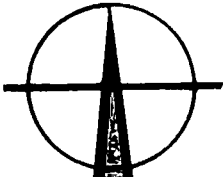


BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT
REFORMED YOUTH*

August-September, 1973

*The Christian
and
Politics*





BEACON LIGHTS

VOLUME XXXII

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1973

NUMBER 4

Published monthly, except June and August by the Federation of Protestant Reformed Young People's Societies.

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Forms 3579 should be returned to BEACON LIGHTS
 Box 7383, Grand Rapids, Mich. 49510
 Second Class Postage paid at
 Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Subscription price \$3.00

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BITING ON THE WRONG END

A young mother and her five year old son were busy one morning making their beds. After the mother had finished straightening up her room, she went to see how her son was doing in his room. She arrived in time to find him struggling violently to get a clean pillow-case over a large feather pillow.

"Here, son, this is the way to do that," she said as she took one end of the pillow firmly in her teeth and slipped the cover on.

"Oh, mother," he cried, "I know! I was biting on the wrong end!"

In the illustration above, it makes little difference of course, which end of the pillow one holds in his teeth while slipping on the pillow-case. However, in the daily life of the child of God many actions are justified and rationalized as being all right by "biting on the wrong end."

The child of God as he lives from day to day faces numerous choices and must make many decisions. Sometimes these decisions are acceptable and right while at other times they are questionable and even objectionable decisions. Often questionable and objectionable decisions are made because we begin by "biting on the wrong end."

Some examples will suffice to illustrate the point being made.

The local high school is putting on its annual play and as a high school junior or senior, you would like to attend. However, when you ask for permission from your parents, you run into a grave problem. Your parents say, "No, you may not go." If your response is, "What's wrong with it?" you are biting on the wrong end. If you ask, "What's wrong with movies?" "What's wrong with dating young people that go to other churches?" "What's wrong with going to the Senior dance?" "What's wrong with drugs, drinking, or smoking?" "What's wrong with wearing short dresses or long hair?" you are biting on the wrong end.

It is, of course, important that you do

know what is wrong with movies, dances, drugs, etc.; but this is not your primary reason for asking the question. It is an escape technique — a means of putting your parents on the defensive. You force mother or dad to make a statement regarding the wrongness of a certain activity and then proceed to argue against it with might and main. You've learned that occasionally your technique is successful and permission is reluctantly given because your parents find it hard to pinpoint the wrongness of that particular activity. Your conscience is now clear because your parents have made the decision for you. But I say, you are "biting on the wrong end."

Instead of asking, "What's wrong with it?" it is better to ask the question, "What's right with it?" or "What's good about it?" Remember, moreover, that goodness is an attribute of God. If we try to judge the goodness of these activities by our own standard of goodness we will continue to do that which is questionable and objectionable. God demands that we walk uprightly before Him in righteousness, holiness, and perfection. In obedience to that calling, the child of God tries to determine what is good and acceptable before God and not those things which are good in the sight of the world.

It is important that we be positive rather than negative. "What's good about not going to movies and plays?" "What's good about drugs or drinking?" "What's good about short dresses and make-up?" "What's good about television?" "What's good about the pill?" "What's good about motorcycling on Sunday afternoon?" "What's good about lotteries and door prize drawings?"

Considered in this light, many of these questionable activities would become objectionable and the sincere child of God would be determined to deny himself these questionable "pleasures." "Biting on the right end" will help us in walking a life of sanctification before the Lord our God.

JOHN KALSBECK

THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS

HARRY LANGERAK

Watergate: As I was contemplating the subject of the Christian and politics this term repeatedly crossed my mind. It struck me that Watergate is a prime example of the evil that the world gets involved in with its brand of politics. Politics, as you may or may not realize, is inseparably connected with our government. It is the art of winning and holding control over government. It may also include the ability to guide and influence our governmental policies. In our particular government we do this democratically, that is, through the will of the people. The people in turn elect representatives to serve them so that their will may be carried out as to how the government is to run. To facilitate matters, parties have sprung up which have particular ideas on how government should be run and candidates usually are elected under the banner of one of them. Watergate is an attempt by a few to get the reign of government into their hands through the illegal use of this political system. They have used money, robbery, invasion of privacy and mechanical genius of our age for bugging in order to gain their ends. How could this happen in our political system which is supposed to be so full of checks and balances so as to avoid this type of tyrannical happening? Watergate should not surprise the child of God. He knows himself and how he must fight his own selfish inclinations for power and prestige, and how much more then those who do not have to worry about fighting it.

Politics is an invention of men to facilitate control over government. Man, who by nature wants to lord it over his neighbor, has tried to build in a system whereby this attempt is minimized. As Watergate has demonstrated no amount of built-in mechanics will insure against this power hungry mania. I believe the child of God must see politics as a creation of this world to facilitate control of government by the world. Only then can we see Watergate in its proper light. At the risk of sounding

pessimistic, I would assert that there will be more Watergates. The antichrist must come and it is only through the centralization of power that this will happen.

The concerned Christian might ask how it is possible for him to participate if politics is an area where the world has such influence and is such a corrupt business. Is it possible that the Christian has no place in the arena of the political process of our government? It is my contention that not only may the child of God participate, but he must. In this article I would like to express some ideas on why this is so.

Before I start, I would like to lay down one fundamental fact that every child of God no matter what he does must remember. The child of God lives in this world as a pilgrim and a stranger. He must realize he has no permanent resting place here and yet he is in this world and is called to live in it. It is this tension that causes much of the problem with regard to answering our question. There are those who would simply withdraw themselves from the political scene and not participate in any form or fashion. This is the Anabaptist point of view. Their argument runs something like this. The world is corrupt and we are to steer clear of corruption; therefore, we must live separately and can disobey government. Article 36 of the Belgic Confession denounces the Anabaptist with these words ". . . we detest the Anabaptists and other seditious people, and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates, and would subvert justice, introduce community of goods, and confound that decency and good order, which God hath established among men." This is the argument used by those who would contend that politics is a corrupt business and therefore, we ought not involve ourselves because our influence is so small in this sea of depravity. If this is so, the Christian could use this argument anytime he pleased and therefore, justify

total withdrawal and be no better than the Anabaptist. I might add this is an accusation often wrongly thrown at us.

There are others who would answer our question by simply throwing out the pilgrim status of the Christian and joining hands with the world in causes and practices. They would have us believe the antithesis is something of our imagination. To them the cause of Christ is to redeem this world and what better way than using the might of this world's political forces. They accuse those who oppose them of being a stick in the mud who have no idea of the social character of Christian or the church. This position must be heartily condemned because it demands that we give up our pilgrim status and denies Christ is coming again to redeem the world.

We must recognize the indisputable fact that we are pilgrims and strangers. The apostle Peter states this very clearly in 1 Peter 2:14. "Dearly beloved I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from the fleshly lust, which war against the soul." This world is not our home. We are just passing through. We are citizens of the eternal kingdom and as such we do not feel at home. "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ:" This world as we know it and all that it contains will pass away and be cleansed by fire. This idea must always be before the mind of the Christian pilgrim as he lives in this world. He must realize this world with all its problems and frustrations will not improve with age, but will wax worse and worse until the cup of iniquity is full. Can you imagine the frustration one would experience if after trying to improve this world he sees things as they are today? If you find this hard to believe, examine what politicians are trying to do today to make peace, get rid of poverty, and improve race relations.

I imagine you are wondering how a Christian pilgrim can participate in politics. Government is an institution of God and was ordained to serve his purpose on earth. This is especially brought out in Romans 13:1-7, and also in the Belgic Confession Article 36. "We believe that our gracious God, because of the depravity of

mankind, hath appointed kings, princes and magistrates, willing that the world should be governed by certain laws and policies; to the end that the dissoluteness of men might be restrained, and all things carried on among them with good order and decency." We are under a government that allows its citizens the right to participate in its politics. We are obligated therefore to see that the purpose of our Lord is fulfilled by our participation. We as children of God should be the most exemplary citizens and purposeful politicians because we live the life of Christ on the earth.

We also participate in this world's politics because we have a calling to do so by our king Jesus Christ. To understand our calling we must see ourselves first of all as citizens of the heavenly kingdom because we have been called out of darkness into his marvelous light. This calling by Christ relates our present earthly existence to our heavenly eternal existence so that the latter permeates the former. The new life of Christ now directs and controls our earthly existence. All we do in every sphere of life is characterized by the new life of Christ. We are now the office bearers of Christ on the earth. He has made us partakers of His kingship. This fact is substantiated by question and answer 32 of the Heidelberg Catechism. What this means is that we press all things into the service of Christ. It is this that obligates the child of God to participate in politics. We must be careful to add that we participate as a pilgrim who seeks God's glory. Do not forget this is our distinguishing characteristic as I Cor. 10:31 teaches, "Whether therefore ye eat or drink or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

We also must be aware that when we participate we are His witnesses. We have been given that new life of Christ so we can shine out as lights in the midst of darkness. We reflect the light of Christ that has been shed abroad in us through the work of the Spirit. This idea is brought out for us in Matthew 5:14-16. While we are here on earth we must strive with all that is in us in whatever we do to walk as renewed children of God. Because of this antithetical walk the Christian in politics will be aware that he is much different

with regard to his solutions to the world's problems. It should not surprise the Christian politician that his influence is small, but this should not deter him. The darkness hates the light. "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be re-proved." The world did the same to Christ and the servant is no greater than his master.

How do these facts make themselves felt in actual participation of the Christian pilgrim in the area of politics? The child of God realizes his involvement in politics is for the sake of Christ and His kingdom. This means he does not seek to redeem this world. The world is sinful and will continue in its sin until it is cleansed with fire in the last day. We know from Scripture that the forces of evil will increase until they will almost swallow up the church. Therefore, the Christian pilgrim realizes that he is only a very small force in the world and yet he must serve his king as a living witness. A difficult task for the Christian politician? Yes, indeed, but a very important one.

Neither can the Christian pilgrim participate in politics on the same basis as the worldly politician. This would be yoking oneself to the method, principles and organizations of the wicked. Scripture expressly forbids this in II Corinthians 6:14-17. The child of God is called to separate himself so he will not be identified with all that the ungodly stand for. The antithesis must exist even in the area of politics. The Christian politician must always have this before his mind or else he risks bearing the yoke of the ungodly.

We must be very careful not to bear the yoke of the ungodly in their purposes. The purpose of the worldly politician is to redeem the world for their own ends. All they do politically is geared for the world's redemption and is of the earth earthly. The purpose of the world is therefore enmity against God. To fulfill their purpose, the world in its politics works at getting rid of the symptoms of the illness in the world. They think by correcting such problems (which will never happen) as war, crime, civil rights, poverty, and ecology they will make this world a better place to live.

What they have failed to do is get at the root cause which is sin. It is in this point that the Christian politician separates from the causes of the world. Do not get me wrong, it is not that he does not want to have all these things the world mentions, but he sees the root cause of sin and all these things are the result of sin. He knows the only real relief from them will be the purging of the world of all sin in judgment at the last day. I would like to add a warning in connection with the causes of the world. At times it might be tempting to take up their banner particularly when they sound appealing to our cause. I have in mind the anti-abortion banner known as the Right to Life. Many Christians have taken up the cause but have lost their particular pilgrim identity by refusing to call abortion what it really is. Abortion is murder and must be condemned on the basis of Scripture. It is this type of identity that the Christian who participates in politics must be wary of.

There are two levels at which the Christian pilgrim can participate in the area of politics. One is at the individual level and the other is at the group level. At the individual level the Christian can operate to influence the politics of our nation through such means as letter writing to officials, voting, articles in newspapers, talking with the neighbor, appearing at meetings to encourage or discourage. These while they do serve a purpose in our political system do not work as effectively as work done on the group level. Although at present for lack of a good distinctive organization, I would encourage their use.

The political organizations the Christian belongs to must display his distinctiveness. Presently there are two major parties in our country. Each has been formed to win elections and form government policy. Each party bears the common banner of the world to make this world a better place in which to live. It is impossible for the Christian pilgrim to fly the banner of either party and maintain his pilgrim status and identity. By joining with the world in this unholy alliance the Christian has broken down the antithetical wall that separates him from the world. By joining their parties he accepts their wisdom, principles

and methods. I would go so far as to say he could not maintain the principles of the child of God and use the argument of Scripture (which is foolishness to the world) and stay in either party. They would not want a pilgrim who talked the language of Scripture. One just does not win elections and influence people that way. I often wonder if this is why Scripture makes the statement in I Corinthians 1:26-27. "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty;" The pilgrim realizes that in this world he will be of little consequence as far as his great influence is concerned. Does this mean he stops his witness? I should say not. He must join himself to an organization that will bear the standard of Christ and His Word. Do not confuse this organization with the church. The church has no business in politics. Its sole purpose for existence is to preach the Word. No, the organization I am talking about must subject the politics of this world to the rule of Christ and His Word. This means this political organization will use the principle of Christ and the arguments of Scripture as a guide to the problems of the world. This will involve a number of realizations for this to be an effective organization of the pilgrim. It must be realized that God chose to use the weak and base things of this world to bring to nought the power of the world. I Corinthians 1:26-28. This party must and will be of very little consequence in the world. It will not play power politics. The only weapon this party may use is the Word of God in its witness. If the use of Scripture will not convince then the only alternative is to submit. Why you ask must this be so? The answer lies with those who make it up. In the first place, they are pilgrims and strangers which means they are despised. In the second place, they are the light of the world according to Matthew 5:14-16 and will bear the wrath of the world because darkness hates the light.

The organization must also realize that this present evil world is under control of

the forces of evil. They are strangers here for a reason. The politics of this world is of this world and is used by it to attempt to wrench the kingdom of Christ away from Him. The Christian pilgrim must not let this deter him in his witness, but it must be an incentive because he has behind him the power that will overcome the world.

By this time you are asking, Is there such an organization? No, I don't believe so, but I would add that we cannot possibly fulfill our obligation as prophets, priests, and kings on this earth and maintain our identity as pilgrims until we can join one. All we are doing at most at present is supporting one party or another, and then the only choice we have is between tweedle-deedee and tweedledeedum. Hardly are we voting out of any principle. I for one feel the tremendous need for an organization that would give the child of God a choice based on principle. I feel this need more and more as I observe the political scene. The time is soon coming when even the lesser of two evils will be too bad to vote for.

I find it very hard based on the present political situation for the Christian pilgrim to engage in politics on a group basis. This I would say is particularly true of running for office. The only alternative at present would be to participate on an individual basis.

Let me give so much time to the improvement of myself that I shall have no time to criticize others.

• • •

Thought and learning are of small value unless translated into action.





FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

REV. G. LUBBERS

"But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel" — Acts 2:16

Spoken by the prophet Joel!

Who Joel was and when he prophesied is a matter of debate and speculation. It was not important to the Holy Spirit to inform us concerning Joel's time and history. Our attention must be fixed on what Joel spoke. The man Joel is not important; it is Joel the *prophet* which demands all of our attention. He was one of the holy men of God; mouth-piece of the LORD was he

It is the end of all contradiction and the testing-rod of the reality of the mighty words of God!

Joel is not the author of what he said; he was the spokesman of God.

He spoke the prophetic word, which shines as a light in a dark place until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts.

Blessed Word of God; a light in the darkness of our night of sin and death.

Spoken by God Himself through Joel!

◦ ◦ ◦ ◦

These men are not drunken as ye suppose!

Unbelief cannot and will not understand even when the mightiest signs of God are

wrought from heaven. When it is noised abroad in the streets of Jerusalem that Galilean men, disciples of Jesus of Nazareth, are speaking in other tongues the wonderful works of God, cruel unbelief mockingly lifts up its head. The fact cannot be denied, but the true character and origin of this wonder must be denied and contradicted. Unbelief is both blind and deaf. The sounds from heaven it cannot and will not heed, and the flames of fire it cannot see. The gospel of sovereign grace is foreign to unbelievers. They will not put off the shoes from their feet.

These men are full of new wine!

Drunken gibberish is all that they desire to perceive. And in the folly of unbelief they perish. They are not pricked in their hearts for their sins' sake. The promise of the Spirit they cannot receive. What here transpires is hid from them!

Stupid blindness of sin!

These men are not drunken as ye suppose

◦ ◦ ◦ ◦

Lofty plane of the prophetic Word!

The things foretold by God are come to pass. It might seem that the Word of God

to Joel was shrouded in darkness and mystery. And in a sense the Word of God by Joel is apocalyptic. The imagery is bold and strong. The situation in Israel is desperate. The curse of the Lord as the expression of the law is in the land. The armies of God's fury are sent in the form of locusts. They devour the bread of God's people; the land of plenty, of corn and wine, is become a vast and horrible wilderness and wasteland. The curses foretold by Moses in the law are present.

The prophetic word calls for a genuine fast of repentance. The congregation, young and old, great and small must all gather in the temple. And they must humble themselves for their sins. They must be pricked in their heart. To call upon the Name of the Lord is the need of the hour. And God in heaven will hear!

To such comes the comforting message of the prophetic Word. Yes, then will the LORD be jealous of His land, and pity His people. Yea, the LORD will answer and say unto His people, Behold I will send you corn and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith

Fear not, O land

Be glad and rejoice.

For the LORD will do great things for His people!

More sure prophetic word unto which we do well to give heed

Until the day dawn

• • • •

Suddenly there was a sound from heaven!

It was as the sound of a mighty rushing wind. It filled the whole house where the church was gathered, which would be built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets of which Jesus Christ is the chief corner-stone.

Yes, the wind was blowing where it listeth; the Spirit was sovereignly going where the Lord of glory was sending Him.

The church heard the sound of the mighty rushing wind, but did not know whence it really came, although this sound came from heaven. It was from above; it came from the Lord who had been crucified by wicked hands, but who had been raised from the dead, set at God's own right hand, and now shed this forth which they hear.

And the appearance like unto cloven tongues of fire was seen upon each of the church. It was the fire of purification of the Spirit of Christ. It was the church, a little "bush" in the wilderness filled with the strange sight of the fire of the Spirit without being consumed by it. The church is really "under the cloud" here. The cloud of glory, the very Shekinah of God rests upon the church. It is the Spirit of grace and glory resting upon the church.

Jehovah is pouring forth His Spirit upon all flesh. It sat upon each of the members in the church. Were there one-hundred-and-twenty souls presents? Men and women, old and young, children and adults? It was all flesh. It was poured out upon the church in a house. God had removed the tent-of-meeting outside of the camp of Old Testament Israel.

Blessed sound in all the house!

Purifying power to present the church one day to God without spot or blemish or any such thing!

• • • •

Upon my servants and my handmaidens!

Selective, sovereign grace of God. It is not for all, this outpouring of the Spirit. Since we are sons we have received the Spirit of the Son, crying, Abba Father. He cries this in the hearts of all the "servants" in such a mysterious way, that we cry, Abba, Father. Yes, it is but the first-fruits which we have now. But it is eating already of the new wine and corn, the plentiful supply of grace which faileth never.

Is not the feast of Pentecost the feast of harvests? Was not this feast one of the three great feasts to be celebrated in Israel? And was not this feast a reaching out in hope to the year of Jubilee, the complete liberation from the slavery of sin and death, guilt and corruption?

Grace without measure, it is.

The Spirit is poured out. It is bountiful grace. Where sin abounds, grace will much more abound. It is the only hope for God's servants. Dead in trespasses and sins, under the curse and damnation of the law, the only hope for Abraham's seed is the promise of the Father: the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. Yes, He takes it out of Christ and gives it unto us. He comforts us and leads us into all the truth. He dwells in

the church with this infinite riches and blessedness, never to leave her. And always the supply of grace from the throne of God is there, grace for grace. All the spiritual blessings in heavenly place are for the servants even as they were elected in Christ from before the foundation of the world.

Grace for grace. Rivers of waters flowing from the mouths of the faithful servants.

Sovereign grace of the Holy Spirit . . .
• • • •

Spoken by God through Joel, the prophet!

In the midst of the dark of the emptied sun, and the awful spectacle of the blood-red moon, there is deliverance. Yes, the great and notable day of the Lord has come. But the servants are safe.

The Name of the LORD is a strong

tower. The righteous flee thither and escape.

The Spirit-filled saint calls upon the Name of the LORD; he alone escapes. He shall be saved, whether he be Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female. None that comes to the Lord called by the Spirit, regenerated, called, justified, will be cast out.

Listen to Joel's beautiful feet upon the mountain.

God spoke through Joel of old. He spoke at Pentecost in the sound of the wind and in the cloven tongues like as of fire. He gave utterance to those who preach the Gospel. Tens of thousands have preached this fulfilled word of God through Joel.

Heaven and earth shall pass away.

But the Word spoken through Joel is timely and fitting forever . . .

BIBLE QUIZ

THINGS JESUS SAID: RECORDED BY MATTHEW

Since these were words spoken by Jesus, they are among the most famous words ever spoken by any one. Can you complete the quotations?

1. "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt and where thieves break through and steal but . . ."
2. "Judge not . . ." Why?
3. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes . . ."
4. "But when thou doest alms" (that is, when you do any good thing) "let not your left hand know . . ."
5. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren . . ."
6. "Take no thought for the morrow . . . sufficient unto the day . . ."
7. "I came not to call the righteous . . ."
8. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world . . ."
9. "Heaven and earth shall pass away but . . ."
10. "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you . . ."

THINGS JESUS SAID: RECORDED BY MARK

One of the things Mark tells us about Jesus' teaching is (Mark 12:27) that "the common people heard him gladly." Can you continue the following quotations? Give the "sense": it is not always necessary to give the exact wording.

1. "The Sabbath was made for man and . . ."
2. "If a house be divided against itself . . ."
3. "A prophet is not without honor but . . ."
4. "Whosoever will come after me, let him . . ."
5. "If any man desire to be first . . ."
6. "Suffer the little children to come unto me and forbid them not, for . . ."
7. "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but . . ."
8. "Ye have the poor with you always . . . but . . ."
9. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready . . ."
10. "Go ye into all the world . . ."

(Answers on page 13)

I Am Joe's Tongue

(with apologies to J. D. Ratcliff, of Readers Digest fame)

J. M. FABER

I am quite something! I cannot help but boast! I am used by Joe in all his waking hours, and sometimes in his sleep. I am all muscle. Muscle, the source of all power! The anatomist can tell Joe much about me of which Joe is but dimly aware. Joe knows by experience that I am generously covered by taste buds and by thousands of nerve ends. If Joe should place two needles tightly together and touch my tip I can discern that there are two! I have many chores to perform for my host. I judge when food is ready to be swallowed; I test the temperature of drinks so Joe's gullet will not be burned; when Joe gets nervous I wet his lips. Joe takes me pretty much for granted but my work in his service is multitudinous. So much for my anatomical properties.

I am much more than a nerve-packed muscle. I talk! I am directly connected to Joe's heart from which are the issues of his life. I reveal the thoughts and intent of Joe's heart. I can arouse deep emotions in Joe's hearers. I can placate a violent man just by speaking. I say, "charge" and a whole army goes forward to battle. And I am above all things most deceitful; I may say, "love" while Joe thinks, "hate" in his heart.

As I said before, I'm quite something! I am a whole world—a world of fire! I am untameable, unlike the great beasts which may be tamed. I am an unruly evil. I defile Joe's whole body. I set fire to the whole course of Joe's nature—and it is set

on fire from hell! I am full of deadly poison. Whereas a fountain cannot bring forth at the same time both sweet water and bitter, I can. I bless God and curse man made in His similitude. I have been likened to a small helm which can turn a great ship about. Behold me; do you blame me for boasting?

NOW HEAR THIS. Joe has been regenerated. Joe is now a Christian, and his ethical heart is renewed within him. What a change in my activities! Now I am used to praise God Who has turned Joe about. Now I am used for lofty purposes. Now rivers of waters flow over me from Joe's sanctified heart to the praise of God and the weal of men. I now sing praises to God in church and in the Society meetings. I keep busy telling Joe's friends and fellow workers of the grace of God which has turned him from his evil ways.

And, sad to say, I still sometimes say mean things about Joe's neighbor. I don't always use my power to speak praise, but speak evil things. I sometimes allow words to pass over me that I should have swallowed. But, praised be the Name of God! I, like that prophet of old, have had a coal from God's Altar placed upon me and have been cleansed! Each night Joe uses me to confess his sins. All is forgiven! How I long for the time when I shall be freed from the pollution and bondage of sin! Then, then I shall whisper in the night, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

PELAGIANISM

by RICK NOORMAN*

Pelagianism is a religious doctrine taught by Pelagius about A.D. 400. He taught that Adam was created mortal and would have died whether he sinned or not. His sin was

*This article was originally written as a Church History I requirement at Covenant Christian High School.

not transmitted to his posterity and man can live altogether without sin. Grace or divine aid is not necessary, and man's will is not corrupted. Every child is born in a state of innocence as Adam was, and his perseverance in virtue depends on him.

Arminianism is a heresy originating in the

17th century. It is a liberal reaction to the Calvinist doctrine of predestination. The Arminians developed the Five articles of Remonstrance in opposition to the 5 points of Calvinism. The articles of the Remonstrance are in short: (1) election and condemnation was conditioned by the rational faith or non-faith of man, (2) the atonement, while qualitatively adequate for all men, was efficacious only for the man of faith, (3) unaided by the Holy Spirit, no person is able to respond to God's will, (4) Grace is not irresistible, and (5) believers are able to resist sin but not beyond the possibility of falling from grace.

Pelagianism and Arminianism are very similar heresies. This will be shown by a comparison of the Arminian articles of Remonstrance and the Pelagian Synod of Arles. I think it is possible that Arminius took the ideas of Pelagius, who lived 1300 years earlier and used them as a basis for his beliefs. Both of these heresies totally deny the five points of Calvinism. Pelagius denied that the whole human race fell with Adam. In this he also denies total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. The Arminian Articles of Remonstrance also deny these five points.

Article I of the Remonstrance denies eternal predestination or unconditional election. The Pelagians also took this stand at the Synod of Arles in 473 when they condemned the belief "that the foreknowledge of God impels men violently towards death." Neither the Arminians nor the Pelagians wanted to admit that the merciful God, the God of love, could condemn a person to eternity.

Article 2 of the Remonstrance claims that Christ died for all men and that he loves them all. This denies limited atonement. The Synod of Arles agrees with this when it condemns the belief that Christ has not undergone death for the salvation of all men.

Article 3 implies that man is not totally depraved, that he can do good. This good that he can do is to accept the offer of grace. Pelagianism says that the labor of human obedience is not to be joined with the grace of God. This, basically, says that man apart from God can do good works.¹

Article 4 says especially that "grace is not irresistible." The Synod of Arles denies that after the fall of the first man free choice was utterly extinguished.

Article 5 denies perseverance of the saints. The assertion of the Synod of Arles said that he that is saved is in danger. This doctrine takes away the most beautiful and comforting fact from the Christian. The belief that God will preserve us and keep us from the hands of Satan is a most comforting thought.

I think the comparison of the Five articles of Remonstrance and the propositions condemned by the Synod of Arles in 473, shows how closely these heresies, more than 1000 years apart, resemble each other. This also gives evidence that the basic heresies keep cropping up in different forms to try and deceive the orthodox Christian world. It seems that Satan has done a good job of camouflage as we see how Arminianism is flourishing today.

The Roman Catholic church also adopted the Pelagian ideas in 1547 at the Council of Trent. They condemned those who believe that the free will of man does not cooperate at all by responding to the awakening call of God. In saying this they became synergistic, that man and God must cooperate in man's salvation.

The main opponent of Pelagius was his contemporary Augustine, Bishop of Hippo. He wrote with very strong language against the beliefs of Pelagians. In 417 at the Third Ecumenical Council the doctrines of Pelagius were first condemned. Then at the Council of Orange in 529, twenty-five canons were passed accepting most of Augustine's teachings, a lot of it in his own words. But even here, in Orange, they didn't go along with double predestination. "But not only do we not believe that some have been predestinated to evil by the divine power . . ." They wouldn't accept it that God would will someone to evil.

1. The Pelagians can't go along with the belief of total depravity because they say it would make man careless and profane. Our Heidelberg Catechism teaches against this.

POPCORN

SOLE MIRANS

"Junior, an important thing you must learn is that sin is not what you do, but where you do it."

• • • •

Once upon a time, not too long ago, there lived a group of people known as the Logicians. They lived in their own secluded country, quite apart from the rest of the world, and few of them ever ventured forth from their homeland. These people were a distinct race and had many fine characteristics. But they had one that appeared rather strange. It involved their attitude toward popcorn. They did not believe in eating it, they would not include it in their diet, and most of them had never tasted it. And they, being Logicians, had a reason. They felt that popcorn was bad for a person. It often, they said, caused indigestion and heartburn. It made people sluggish. It was habit-forming too, and its addicts usually neglected more wholesome food. The unpopped kernels might crack your teeth; parts of the popped ones might lodge between your teeth, or, worse yet, under your gums, at least if you had false teeth. The older people, for the most part, had no urge to eat it; the younger people were forbidden to eat it. This principle of not eating popcorn had great influence and for quite some time was accepted unquestioningly by all.

It began to be a problem however, when some of the younger Logicians temporarily left their country to learn a trade or to receive a higher education. For, in the countries around them, popcorn was a regular part of the menu and was highly relished. The young Logicians were often urged to try the popcorn. For a time, they resisted. But soon a few, and the number gradually grew, began to taste it, usually on the sly so that their own countrymen wouldn't see them. They found, to their great surprise, that popcorn didn't taste so bad after all. In fact, it had a pleasant flavor. Also, none of the dismal after-effects seemed to follow. More and more of them began to try it, and more and more of them began to eat it very frequently.

Word of the young Logicians' actions soon reached their elders. They were appalled. But, being practical thinkers, they tried to find a remedy. No longer could they talk of the horrible results of such eating because the young Logicians would not believe it anyway. After much planning, however, they found a very nice solution. Since, they felt, it was obvious that the young Logicians would continue to eat popcorn, and since some of them also had an urge to try it, they said: "If you're going to eat popcorn, eat it at home. Don't go to the popcorneries in the other countries. If you must eat popcorn, you'll do it under our supervision." This decision made the young Logicians, and many of the older ones too, quite happy. Many purchased electric popcorn makers so that they could make popcorn in their own homes, just by plugging in the machine and turning it on. None of the older Logicians, and few of the younger, went anywhere else to buy it. They ate at home, and they all found eating popcorn so enjoyable.

It was very, very strongly insisted upon, however, that popcorn might be eaten only at home. Severe condemnation was on those who dared to taste it elsewhere.

• • • •

"No Junior, you may not ever go to a movie, nor to your class play. All drama is an abomination to the Lord. Be a good little boy and stay home with us and watch television."

ANNOUNCEMENT:

WELCOME

The Federation welcomes to its Executive Board: Ron Hanko (Vice-Pres.); Dawn DeJong (ass't sec'y); Daryl Kuiper (treasurer); Jim Schipper (Youth Coordinator); and Rev. D. Kuiper (Spiritual Advisor — West).

Also, a welcome to Mr. James Huizinga, who will replace Miss A. Lubbers on the Scholarship Fund Committee.

NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

JEANNE KARSEMEYER

From our Hope, Walker Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Gary Kaptein and one baptized child were received as members from the Second Christian Reformed Church of Allendale. The Kapteins recently were blessed with a baby daughter, Cynthia Lynae.

The Young People's Society sponsored a car wash and baked goods sale at Hope School on Saturday, July 14. They also held a car wash, baked goods sale and paper drive on August 4. Proceeds were for the convention.

Mr. and Mrs. Louis Kamps rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Mariam Petra, born on July 11.

The membership papers of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Machiele (Genny) and two baptized children, Richard Paul and Ginnette, were received from the Spring Lake Christian Reformed Church.

The annual church picnic was held at Douglas-Walker Park on the evening of August 8.

During the week of August 13-17, Hope's Young People's Societies were privileged to host the 1973 Protestant Reformed Young People's Convention. Many young people as well as their parents and families attended the Pre-Convention Singspiration at First Church on August 12. Speeches by Prof. H. Hoeksema and Rev. M. Kamps were given in Hope Church on Tuesday and Thursday nights of that week.

The address of Bob Kamphuis is:

S. R. Robert Kamphuis
Naval Training Center
San Diego, California 92133

From our Holland Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Brent Overway were blessed with the birth of a daughter.

From our Loveland Church:

Mr. and Mrs. R. Brands were blessed with the birth of a daughter.

Ft. Collins City Park, which contains a baseball field, tennis courts, and a swimming pool, was the site for the annual church picnic held on the Fourth of July.

Public confession of faith was made by Rich Campbell on August 19.

Rev. Engelsma gave the convocation address for the Loveland Protestant Reformed Christian School, which opened its doors on August 28. His topic was "A Covenant School."

The Ladies' Circle sponsored a potluck supper on August 31 at Lakeside Park. A collection was taken for the building fund of the school.

From our Hull Church:

Mr. Philip Brummel and Miss Sheryl Ribbens were joined in marriage on Wednesday, July 11 at the First Christian Reformed Church of Hull.

The church picnic, a potluck supper, was held at Sioux Center Park on the evening of July 9.

Mr. David Hoekstra and Miss Donna Burgers were united in marriage on July 24 at the Christian Reformed Church of Inwood.

Mr. and Mrs. David Wiersma rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Stacy Ann, born on July 27.

Mr. and Mrs. Rod Brunsting were blessed with a son, Ryan Dean, also on July 27.

Mr. and Mrs. David Groeneweg are the grateful parents of a son, Chad Davis, born on Tuesday, July 31.

From our First Church:

The wedding vows of James Alan Schimmel and Carol Lynn Dykstra were spoken in our church on August 23.

Mr. Oscar Faber and Elaine Bakker were joined in holy matrimony on June 29. Elaine has been received as a member in full communion from the E. Muskegon Christian Reformed Church.

Mr. Ryan Harkema and Mrs. Henrietta Pastoor were united in marriage on Wednesday, July 25.

Larry Looyenga and Kathy Clawson spoke their wedding vows on July 27.

John Cooke and Susan Yonkers were married in our church on Friday, June 15.

From our Hudsonville Church:

During the morning service of July 22, Miss Ilona Philips and Jason Holstege made their public confession of faith. Miss Philips also received the sacrament of baptism at that time. And on Saturday, September 15, Jason and Ilona were united in marriage in our church.

Mr. and Mrs. Steven Holstege, Jr. are grateful to God for receiving from Him a baby daughter, Marcy Ann, on August 4.

Members of all societies attended a pre-season inspirational meeting on September 11. Rev. Heys spoke on "Our Two-fold Need."

From our Randolph Church:

Jack Regnerus and Susan Soodsma were united in marriage on May 12.

On May 19 the Young People's Society travelled to the Chain of Lakes in Waupaca for a canoe trip and picnic. On Memorial Day they held their annual picnic at Devil's Lake State Park. On June 21 they

held a baseball game at the community ball diamond, and on June 17 sponsored a singspiration. Proceeds from the singspiration were for furnishings for the new church building.

The construction of the new church building in Randolph began on June 4.

Rev. Engelsma gave a lecture entitled "Key '73 - What Must We Say About It?" on July 19 in the church auditorium.

To close their season, the Young People's Society had a baseball game and cook-out in the Randolph Park on Wednesday evening, May 23.

From our South Holland Church:

Mr. and Mrs. Garrett Eriks were blessed with a son on Wednesday, July 4.

The wedding ceremony of Mr. Arthur W. Zandstra and Judith Ann De Boer took place at the Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church on Friday, July 27.

Karen Bruinsma and Donald De Jong made profession of faith on July 1.

Answers:

BIBLE QUIZ*

Things Jesus said:

Recorded by Matthew

1. "... but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Matt. 6:19-20.
2. "... that ye be not judged." Matt. 7:1.
3. "... of thorns or figs of thistles." Matt. 7:16.
4. "... know what thy right hand doeth." Matt. 6:3. Jesus was saying "Never do a good thing to show off: to do that spoils it - it isn't any longer a good thing."
5. "... ye have done it unto me." Matt. 25:40.
6. "... is the evil thereof." Matt. 6:34. In other words, "Don't worry."
7. "... but sinners to repentance." Matt. 9:13.
8. "... and lose his own soul." Matt. 16:26.
9. "... my words shall not pass away." Matt. 24:35.
10. "... do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. 7:12.

Things Jesus said:

Recorded by Mark

1. "... not man for the Sabbath." Mark 2:27.
2. "... that house cannot stand." Mark 3:25.
3. "... in his own country." Mark 6:4.
4. "... deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Mark 8:34.
5. "... he shall be the last of all and the servant of all." Mark 9:35.
6. "... of such is the kingdom of heaven." Mark 10:14.
7. "... to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Mark 10:45.
8. "... me ye have not always." Mark 14:7.
9. "... but the flesh is weak." Mark 14:38.
10. "... and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15.

*Taken from *The Bible Quiz Book*, and used with permission of Baker Book House.

MR & MRS JOHN ZANDSTRA JR.
492 GLENWOOD-LANSING RD.
GLENWOOD, ILLINOIS 60425

ANNOUNCEMENT:

The Federation Board, on behalf of the Young People's Federation, would like to express their appreciation to the Hope Society members, their parents and friends for the effort they put forth in sponsoring the 1973 PRYP Convention this year in Grand Rapids.

We also wish to thank the retiring Federation Board members: Ed Karsemeyer (Vice-Pres.); Nona Miersma (ass't sec'y); Jim Schimmel (treasurer); Pete Miedema (Youth Coordinator);

and Rev. R. Decker (Spiritual Advisor) for giving of their time and talents to the Federation during the past two years.

Finally, a special thanks to Miss Agatha Lubbers, retiring teacher—representative to the Scholarship Fund Committee for giving of her time for this cause.

Thank You!

The Federation Board
SUE TERPSTRA, Sec'y



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