like to say that many of his observations about Consciousness I and II were somewhat plausible; for instance, the loss of interest in work and the competitive race for material gain are indeed typified by the factory worker who lives for retirement and the young executive who desperately tries to scramble to the top of the economic ladder.

Yet from the very start Reich's vision is distorted. He bases all his arguments on the assumption that man is perfectable, which as we of course know he is not. Although man is definitely in need of perfection, his total depravity makes it impossible for him to perfect himself or his environment. Reich's vision of an even possible Utopia does violence to God's work.

However Reich's complete distortion is evident in his blind faith in Consciousness III. He equates the total loss of conscience to the awakening of a bright future. He sees the answer to the problem in the end result of the problem. He mistakes lawlessness for change and most tragic of all he mistakes destruction for salvation.

Birth Control – A Christian Alternative?

KAREN KARSTEN

Silence reigns in the sunny, fourth grade classroom. Twenty-eight children read their textbooks and for a few moments I sit back and drink in these few precious, relaxing moments. For, working with children is

one of the most difficult tasks I have ever undertaken! It is at such times as this reading time that a sense of awe and wonderment sweeps over me. Twenty-eight lives are in my control, seven hours of

each day, nine months of this year! Easily molded and bent, these children grow and develop as I attempt to lead and teach them. To see this process of growing and learning is one that many parents and teachers will laud as a miracle of life.

I have had the privilege of viewing children from the standpoint of a teacher and have wrestled with and enjoyed the problems and joys of helping children grow up in this world. However, the position of the parent must bring one even closer to the experience of childhood. No one individual holds so much influence in a child's life as his parents. I was sharply brought to realize this as I worked, hopelessly at times, with children who come from poor or broken homes. Parents can complete or undo in a very short time all the good influences a child receives outside of his home. The parents, too, have the advantage of being with their children year after year, understanding and guiding the child as needs develop. Their help and guidance are perpetual and every child senses the importance of this in his life. The responsibility of parents toward their children, then, is an immense one, one that far surpasses most responsibilities grown-ups must deal with. We may not underestimate the extremely difficult but beautiful task of bringing children, especially God's children, into this world.

And so young people who are planning on marriage must face the decision of when they should be ready to bring up children. In the past, young people were married and were expected to begin immediately on their family. Today, a different society and birth control methods have changed that prevalent attitude and family size has dwindled from twelve and thirteen to two and three. But what should a Christian couple decide on the matter of using birth control? I guess there is no one answer to every situation but some guidelines apply to most cases. Every Christian couple who seriously is concerned about bringing up children should discuss this often before marriage. Many times couples use birth control methods immediately after marriage without even giving it much thought or without even asking if this is what God wants them to do.

But if a couple has seriously discussed this together and with God can they even allow birth control as an alternative? To this question I would answer "Yes, it definitely is a Christian alternative!" The problems arise when we begin to examine the *motives* behind birth control use. If the couple uses birth control because they must first build or buy a home, purchase furniture, and pay for the new car, then the motives are obviously materialistic and sinful. However, recognizing the sin in that motive is easy enough. It is much more difficult to admit and recognize that sin in oneself.

But suppose a couple wishes to marry but does not feel ready to bring up children. This is a very common situation among young people. It has been argued that then the couple may not and should not marry. Ideally this may be true. However, practically, I do not think this is an abnormal situation to be in. It is the vague desire of most men and women to want children of their own some day. This desire has been present in mankind since creation. However, when a couple is faced with marriage, it is no longer a matter of a vague desire but of a very real and maybe near possibility. Therefore, they must be prepared for this situation and possibility. It is difficult for many couples to feel ready for this responsibility before marriage because wanting children together arises from the intimate experience of married love. This must be true. It is only after a Christian man and woman have experienced the spiritual, physical, and emotional facets of mutual Christian love that the desire to bring covenant children into the world and church can arise. For some couples this may take two weeks, for others, two years. There is no hard and fast rule to apply. Relationships develop and grow at so many different rates. Until a couple feels that their relationship has reached that point, it is not only advisable but also Christian to use some form of birth control.

But why? Why must we today put so much emphasis on readiness? Simply because many children today show so obviously that they are growing up in unprepared homes. And this is also true in

Christian homes. The society in which we live is different from the one in which our parents grew up. We may not like it but it is a fact we must deal with. Twenty or thirty years ago, families were out of necessity home-centered. Today, families are becoming more and more helter-skelter. A rash of "baby-sit-ism" has developed within the church and parents bring up children in the restaurant, at ballgames, in shopping malls and a hundred other places other than the home. That is why bringing up children is becoming a more and more serious and challenging business. If a Christian couple is not willing to sacrifice an immense amount of time, money, and recreation today, they are not ready to bring up children and they have no business doing so either!

There is one other question that is often brought up in connection with this topic. That is, "Are we not taking into our own hands what is really God's work, the giving

of life, when we use birth control?" Hardly, I think. There are going to be times in the lives of most married couples when it just is not wise for them to have their first or another child. Then, for the sake of the lives involved it is their duty to use some form of birth control and we may not look at doing so as a means to hinder God's work of giving life. To make such a statement implies that the *only* purpose of marriage is to produce children.

Birth control, like any other instrument in man's hand, can become a deadly instrument. But there is a place for its proper use among members of the church. Bringing children into the church is an honor and privilege for Christian parents. But once a life is intrusted to us we better be sure we will shoulder the responsibility. It is an awful indictment against us if a child can say when he is grown "But where were my parents when I was a CHILD?"

BIBLE QUIZ

BEATITUDE "WHY'S"

1. "Blessed are the poor in spirit . . ." Why?
2. "Blessed are they that mourn . . ."
3. "Blessed are the meek . . ."
4. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness . . ."
5. "Blessed are the merciful . . ."
6. "Blessed are the pure in heart . . ."
7. "Blessed are the peacemakers . . ."
8. "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake . . ."
9. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice and be exceeding glad . . ."
10. "Blessed are they that do his commandments . . ."

SAYINGS OF JESUS

1. "Let your light so shine before men that . . ."
2. "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate

you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you." Why?

3. "Pray to thy Father which is in secret . . ."
4. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor dust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal . . ."
5. "No man can serve two masters . . ."
6. "Take no thought saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or Wherewithal shall we be clothed?" (Don't worry.) Why?
7. "Ask . . . seek . . . knock . . ." Why?
8. On the night he was betrayed, Jesus said to his closest friends, "Watch and pray . . ."
9. Jesus once said, "I am come that . . ." and went on to tell why.
10. In his last talk with his closest friends, Jesus told them, "Let not your hearts be troubled." Why?

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(Answers on page 17)



FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. M. KAMPS*

What Must the Grieving Sinner Hear?

Psa!m 86:5 – "For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."

The question, what must the grieving sinner hear, is an important question. The answer to that question concerns the gospel of Christ. The answer to that question will, in a large measure, determine what one preaches. We must note that the question asks something about the grieving sinner. If a minister considers that the sinner must hear that God loves him, the content of his preaching will be, undoubtedly, that God loves all men. Or maybe the minister thinks that the sinner must hear that Christ died for all men and that all will eventually be saved. His preaching will be the gospel of universalism, which is not the gospel of Christ.

Note too, the question is not what must every sinner hear? For many sinners have not heard the gospel and have died in the darkness of heathendom. Evidently, God was pleased not to send them the gospel of Christ. We confess don't we, that God sends

the gospel to whom He will, when He wills, and according to His good pleasure? Do not forget that the fact that God sends His gospel at all is according to His grace.

The grieving sinner must hear a particular gospel. The one and only gospel of the Word of God, which reveals to us the sovereign goodness of our God, the grieving sinner must hear. The sorrowful sinner is a peculiar sort of individual. He is one of those who have become the property of our Lord. We know that all men are sinners worthy of damnation on account of their sin; but precious few persons grieve about their sins. How about you and me? Do we grieve because of our sins? Are we sorry for what we are? I am not only responsible for what I do, but I am also responsible for what I am – a sinner, dead in sin and misery.

We know that to be Reformed we have to say with respect to ourselves something about total depravity; but whether we have experienced personally the truth which we confess is another matter. To know your-

*We wish to welcome Rev. Kamps (pastor of our Redlands church) as one of our editors.

self to be a wretched miserable sinner, unable to do any good and prone to do all evil, is a gift of God's grace to you. Every man in the pew or on the pulpit is a sinner before God, whether the individual on the pulpit or in the pew experientially knows that of himself or not. Some people in the church do not know the horror of their sin. Therefore, they do not seek rest in Christ. The sinner who does not walk in the consciousness of his sin and guilt before God does not come to church in order to hear sermons from God's Word about sin, grace, atonement and sanctification. He comes to church for other reasons.

All of us frequently walk in the sins of greed, malice, lust, pride, envy — breaking the whole law of God. But only some are troubled by the knowledge of their sin. Some have not only the knowledge of their sin, but they also grieve over it; while others may intellectually know they are sinners, but they could not care less about it. In fact such seek the pleasures of sin. The difference between the grieving sinner and the "couldn't care less about it" sinner is the irresistible grace of God.

But the question confronts us, what must that burdened and heavy-laden, grieving sinner hear? What must the preacher preach? The sorrowing sinner must hear this: God is good, and ready to forgive!

What does it mean that God is good? We can say, first of all, that God is good in that he bestows all manner of good gifts upon His creatures. God gives health, food, rain and sunshine, clothing for the naked, and all things necessary to sustain His creatures as it were by His hand. God is good! Secondly, God is good as the ethically perfect God. God is virtue. He is love, grace, mercy, and loving-kindness exactly as He is the thrice holy God. He as the Holy One fills the whole earth with His glory. You understand then that the goodness God shows to the creature is a revelation of His goodness as He is in Himself. As the Lord, who is good, He is righteous in all His ways and Holy in all His works. God is good exactly because He is the Holy One, who loves Himself as such. In the third place, God's goodness implies that He is ever ready to bestow His righteousness upon them that seek to be right-

eous. God reveals Himself in Christ as He who is ready to forgive all them that call upon him, namely, the grieving sinner, who seeks to be righteous. This righteousness Christ has merited for all His own by His death upon the cross of Calvary.

God is good. Therefore the sinner need not be afraid to come unto God in prayer asking for forgiveness. God is always ready to remove His hand of oppression from off that sinner who grieves under the burdensome knowledge of his own sin. God is ready to bestow the righteousness of Christ upon him.

It is true that if the sinner did not know that God, who is holy, was also ready to forgive, the sinner would not dare to come in prayer before God's throne of justice. The sinner who did not know that God is good and ready to forgive would rightly be filled with terror before God expecting to be consumed in the fire of His just wrath. But Scripture declares, and the preacher must declare, that God is good and ready to forgive, being plenteous in mercy. God's mercy is this that He desires to forgive the sins of the grieving sinner and cause that sinner to experience the joy and blessedness of friendship with the covenant God.

God is always ready to forgive. It is not so that God is unforgetting, as if God were some tyrant who created and sustains all things and who rules and controls all things irrespective of the desires and longings of His rational moral creatures. Such a god, God is not. But men receive forgiveness in the way of seeking it and only in that way. Men who don't seek His forgiveness ever experience God's wrath. God is ready to forgive all them that call upon Him. Unto all who seek remission of sin, God grants remission. Unto all who seek to be righteous in Christ, God grants them the consciousness that they are righteous by faith, a righteousness Christ merited for them and which always remains Christ's righteousness even when you possess the consciousness of it by faith in Him.

This gospel the grieving sinner must hear. It is a particular gospel. The gospel is addressed to them "that call upon him." It is personally addressed to a peculiar people who sorrow for their sins. The assurance

that God is ready to forgive is given to them that call upon His name. That assurance is given to none other.

Upon the impenitent, God, according to His holiness and expressing that all His ways are holy, breaks forth in judgment in this life and life to come.

The sinner must know that God delights in the repentance of the penitent. The preacher must declare that God will hear the sinners' cry for help. The sinner who grieves must cry out for forgiveness. He need not be afraid before God, who is

holy and good. The sorrowing sinner in the knowledge that God is ready to forgive must call upon His name seeking forgiveness for his sins.

Do you believe that God is good and ready to forgive and plenteous in mercy to all them that call upon His name? Then, whoever you are, call upon His most holy name! Ask Him to bow down His ear; and say, hear me, O Lord, for I am poor and needy! That you need forgiveness is true, isn't it?

CONTRIBUTION

LOVE ME, I AM OLD

by BERTHA DEN HARTOG

The old man ran his fingers through his woolly head, and glanced at the old clock on his mantle in eager anticipation. He leaned thoughtfully back on the faded, rose chair, that had been one of his first possessions in the "new country." Reminiscently, he smiled, "Ya, they were good children."

Just yesterday he'd been telling that old Mr. Gregior in the other room, his boy Billie had just been moved up to assistant clerk at the department store! "Ya, Billie had it in him to go far," he smiled proudly. Oh, did it really matter that his wife was so modern, she never cared about the old days; after all when one was young one had no need for an old man's memories; you had your own life then.

"And then there was Hans," the old man's face flushed proudly. His "little Hans" was learning at a great school, and some day he would become a great man. What did it matter that his ideas were so strange, this was a new time and the things of the old country, those were behind now. Ya, Hans was so smart and so busy with all his many friends. Yesterday he'd tried to explain to Mr. Gregior how Hans was so busy with learning and that in his free time . . . well he knew, the old man chuckled, "a young handsome boy with a promising future . . . well there were these things called dates, of course a young boy had not always time to visit and talk with and old man, who could not understand the

words so well. "But today," . . . the old man leaned forward expectantly, "today, they were all coming."

"How Mama would have loved it," he thought, "all the children with their little ones, and they could talk of old times." No he must remember not to do that, they didn't . . . how had Hans said that, oh yes, "they didn't live in the past, but in the future." He chuckled sympathetically. "When he was young he didn't want to hear of lives already spent . . . how he had hated hearing of the good old days, but yet when a man got old his memories were a comfort to him like a warm blanket in the cold weather. They helped him forget that his strength was seeping from him and that his future held only bleak cheerless tomorrows leading to nowhere. He shook himself resolutely. He must not feel sorry; it was only right that he who had already lived, already served his purpose, be cast aside, "cast aside!" he snorted. He was very happy here in the 'home,' where the children could come and visit him. The children yes . . . and the grandchildren, why even old Mr. Gregior had nothing to compare to his handsome grandchildren, and if they were noisy and tired him with their insistent demands it was only because he was so old.

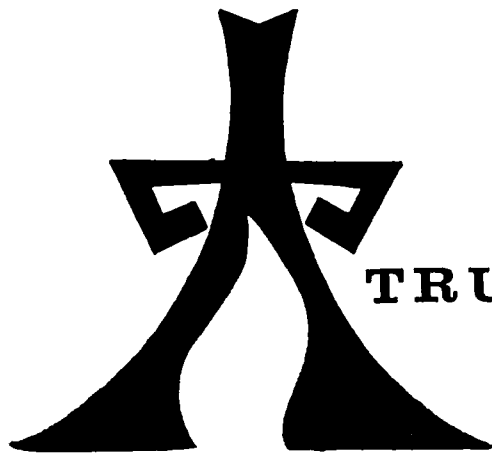
"Mr. Gregior," he thought scornfully, "always talking about his children. What were they? Poor common laborers? His Hans

was to be a lawyer and Billie was buying a new house in the spring. Mr. Gregior indeed, a common old Italian pizza maker! Ha! That man had the nerve to say his children didn't care . . . of course they cared but, ya, he knew how it was, life is so busy."

The clock on the mantle ticked the afternoon away in loud ominous ticks. The old man sat in contemplative silence, occasionally dozing, but awaking with a hopeful start at the sound of a footfall outside the corridor, only to fall back in disappointment when the unintentionally cruel foot-steps walked on by.

The old man paused from his rocking

and looked at the clock; the hands read 5 o'clock, long past visiting hours. He sighed, his shoulders became a little more stooped, his eyes more lonely, his face wearier. Then he brightened. He had misunderstood of course, they were coming next week. He was getting old he scolded himself; of course they had meant next week! How proudly he would walk over to Mr. Gregior's room; he would smile and say, "Mr. Gregior these are my sons!" "Crazy old Italian saying his children didn't care. Why of course they cared, only it took time to get ahead." He shook his head condescendingly, "Crazy old Italian peasant, Ha!"



TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBT. C. HARBACH

MRS. TIMOROUS

— *And Our Friendly Visits*

Secret had gotten her started. Christiana now with her children is packing up for the heavenly Jerusalem. She will be carrying in her bosom an epistle from the King, gold letter edition, its pages faintly emitting fragrances of the best perfumes (Song 1:3). She and her children read this golden book daily. Their aim is to have it "by root of heart."

Every day there are neighbors of Christiana's who have little else to do than to hang over the back fence for hours of tittle-tattle. Tiring of this they adjourn to meet in what some of the neighborhood men call "the yap and lap club." There Mrs. Bat's-

eyes is president, Mrs. Know-nothing is vice-president, Mrs. Inconsiderate, treasurer, Mrs. Light-mind, secretary, and Mrs. Timorous with Mrs. Love-the-flesh, the new-recruit sub-committee.

Ever try to do your packing and listen to a gossip? So busied, a knock at the door interrupted our heroine, and there stood Mrs. Timorous, on one of her recruiting sprees. Said the lady of the house, "If you come in God's name, come in!" Momentarily this had Mrs. T. "shook," for she was not used to this kind of language in her neighborhood. Still, she entered, and being amazed at what she saw, blurted,

"What in the world is going on here?" Christiana, continuing with her packing, replied that they were preparing for their long pilgrimage. "Well," said Mrs. Timorous, having some time to kill, "I've come to pass on some of the latest regurgitations of our local, friendly gab-gobble-and-git society." Then followed a set-to, with Mrs. T. trying to dissuade Christiana from this ridiculous turn of things. Christiana would only pause in her preparations to take out her letter, open it, read a snatch from it, and say. "Now, what do you say to this?" But read for yourself the whole account of that dialogue.

Names like Miss Much-afraid and Mr. Fearing are, in themselves, indifferent, capable of both good and bad implications. With the latter it was good, for he was always fearing sin. Other names have nothing but a bad connotation, as this of Timorous. In Christiana's golden epistle the name appears in, "Let not your heart (or name) be Troubled," and in, "Why are ye Fearful?" and in, "God hath not given us the spirit of Timidity." Timorous belongs to the genus *deilos*, mentioned in, "But the fearful (timid ones, cowards) . . . shall have their part in . . . the second death." So the name is bad enough, but, as you see, not the worst of that lot of gad-about.

We saw, in the chapter on Timorous and Mistrust, that the father of this woman was a Temporary, a Turncoat. He and his family did not like Strait Street. He noted that rushing back from it were Obstinate, Pliable and Atheist. Also on one side of that street was the Shadow of Death, on the other side, Apollyon and his black mastiff. Further, the road led through the dangers of Vanity Fair and through many long, lonely lanes with lurking lions. Timorous could not imagine a poor, weak woman taking that way with four sweet babes! She began to feel that her visit was not proving very entertaining to either of them. She was further mystified when her utterly mad friend argued that all these troubles in The Way did not discourage her from it, but only convinced her that she was in the right. But then she was really exasperated when her scurrying host broke out, "Since you came not to my house in God's name, I bid you begone!" Had you

been there you would then have learned what an unbearable loud-mouth the faltering, shy Mrs. Timorous could be. Off she went, and could calm her strident ravings only by pouring out her timid, empty soul before the avid auditors of her set in the apartment of Mz. Wanton.

Later, in her own house, she told the whole gabble her latest escapade. To the idea of Christiana's going on pilgrimage, the natural reaction of Mrs. Bat's-eyes was, "Oh, that blind and foolish woman!" Mrs. Inconsiderate, sister of one of the jurymen in Vanity Fair, Mr. No-good, had no sympathy whatever for Christiana. "Away with such fantastical fools from the town!" she ranted, "and good riddance! Let her go, and let better come in her room. It was never a good world while such whimsical fools dwelt in it." Mrs. Light-mind, changing the subject, told of a party she attended with music, dancing, the latest flapdoodle from Mz. Filth and Mz. Love-the-flesh, and how that all thought Mr. Lechery was "a pretty fellow."

But we have better things to do, better company to keep. When we make friendly visits, we had better be sure that we do so to the glory of God, and by them minister grace to our hearers. The Apostle Paul put it this way, "Let us go again, and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do" (Acts 15:36). What does that mean, "see how they do?" It does not mean, "to hear their gossip," nor "listen to their complaints." It means, rather, that since they have heard the word of the Lord preached to them in all its purity and power, more than any other people under the sun, has all this good preaching met with good effect in them? Or has it, perhaps, been lost on them, and the grace of God been received in vain? Before you do any visiting of others, you must first visit yourself, and ask yourself, the Word of God has long been preached to me, how do I do with it? Is it to me a word of life? Does it quicken me, or does it leave me dead in trespasses and sins? Is it light to me, or am I in the dark about it? Is it spiritual food to me? Do I feed on it and get nourished by it? Am I the better for all the sermons I've heard and all the exposure

I've had to the Holy Scripture? What appetite do I have for spiritual delicacies? Does my soul prosper? Do I get nearer to God and heaven, or does my soul cling to earth, with heart and mind set on it as much as ever? It's important to know, spiritually, how you do. Do the words preached and read leave you cold and unmoved, dull and inactive in the work of the Lord? Do you maintain close, constant and secret devotion to the Lord? Do these devotions lag, with you careless and lifeless in them? Is your private and family worship kept up as it should be? Now, if you should conduct such a visit with yourself, will it not reveal to you how worthless most of your outside, social visiting is?

Ordinary visits, made to relations, friends and neighbors, should be carefully managed, so that they may be Christian visits. Our visits, in themselves neither good nor bad, will be either, according to the principles motivating us and governing us in the conduct of them. Whatever we do, in our calling and ordinary life, we must do to the glory of God; then it will be dignified and sanctified. It should be the effect of what we do to bring our friends and acquaintances forward on their journey, and that is to be done "after a godly sort." Then we do well (III John 6). The Christian religion is not to be confined to church on Sunday, but wherever we are we must have it with us. "Bind it continually upon thine heart, tie it about thy neck. When thou goest, led it lead thee; when thou sleepest, let it keep thee; when thou wakest, let it talk with thee" (Prov. 6:21, 22). The Christian life must be lived when you sit down at table, lie down on your bed, when you rise up and go about your business.

Let it be evident in your buying and selling, reading and writing, looking and listening, when alone, and in company. Let all this show that a new heart regulates your life.

The Christian pilgrim will not allow friendly visits to become a waste of time. Every Christian is a steward of his time. Our time is not our own. Time is entrusted to us as a pound to be traded with for eternity. If any of our visits are made at the expense of the responsibilities of Christian life and godliness, they are not Christian visits. Paul warns those who "learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house," as "not only idle, they are tattlers also and busy-bodies," — idle in good, busy in evil. When tale-bearing goes on at our visits, they are not Christian visits. "Speak evil of no man" cautions not only against the spreading of an evil report which is false and groundless, but also that which, though true, would only mean spreading more harm than good. If we cannot speak well of a person, it is better to say nothing than to speak ill of the person. We would not have our own faults and mismanagements aired behind our backs. How we would hold our tongues if we treated others as we desire to be treated! Where the law of God says, "Thou shalt not raise a false report," the margin has, "thou shalt not receive a false report," for often the receiver in this case is as bad as the issuer. Those who make it a habit in their visits to gossip about (the absent) others, abusing their good name, propagating contempt and jealousy, sowing suspicion and discord, do the work of the devil and serve his interests. "Get thee behind me, Satan!" Timorous. I bid you be gone!



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CURRENT EVENTS AND COMMENTS

Freedom Craze

RACHEL LUBBERS

This is just a gorgeous morning, and the sun shines brightly making the complete world appear beautifully golden. A gentle breeze offers a freshness which nothing else can give. A morning such as this causes one to become very awakened and inspired. No matter where one would take a stop to rest today his eyes would be easily drawn to the fascinating, amusing, interesting, and the new in life standing ready to be learned.

Taking just a glance at the people around and about me I see clearly and sense strongly how important it is to them to enjoy their freedom and how they are seeking desperately for originality. Noting this just passively draws me to concentrate on this subject in bewilderment. Today, these two ideas of freedom and originality are keenly driven into the minds of the American people. Those who turn on the radio hear advertisements on the air encouraging them to go places that should not be missed. There are things to see that you will not forget, things you can do to get yourself out of the same old rut. Those who watch the T.V. set are shown how to be different from the crowd and what to use or get in order to accomplish that idea. Those driving the highways read signs on both the right and left informing them how to enjoy themselves and how to have a good time. Everywhere, the media encourage society to get out and away and have some fun.

This tremendous emphasis on individual freedom, and being your true self, which ever way that happens to be, has just massacred the mind of the younger generation today. How? Stop and take a look around. What do you see? A large and growing group of young people who do not know where they are going or who they are supposed to be. They are people who have no idea whom to believe, but are busy searching deeply trying to figure out what life is supposed to be used for! It is true, there are some young people who

are trying to pass by all this complicated confusion and there are some who are really searching, trying to find, and to see. But it is sadly apparent that many of both these two groups of people have joined our cities' one million runaways. They are out to join a search for themselves and a place where they can either find or plant imaginary peace. The rising number alone of those young people who are hitch-hiking and roaming aimlessly in this country from early dawn into the late night is incredible! Miles of unhappiness are forcing curious young people to search for some freedom which can be packed in a sleeping bag, swung over a shoulder, to be used as they wish. Flinging open the door of their homes, they leave, feeling convinced they do not need the security of family or friend. Success is a word they do not understand and so they go out to try to learn it on their own and test themselves to it in life. Yet, many are mistaken and fail to realize that they are only trading in any happiness and contentment for deeper frustration and confusion.

So as time passes so also does it teach. They can all run far and fast, but when they are tired and come to the end of their run, they turn around, raise their faces into the sunlight, let the gentle wind blow their hair and begin a long trip back. Reaching out, they cling desperately to some dream but found it only vain. Those who want out, those who leave and drop out of society learn that reality clutches their hands, and wherever they may run it will run with them; wherever they may hide, reality will find the secret hiding place. No, there is no answer in the peace sign, in dropping out, in drinking, in drugs, or in love-ins — no answer in selfishness. Trying to live in full freedom only causes confusion to grow and sin to increase.

As I stand here and let the wind dry my sad eyes after seeing this pathetic sight, my mind turns to the church of believers. I almost want to sigh in relief and whisper

peacefully how happy we must or should be. Yet, looking again I almost want to shout out how much we must learn . . . not tomorrow, not next week, or whenever we are finally ready settle down, but right now. More today than before and more tomorrow than ever the world has more to throw at our feet to cause us to trip, stumble, and fall. We cannot spend our life and time, which is given to us, in any way that we wish. In fact we must be extremely conscience of what we do. We are not here as a free people or a people of any kind, but as dedicated people, dedicated people who live for the service of God. Oh, not only on Sunday or when we feel more like living a true Christian life, but this is our whole life! Man was not created to live for himself and to see what he can give to himself. And it does seem time for every individual to try to conceive of that meaning . . . to give more of himself and take just a little bit less. If we could try a little harder to feel

that self should not always be our first thought. We must venture out a bit and teach ourselves to be persons enough to see the sin in breaking down others whom we either know or do not know for the sake of being able to build ourselves a little higher. Looking outside and seeing what lies out there show clearly we may not strive to be a free people and that life is not ours. We are different (aren't you?) and therefore not only asked, but required to live differently. Yes, perhaps now life may seem to move swiftly by, but when life is no more and we must give account for each thought and deed ever done, it may well seem to be a thousand and one years.

Well, the green leaves on the tree still move gracefully, and I am going to leave now and take a walk with the beautiful fresh wind. Taking one last glance I notice the long shadows of early morn have shrunk, and again I realize how quickly time has passed along.

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

JEANNE KARSEMEYER

From our Hudsonville Church:

The membership papers of Mr. Edward Vander Werff have been received from our Redlands Church.

Lester Barnhill made public confession of faith on May 27. He comes to us from the McBain Baptist Church.

The Pre-Synodical sermon was given on June 5, Tuesday evening, in our Hudsonville Church, with Rev. C. Hanko as the speaker. Synod began its sessions on June 6. The two seminarians, Mark Hoeksema and Meindert Joostens, successfully passed their examinations, and graduation exercises for them were held on June 12 in Hudsonville Church.

Lester Barnhill and Mary Lanning were joined in holy matrimony on May 18 in our church.

John Bodbyl and Jane Keen were united in marriage on March 23 in the Bauer Christian Reformed Church.

From our Loveland Church:

Graduation exercises of our Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School were held Tuesday, May 29, in the church. Rev. Engelsma spoke on the theme "Faith and Peace" from Psalm 4.

From our Hope, Walker Church:

A talent program sponsored by the Young People's Society was given in the church on May 25 to raise money for the coming convention.

The membership papers of Mrs. Russell Dykstra (nee Carol Looyenga) have been received from our First Church.

Ninth grade graduation exercises of Hope School were held on Thursday, June 7. Professor Hanko spoke on the theme, "Happy are the people whose God is the Lord."

Art Bleyenbergh of Edgerton and Mary Lou Kuiper spoke their vows of marriage on June 22 in our church.

Mr. and Mrs. James Huizinga rejoice in the birth of a daughter, born on Wednesday, June 20.

From our Hull Church:

Mr. Jerry Brummel and Miss Marilyn Mulder were joined in marriage on June 15 in the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center.

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Uittenbogaard were blessed with a son, Chad Lee, on June 4.

Graduation exercises of the NW Iowa Protestant Reformed School were held in Hull Church on Friday, May 25. Rev. Wayne Bekkering spoke on the graduation theme, "Fight the Good Fight of Faith."

From our Randolph Church:

On January 26, Eugene Braaksma and Kathleen Fisher were united in marriage in our church.

Public confession of faith was made by Jack Regnerus and Mr. and Mrs. Eugene Braaksma on February 11.

The Young People's Society traveled to South Holland on March 23 for a combined society meeting. A dinner was served and Bible discussion and a singspiration followed.

The consistory announced that dismissal papers were sent to Dave Tamminga at his request.

A public lecture was held in our church Friday, April 27; it was delivered by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema and was entitled "Holy Scripture - Wholly Divine." A time of fellowship and refreshments followed.

From our Holland Church:

The Young Adult's Society Banquet was held on Thursday evening, April 19, at Jay's Western Room. All the young adults of the congregation were invited to attend.

The membership papers of Mrs. Robert Windemuller have been received from the First Reformed Church of Byron Center.

From our First Church:

Dismissal papers have been sent to Miss Ruth Noordyke. She intends to affiliate with the Beckwith Hills Christian Reformed Church.

A public lecture was given in First Church on May 10. Speaker was Rev. D. Engelsma and the very timely subject was "Key 73 - What Must We Say About It?"

Public confession of faith was made by Rosanne Dykstra and Tom Moerdyke on May 27. Tom also received the sacrament of baptism at that time.

Membership papers of Mrs. Henry Holthrop have been transferred to our Hudsonville Church.

The annual church picnic (which I hear was an Ox Roast), was held on Saturday, June 9, at Caledonia Park.

From our Southwest Church:

Membership papers of Mr. John Bylsma were received and accepted from our First Church.

A combined car wash and baked goods sale was sponsored by the young people on April 24. Proceeds were for the convention.

From our South Holland Church:

Members of Covenant Christian's choir travelled to South Holland to render a special program in the church on April 26. Afterwards refreshments were served.

On May 11, the marriage of William Lenting, Jr. and Janet De Young was solemnized in the First Christian Reformed Church of South Holland.

The annual South Holland Protestant Reformed School dinner took place on Tuesday, May 8, in the church basement. Proceeds were for school expenses.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Busker were blessed with the birth of a son on April 25.

The Men's Society sponsored a lecture by Rev. Engelsma on May 9 in the church. The topic was "An Analysis of Key 73."

Dismissal papers of Mrs. Marcia Boersema (nee Poortenga) have been sent to her home.

Mr. and Mrs. Adrian Lenting rejoice in the birth of a daughter on May 18.

The annual Memorial Day Church Picnic was held at Glenwood South Forest Preserve on May 28. Some of the events were: a program following lunch, the Ladies' Society Sale, games for the children and a ball game. Proceeds of the picnic sale were for the school.

Ninth grade graduation exercises of the South Holland Protestant Reformed School were held on June 1 in the church. Speaker was Prof. H. Hoeksema, who spoke on the class motto "Let Your Light So Shine."

BIBLE QUIZ

Answers:

Beatitude "Why's"

1. "... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3.
 2. "... for they shall be comforted." Matt. 5:4.
 3. "... for they shall inherit the earth." Matt. 5:5.
 4. "... for they shall be filled." Matt. 5:6.
 5. "... for they shall obtain mercy." Matt. 5:7.
 6. "... for they shall see God." Matt. 5:8.
 7. "... for they shall be called the children of God." Matt. 5:9.
 8. "... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:10.
 9. "... for great is your reward in heaven." Matt. 5:12.
 10. "... that they may have right to the tree of life and may enter in through the gates into the city." Revelation 22:14.
2. "That ye may be the children of your Father, which is in heaven, for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain on the just and on the unjust." Matt. 5:44-45.
 3. "... and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:6.
 4. "... for where your treasure is there will your heart be also." Matt. 6:20-21. Matt. 6:20-21.
 5. "... for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6:24.
 6. "For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things." Matt. 6:32.
 7. "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Matt. 7:8-9.
 8. "... lest ye enter into temptation." Mark 14:38.
 9. "... that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." John 10:10.
 10. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1. (The rest of the chapter goes on to explain further.)

Sayings of Jesus

1. "... they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Matt. 5:16.
10. "Ye believe in God, believe also in me." John 14:1. (The rest of the chapter goes on to explain further.)

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