

# BEACON LIGHTS

*FOR PROTESTANT  
REFORMED YOUTH*



February, 1975

**Modern Entertainment  
and the Christian**



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## Editorial

# Any Pistle to the Cousins of Jack and Jill

by J. M. Faber

Dear Grandchildren:

Now that Jack and Jill are safely off on the sea of matrimony, and have presumably made many adjustments in their ways of conduct, I will address this Pistle to the rest of my grandchildren.

I have in mind to write to you about the concept, compromise. The big book by Webster tells us that the noun form of that word means: a settlement of differences by natural concessions; an adjustment of conflicting claims, principles, etc., by yielding a part of each.

Now such adjustments are often the ideal way of meeting differences of opinions between two parties, or factions; or even the differences that show up in a good Christian marriage. I imagine that Jack and Jill and their spouses have already made mutual concessions in the matter of preference for tea or coffee for breakfast, or whose relatives deserve the first dinner invitation. The better way may often be by yielding to one's marriage partner and to be rewarded at another time by a reciprocal yielding on the other's part. So far, so good.

There are some compromises that are not worthy of the name. Suppose that one of your friends enjoys going to the movies for his entertainment, and asks you to go with him. You answer that you believe it is wrong to do so, so you decline. He then suggests the compromise that you stay home tonight and watch the film on T.V. You compromise. What! That was no compromise; you lost that round!

I'd rather call "settling of differences" an adjustment instead of a compromise.

The word, compromise, often has a stigma attached to it, an evil connotation. You probably know that Jill's husband was born and raised in a denomination other than Jill's. After they realized they were in love and began to see in the other a possible marriage partner, they began to consider their religious differences. Jill talked with her parents about this, and she had several talks with her pastor. They helped her see that any compromise between her and her lover was out of the question. No, not a compromise, but an adjustment was in order. From here I could not learn the reaction of his parents and minister. I suppose it was much like hers.

But with her minister's counseling of Jill and her beloved, he gradually saw that the stand on which Jill so firmly stood was really the Holy Scriptures as they were so faithfully stored in the Reformed Confessions. The Three Forms of Unity also became the form of unity upon which their relationship developed. The outcome you know; they were married Christmas Day, and are attending Jill's church in complete accord. Jill's Mr. made the adjustment, in God's Grace, and received the reward of grace: a truly happy Christian marriage based on Scripture.

Jack and his Mrs. were spared the trauma of such an adjustment. He found his girlfriend in the catechism class; the friendship was strengthened in Bible discussion in the young people's society. They learned to know and appreciate each other's viewpoint on matters of their faith at an early age. Of course other

adjustments had to be made: non-earth-shaking ones like Saturday rising times. Jack liked to be-up-and-at-it bright and early. Jack's Judy liked to stay abed longer on the day she did not have to go to work. But she wanted to get his breakfast every day, and wanted to share the Saturday morning's leisurely breakfast with him. They compromised. The difference between a seven and nine alarm-clock call was settled by mutual adjustment to a routine eight o'clock breakfast. So I am not very concerned with Jack and Judy, nor Jerry and Jill, any more. I am concerned about all their cousins-my grandchildren, all!

Remember, your parents are praying that your faith will not falter; that you will never compromise the confession of faith made in church. But remember, too, that your grandparents are also carrying your concerns to the Throne of Grace in their daily prayers, that you may be kept in the faith once delivered unto the saints. Paul's spiritual son, Timothy, had a grandmother whose concern for her grandson was great enough to receive a special mention in the Bible.

Now then, if you meet up with a problem which calls for a compromise, and which might be settled by a simple adjustment suggested by your parents, your minister, or even your old (I can remember when bread sold for five cents a loaf) Gramps, feel free to seek such counsel. Gramps' sixty-ish years of experience might come up with a possible solution. Just Maybe?

Closely related to the above, I will now present you with Gram's post-humous advice found in Eph. 4:31, 32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

I submit you cannot beat that advice. That is straight from Our Father which is in Heaven.

In my next letter I intend to write about my teen-age impressions of the Church Reformation in the years of 1924-25, 'till then.

Love, Gramps.

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## Feature

# Modern Entertainment and the Christian

Phil Harbach\*

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\*Phil is a member of our Hope, Walker, Church.

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"Hey, man, watcha doin' for excitement?"

"Oh, nothin' much lately."

"Let's get with it, man. Hey, I got just the place — good drinks, far out bands and nice girls like you wouldn't believe!"

"Well, uh, couldn't we just take in a flick?"

"Naw, man, this place will blow your mind!"

"Well . . . I don't know, ya see my parents would get 'uptight, and if anybody from church found out, it'd be a bummer."

"Aw, you gonna let them spoil your fun? Besides, who needs to know anyway? What do ya say?"

"Yeah . . . if nobody finds out about it . . ."

Consider the double-minded reasoning of our "church kid". He thinks his parents and their church have placed arbitrary, oppressive restrictions on his "fun life" which he must enjoy in secret or else lose the pious mask he wears every Sunday. "Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (Matt. 23:28). This may also describe the confessing church member who has never gone to the movie theatre, danced (at least publicly) or been drunk, but deeply envies the hilarity-packed lives of his non-Christian friends and acquaintances. He loves to hear their stories of drinking and dance parties, rock concerts and the latest flicks. Many times he has thought to himself while eyeing the newspaper entertainment ads, "Boy, I'd like to see that flick; everybody at work says it's really a scream. If only my folks weren't so picky!" Or if his parents don't object to TV, "Oh well, I'll see it on TV in a couple years anyway."

All the pleasures and entertainments the world has to offer attract church-going young people as well as youth of the world. Many reason like this: Why are the Protestant Reformed Churches, pastors and parents always harping on the "evil" and "wickedness" of all that kids like to do? Isn't it a thrill to experience the deafening, powerful roar, the squealing, burning rubber and awesome acceleration of those "speed machines" at U.S. 131 Dragway? Just think, a quarter mile in, say, eight or nine seconds!

Or take dancing. There you have good exercise. Just let your body move freely with the rhythm of the music. It makes you feel liberated and carefree. Or why not have a few drinks? You don't have to get drunk, just be sociable; it'll loosen you up and relax you. Our parents had their music, so why can't we have ours? Sure the words may not be perfectly Christian, but its got a nice tune and a lively beat which make you want to sing along, or get up and dance. It'll make you feel happy and "turned on".

Then there are movies. Why, a good movie helps you unwind, forget your worries. Everybody likes to see a good moving story with realistic action, suspense and a thought-provoking theme. One could even find some religious truth or at least some socially redeemable value in most movies.

All sounds quite attractive, doesn't it? But consider some of these things more closely. Examine your individual, private motive behind your fascination for these things. Do you attend drag races for the thrill of speed or the excitement of a possible spectacular crash? If so, does this honor the name of Jehovah? Or are you satisfying the god of self? Whether or not attending the races is inherently wrong, the most important question is, "Can I possibly be a witness to God's holiness in this place?" An honest answer will reveal your motive.

Modern music and dancing, so attractive to professing Christian young people has important social and moral implications. For an indepth study of rock music and dancing, written by a converted rock musician, read *Rock and Roll, the Devil's Diversion* and *Hippies, Hindus and Rock and Roll* by Bob Larson.

Man is a rhythmic being: his autonomic system being rhythmical (respiration and heartbeat). Dancing is a "language" to express these inner rhythms. Larson, quoting from *The Textbook of Social Dancing*, says, "Dancing is the expression of the sex philosophy of a given period." Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones has said, "All dancing is a replacement for sex." On rock music, Larson quotes a clinical psychologist as saying, "The music is in a way . . . a kind of sexual expression. The beat has genuine sexual implications." Frank Zappa of the Mothers of Invention said, "Our present state of sociosexual enlightenment is attributable to the evolution of rock music." In other words, since rock is a highly effective medium of communication, it has been a major force in precipitating the so-called generation gap, drug

abuse and sexual immorality.

Remember the words of Scripture, "Your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit . . . and ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God's" (I Cor. 6:19-20).

Graham Nash, a rock superstar, says, "Pop music is the mass medium for conditioning the way people think . . ." On another occasion, "I think that pop musicians in today's generation are in a fantastic position. They could rule the world. . . . We have the power . . ." Mick Jagger said, "We are moving after the minds and so are most of the new groups." (The music's mind-controlling properties are so effective that one may even hear confessing Christians singing along with such tunes as "Honky-Tonk Women" or "Jesus Christ Superstar"!)

The fact that those most familiar with rock music explain it this way only confirms the warnings of our ministers from the pulpit.

Larson goes on to point out the similarity between modern American discotheque dancing and African voodoo dances which many missionaries claim have demonic influences. Remember that because of a dance Herod gave the head of John the Baptist to Herodias' daughter on a platter.

Those who let pop music permeate their minds are allowing the devil to take them captive by their own will (II Tim. 2:26), and are giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of demons (I Tim. 4:1). Rock is the brainwashing propaganda of the false prophet of Revelation 13. It does not confess that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. Rather, it ridicules His name and tramples it under foot. "Superstar" and "Godspell" are two such examples which every young Christian should denounce as abominations against the holiness of Christ. A little research will reveal the perverted and godless actors and writers behind these productions. Such is not of God but is the spirit of antichrist (I John 4:3). Let us agree

with Johann S. Bach who said, "The aim and final reason of all music should be nothing else but the glory of God and the refreshment of the spirit."

God's Word gives us an example of a lasting joyful replacement for those shallow "thrills" of rock and roll. We are told to "speak to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord" (Eph. 5:19). You ask, "Who ever heard of anyone, even a Christian, doing that these days?" True, the church needs to apply this passage seriously. I believe those "spiritual songs" could be truly entertaining in a deeply joyful way.

Well, got nothing to do? Sit back and let the "Tube" tickle your mind! But look out! Scripture commands us (Titus 2:6) to be in control of our minds, "sober-minded." Television can be an escapism as dangerous as dope or music. Television and movies both preach a false gospel glamorizing violence, the new morality (including homosexuality) and blind materialism (via commercials). A very deceptive propaganda promotes the concept of a one-world religion and political system. Orthodox Christianity, marriage and the family are the object of ridicule on talk shows, "family" and comedy programs and even news specials. To harden oneself to this is to lose one's sensitivity to sin. Television is not inherently wicked in itself, but make sure you control that on-off switch. If you find yourself falling under its power, it would be better to "cut it off and cast it from thee . . . than to be cast into hell fire" (Matt. 18:8).

It may be easy to see the evils in music, television and dancing, but far more difficult to resist their influence in our lives because of their basic catching, hypnotic effect. Our only defense is prayer for the Lord's grace to overcome the world. Sometimes we don't want to pray this because we love the world. Remember that if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. The world passes away, but he that

does the will of God abides forever. Jesus said, "I have overcome the world." He promises that we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

Our motives must be to seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

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Do you do that whatever you do for entertainment? Do not be "foolish . . . serving various lusts and pleasures" but "in all things showing thyself a pattern of good works." Read Titus 2 and 3.

## Feature

# Prayer

Prayer by Ron Hanko\*

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\*Ron is a member of Hope, Walker, Church and is in the pre-seminary department at our Theological School.

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How often do YOU pray? Paul teaches that we must "pray without ceasing". Of course he does not mean that every minute of every day of our lives must be spent in prayer. That, of course, could not be; every man has physical needs as well as spiritual which must be satisfied.

Yet prayer is of utmost importance to our Christian life. Prayer is "the chief part of thankfulness", according to the *Catechism*, and we must be thankful in order to "live and die happily" (Lord's Day 1 and 45): indeed, it is not all of thankfulness, but certainly the most important part. Prayer is so necessary that God will give His grace and Holy Spirit *only* to those who ask them of Him and are thankful for them. (Lord's Day 45)

Why then, at times, when one of us young people is asked to pray in society or elsewhere, the result is an unintelligible mumble, or the unfeeling recitation of a few well-worn phrases? We do not talk to our friends that way, why then to God. Talk about reverence in prayer, that is not even polite.

Why is the problem? Don't we know what to pray or how to pray? Haven't we been taught? Must we be taught? Do we need special instruction in this in school? Catechism? The home?

Certainly, we must learn to pray. And

it is our parents primarily, though also our teachers and elders, who show us the way of prayer, both by teaching us simple prayers as children and by their own example. But that must not be the end. As we mature and are instructed in our heritage of truth, we must also grow in the knowledge of prayer.

How? As in all human learning, we develop by continual, regular usage and practice. A coach can teach his players the rules of a game, but with that alone they will never win any games. They must practice and practice some more, and if they cease they will lose whatever skill they did have. How much more should we attempt to develop in something which is absolutely essential to our life and well-being.

We must, therefore, keep a regular schedule of prayer. Family praying is a part of this and important, but we must also find time to pray alone, by ourselves and about ourselves. Everyone has their own personal sins and problems and these, as well as individual and personal thanksgiving, should be confessed to God in private.

I know, however, how hard it is to set and keep a regular period of prayer. The hectic pace of the life we lead, long hours of work, and a busy social life, make it very difficult to find time for our Bibles and our God. Coming home late at night after a date, work, or whatever, how easy it is to crawl into a warm bed without pausing on our knees for a few moments

on the cold floor.

Yet that is no excuse. May we tell Jehovah that we have no time for Him? To wake an hour or half-hour earlier in the morning and go to bed a little later in the evening is very small thanks for the gift of eternal grace: likewise cold knees or a missed TV program.

Look at the example of our Lord. Though He prayed in public and in the company of His disciples, yet, even as God, He prayed to God, alone; not casually to His Father, but in bloody sweat and anguish; not just in times of extreme trial but at all times. "It would be utterly unthinkable to picture Jesus Christ without the dimension of prayer. It is perhaps because we read the gospels so often as unpraying men that we are insensitive to the deep prayer dimension of His life. For Him prayer was not peripheral, causal or irrelevant but, on the contrary, absolutely central and essential. The first disciples

soon recognized something very unusual about His life: His unique wisdom, power and closeness to the invisible God. They surmised rightly that His prayer life held the secret of His unique relation with the Father." (Charles Whiston, *Pray*, page 19). Therefore they ask; "Lord, teach us to pray."

"Let us follow their example and seek to build a life of distinctly Christian praying on solid foundations; not spasmodic, intermittent, situational prayer in times of crisis, not prayer based on the felt need of the moment. That kind of prayer may be able to rest on the immediate occasion and need. But we must have prayer which rests on solid and enduring foundations; prayer which is rooted and grounded in the deep truths concerning God and man. Let us begin by turning away from ourselves to Jesus Christ, the man of prayer." (Ibid p. 18)



## Pentecostalism and Its Relation to Montanism

Jan Hanko

The history of the Ante-Nicene Church tells of the rise of many cults or Sects within the church. These groups opposed the pure doctrines of the church of Christ by denying the doctrines confessed in the Creeds of the church. Montanism is only one of the many groups which arose during this early period of the church. Although Mon-

tanism arose some eighteen centuries ago, there is still some evidence of it today. Pentecostalism of today seems to be a basic form of Montanism.

The origin of Montanism can be traced back to the second century in Asia Minor to a small village in the Province of Phrygia about 157A.D. This movement was started by a man named Montanus

who considered himself the inspired organ of the promised Paraclete or spirit of truth. Thus, many were led to believe that Montanus was that spirit of truth promised by Christ in John 14. It is said, that Montanus and two prophetesses, Priscilla and Maximilla, went forth as prophets and reformers preaching that the age of the Holy Spirit and the millennial reign, which was to take place in the small village of Phrygia, was soon to come.

Montanism, however, was soon condemned by the Catholic Christian Church and church councils. They said that Montanism was mystical, unorthodox, and denying some of the cardinal doctrines of the church. About 177 A.D. Montanus and his followers were excommunicated. Montanism seemed to gradually decline about 200 A.D., however several different forms of this heretical group continued to exist. Even now, today, evidences of Montanism are once again creeping up in Pentecostalism.

Montanism was rooted in Christianity, but its great exaggeration of Christian ideas caused it to fall into error. The most distinguishing characteristic of Montanism was their strong faith in Montanus whom they believed to be the promised paraclete or comforter which Jesus promised in John 14:16. The Montanists believed that there was a continuance of the miraculous gifts of the apostolic church. Prophecy and speaking in tongues were the gifts which they believed every man had the ability to obtain.

This prophecy related mostly to the approaching heavy judgments of God and coming persecution. The Montanists preached and prophesied that the second coming of Christ would occur at any time. Many taught and believed in a millennial reign to take place in the small village of Phrygia, in which Christ would rule on earth for a thousand years.

The Montanists believed that the emphasis being placed on the appointment of bishops and leaders in the church was much to great. They believed that the

church should rather be concerned with the priesthood of believers. They looked for the guidance of direct inspiration and would not recognize those spiritual gifts which are conferred by ordination.

The true followers of Montanism were required to turn from all the enjoyments of life. All virgins were required to be veiled, second marriage was considered adultery, hiding or fleeing from persecution was considered a denial of Christ, and fasts and other ascetic exercises were very important within the lives of the Montanists. Anyone who disobeyed the laws of the Montanists, or committed any of these deadly sins could not be restored to the fellowship of the church by any human authority.

One of the basic errors of Montanism is their view of the Scriptures. For the most part they took an allegorical view of the Scriptures instead of letting the Scriptures speak and then letting the Spirit apply this word. The Montanists were wrong in teaching the continuance of miraculous gifts of the Apostolic Church. These miraculous gifts ceased with the apostles for the Scriptures were then completed. In continuing the teaching of miraculous gifts they deny the completeness and sufficiency of the Word of God. The Montanists were part of the Chiliast Movement which was looking for the immediate return of Christ. They were also wrong in teaching that a millennial reign was to take place in the small village of Phrygia. Christ will never set up a kingdom and rule on earth.

The Montanists also fell into error when they refused to recognize those spiritual gifts conferred in ordination. They looked only for the guidance of direct inspiration. Ordination, however, is prescribed in the New Testament by Paul in his many letters to the various churches. In Acts 14:23. We learn that the disciples, "ordained them elders in every church".

Montanism resulted mostly in false doctrine. The only good aspect of Montanism is its emphasis on the Holy Spirit,

which the early church often neglected. This emphasis of the Holy Spirit however, resulted only in a misinterpretation of the work of the Holy Spirit and its effect upon those inspired by it. Montanism also aided in bringing about later trends which were concerned with the Holy Spirit such as Pentecostalism.

The Pentecostal trend did not become prominent in the United States until the early 1900's. Its history however, can be traced back to the New Testament church. In the books of Acts and I Corinthians, especially, we find much evidence of tongue speaking and other practices which the Pentecostals teach. From about 100 A.D. to 1900 A.D. there is very little evidence of tongue speaking except for that which arose for a short time among smaller groups such as the Montanists.

Pentecostals for the most part, believe in the Trinity, Man's original sin, and man's salvation through the atoning blood of Christ. They further believe in the virgin birth and deity of Christ. Concerning the Scriptures they believe in both the divine inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures. Many Pentecostals are Premillennialists. The belief however, that is most characteristic of the Pentecostals as with the Montanists, is that concerning the work of the Holy Spirit.

The basic idea of Pentecostalism is the idea of baptism in or with the Holy Spirit. They teach baptism in or with the Holy Spirit in distinction from regeneration and conversion. They further believe that the Holy Spirit brings to us the gifts and powers that we need, by coming into our hearts personally. The sign which shows that one has been baptized in or with the Holy Spirit is that of the ability to speak in other tongues. Pentecostals strongly hold to the fact that the experience of Spirit baptism and its result, tongue speaking, must be sought by all believers. Before this can happen, however, certain conditions must be met, for the believer will have to fulfill all these

conditions before the Spirit will come upon him.

Although this is only a brief summary of the beliefs of both Montanism and modern day Pentecostalism, it is fairly evident that there are many likenesses between the two. Both of them stress the work and importance of the Holy Spirit. They both emphasize the miraculous happenings as evidence that the Holy Spirit is dwelling among them. Scripture does not teach this. Speaking in tongues, for both the Montanists and Pentecostals, is evidence of the work of the Holy Spirit. They both teach the continuance of miraculous gifts and signs. Both put much emphasis on the emotional and unusual. This caused them to overlook the true gifts of the Spirit such as: ministry, teaching, exhortation, showing mercy, and others listed in Romans 12:6-8.

As for basic doctrinal ideas, they both believe in the Trinity, man's original sin and salvation through Christ, the virgin birth, and deity of Christ, divine inspiration and infallibility of the Scriptures, and most other Reformed Christian teachings concerning Christ.

Both Montanism and Pentecostalism hold to the belief in a millennium. They both teach that Christ will reign and set up his kingdom on earth. They both fall into error by taking a mystical and allegorical view of the Scriptures. Actually, they are forgetting the authority of the Scriptures and making their own experiences as a standard of belief.

In conclusion, let us look at Galatians 5:22 and 23 where Paul writes to the Galatians, and all of us, this: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." It is these gifts which God bestows (to each differently) upon his people. It is these gifts that we must look for and use, not just a few spectacular ones. The fruit of the Spirit is manifested through such gifts as these. Walking in

truth according to the Spirit is not easy, but we must not let ourselves be attracted by this sensational and emotional way

which is only a means of escape from the truth of God's Word.

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## Essay and Poetry Contest

In connection with the 50th year anniversary of the Protestant Reformed churches, the Beacon Lights Staff would like to hold an essay and poetry contest. The theme of all entries should deal with the idea of God's Covenant Faithfulness. The winning entries will, the Lord willing, be published in Beacon Lights just before the Young People's Convention this summer. So, grab pen and paper and enter soon! The following are some guidelines for the contest.

- I. Content
  - A. Theme: God's Covenant Faithfulness
  - B. Style
    1. It may be historical or experiential.
    2. It must be your own.
      - a. Avoid the use of cliches and word phrases foreign to you.
      - b. Be sincere.
- II. Grammar
  - A. Unity
    1. Avoid the use of excess words for the purpose of making your paper long (wordiness); if it can be said in a word then say it.
    2. Within the sphere of God's covenant faithfulness there are many aspects; choose one and write on it.
  - B. Necessities
    1. All standard grammar rules must be followed.
    2. The presentation should be neat and, if possible, type written.
    3. The due date is May 1.
    4. Please mail your entry along with your name and address (those of you who are in school also include your present grade level) to:

Mr. James Van Overloop  
7561 Sunset St.  
Jenison, Michigan 49428

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### Contribution

# Reflections of Young People's Society

by Ben Wigger\*

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\*Ben is a member of our Hudsonville Church, and a leader of their Jr. Young People's Society.

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The thought crossed my mind over and over again. It was a Sunday afternoon. the room was full of young people. the Bibles were all open in front of them

and they were involved in another society meeting. I just wondered how many would be here if the decision was left up to them. Was there enough interest then, and is there enough interest now to insure the continued growth of our Young People's Societies. Just stop and think a moment; ask yourself that same question. Do you really think Young People's is worth your attendance, or is it something you would pass up if your parents or anyone else gave you the chance? If your parents have to force you to attend, then really it is too late. In a matter such as this you should not have to have laws made to force you to do anything; you should want to.

But then this isn't really meant to be a negative article on why our societies are all doomed to fail. In the past I have had the opportunity to read the minutes of some society meetings. These minutes drew the same kind of problems that we face today. These problems are problems that have always plagued the church, and they will always continue to be with us.

Sin is the one factor that makes us incapable of doing any good thing. It is because of our sinful nature that we get bored in society. That's the reason we fail to speak up when we have an answer to a question that has been asked. Sin is the reason why we would rather drive out to the beach on a Sunday afternoon than study a chapter of the Bible.

So that is what you say. Sin will always be in us, the battle between the old man and the regenerated child of God will continue in us until death. There is nothing we can do to change all that. Really, the kind of society life we should have is unattainable. We just will never realize it.

The truth is that our best works on earth are as filthy rags; of ourselves we can do nothing good. But by the grace of God we can do good. He sees all of our works through the atonement of Christ. So you see there is hope for us. God's grace makes all the difference in what we do. Our society life can become more

meaningful if we strive to make it so, not by our own means but through prayer, asking for the help of God.

Now if there was only some easy step-by-step plan which we could follow to make our societies a place where we always wanted to be. If there was a book that could be bought which showed 10 easy-to-follow steps to improve your society life. Who knows, there might be a book like that somewhere, but I doubt if it would do any good. Really if there is going to be a change in our society life this year, it has to, in fact it can only come from one source, us. You as young people, and myself as a leader.

Thinking back when I was in Young People's Society, I could remember times when I came to Bible discussion with no idea of the chapter or verse we would study from. That makes for a long 45 minutes when you are completely unprepared.

The biggest step we could take in improving our societies would be in PREPARING OURSELVES FAITHFULLY from week to week. This takes work. But it is amazing just how much more you can enjoy those minutes spent in Bible discussion. It would be well worth it if you even went to a religious book store and bought a commentary on the particular book of the Bible you are studying in your society. It can be a great help, and it's not expensive. The ones I bought were usually around \$2.00.

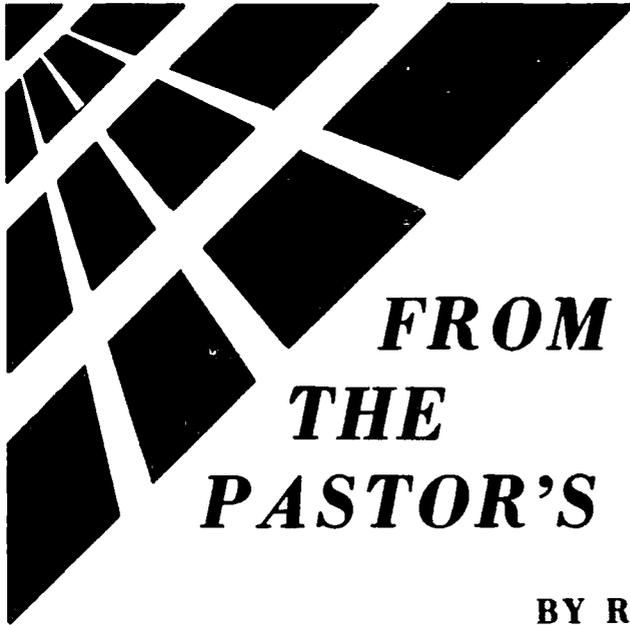
But if there is something worse than not being prepared, it's not participating. Even if you didn't study like you should have, you should have enough educational background to be able to answer or ask religious questions. Participation can be a lot harder to do than preparing. For some it's just not easy to speak out. But if you put forth an effort to answer or ask at least one question at each society meeting, you would be surprised how fast your confidence grows. For myself I have often thought, if only each person could have the opportunity to lead Bible discussion; it would make for a much better

society. If you only knew what it is like to see all those faces give you that look of puzzlement when you ask an easy question, I think you would be much more eager to talk.

There is nothing more discouraging than to see no hands come up when a question is asked. But then there is nothing more rewarding than to get a good religious discussion going, the kind when it seems everyone wants to say something. Those are the meetings we all

remember. That's when we can say it was good for us to be there.

I know that it's been said many times before, but I will say it again; society is what you make it. This year why not really try and dedicate your Sunday afternoons to it. Just for a while, say one month, give it all you have; study hard; do the best you can; and with the continued prayer of all of us, not just young people, we can make society life a rewarding experience.



# FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

BY REV. G. LUBBERS

## Think and Do These Things in the Lord

*Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue, if there be any praise think (take account of) on these things. The things which thou hast both learned and received and heard and saw in me, these things do: and the God of peace shall be with you" Philippians 4:8, 9.*

We have already entered the New Year, Anno Domini 1975. It is the Lord's year. He is King of God's right hand. He is the Savior of His Church. Behold, He

cometh! And everyone that hath this hope in his heart to see Him in all His glory, *purifies* himself as He is pure. I am this time, with Paul, addressing myself to

you as such "brethren". You are, old and young, filled with the Spirit of the Son; otherwise you are none of His, and cannot put spiritual things with spiritual. But you have the mind of Christ.

In this current year you must have peace. Your joy must be full; it must be the joy of Christ in you. You must rejoice this year as the beloved and redeemed children of God. And you must run the race of faith, reaching out for that which is before, and forgetting that which is behind. You must be found in Him, not having your own righteousness, and must know Christ in the power of His resurrection-life in you; you must have fellowship in Christ's sufferings on the Cross, in the forgiveness of sins, and also finally come to the complete resurrection in the day of Christ, when all sin and sorrow shall forever be no more remembered.

This year you do not want to travel alone, do you. You say with Moses, "Do not cause us to go from here unless thy presence go before us" (Exodus 33:15) We would not simply have a place prepared for us in the cleft of the rock, as was prepared for Moses; but we would with uncovered face behold the glory of the Lord, and be transformed from glory unto glory as by the Spirit of the Lord.

This is no mere "New Year's resolution"; it is a holy vow which we must perform unto the Lord.

Think on these things and do them. The Bible does not tell us in every detail what we may and may not do in running the race and fighting the good fight. But we are told in one sum what our strivings and aspirations should be with a spiritual and sanctified conscience. We are free-born sons, who must *walk* in our new liberty.

There is a certain class of spiritual "things" which we must count, reckon, weigh carefully, and which must be our meditation day and night. One hears here: may the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my redeemer. Is this not true when we think

of all the "things that are true"? These are the things which are not hidden and obscured by sin and darkness. These are morally in harmony with the *objective rule* in the spiritual morality of the Gospel. This means to put off the lie and to speak and do the truth in all things, and do and seek things which are truthful – far from Satan's hellish lies and deceit. That this truthfulness is on a higher plane than the morality of the world (whether "old" or "new") is evident from that fact that it is connected in Scripture with whatsoever is "honorable". Now this is far from any honorableness propagated by an Ann Lander's Column, read by millions; it is on a higher level of what is laid on the altar of God by those who are Christians, anointed priests of God. This is more than mere proper etiquette, the forms of life prescribed by good breeding, the accepted mores of society. This is the honor which was ascribed to God, and wherein we learned, in our thoughts, to take the sinful shoes from off our feet, because we are walking in the presence of the thrice holy God. It is the respectful worship of God. This is a quality of spiritual gravity which is a requisite in church leaders, deacons, wives of deacons. And children must be taught in this reverence before God. This places us not merely in some flippantly uttered New Year's resolution, spoken by those lingering over their cups, but it places us in the climate of our holy vows uttered before God, angels, and the church. Think and do these things.

When this is done we will also think on and consider the "things which are just". We are then not our own masters, self-styled architects of what is right and wrong, but we will seek the Lord's Gospel for the things that are just, and work out our salvation with fear and trembling. We shall then not do injustice to our brother. We will ask: is it right, is it *according to the standard* of the Lord's justice, who hates a false balance? Here we do not say flippantly "let each do his thing"; which results in the confusion of hell, because

the foundations are being destroyed. And we add that where justice is practiced with great spiritual sensitivity, that will also be "the things which are pure". Do you know why the world is so namelessly impure, rotten and too scandalous to be mentioned? It is because they are not interested in what is just. And the wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all such rottenness, giving men over to all vileness and consuming lusts, the sins of Sodom and Gomorrah: pride, vanity and licentiousness. Consider this, my youthful reader, when you see the scandals of Washington in the headlines of the daily News Paper. Think upon that which is just and pure only.

There is also the reality of things "which are lovely". Ye are the salt of the earth. Have salt in yourselves. In your dealing with your brother and sister in Christ, and in all your contacts with men consider that which is lovely, agreeable, and what is full of being kindly affectioned toward one another. You must always ask: what is endearing to the brethren? This is also the "truth" in Jesus which we must maintain. It is also just and pure. We need not walk about in God's church like a bristling porcupine hurting people's feelings. We must speak the truth in love. Closely connected with this are the things "which are of good report". These are the things which give a good name to ourselves and to others. We will then be sure that we do not defame our neighbor.

Now this is really not exhaustive. The Bible speaks of our upward calling of God in Christ Jesus. We have the Spirit of Christ and we know all things which belong to our heavenly calling. We are citizens of the heavenly kingdom. Now when you "consider" this list you must know that the Bible points out to us anything that has "virtue" in it. This is not the virtue of the Greeks in their ethics, but it is the ethics of the eternal law of God fulfilled in Christ Jesus. It refers to every jot and tittle which shall be fulfilled in us. It is more abundant than the

righteousness of the Pharisees and the Scribes. Hence, "if there by any *virtue*," that is, anything which is on an eminently higher plane morally and spiritually than all the darkness of sin and evil of our sinful nature, consider that. Then there will also be "praise", things worthy of praise. We will indeed have a good name which is better than rubies.

There are four verbs which we must learn very well in connection with this. They are: *learned* and *received*, *heard* and *saw*. Paul walked in a good conscience in the midst of the saints and of the world. He was running the race. He had not yet attained, but he will. Now he says to us: do not listen to vain teachers in this regard. Do not heed that college professor, who, with his "Socratic Method", is in search for a standard of morality. Do not heed that Social Gospeler who neither understands nor does the things whereof he so confidently affirms. Just remember me and take stock of what you have learned and received – in Catechism, Sunday School, from the preaching on the pulpit, in the Christian Schools and Colleges and, not the least, at your mother's knee.

These things do!

And then have a good New Year. The God of peace shall be with you. He will be your guide even unto death. Let no one take your crown. Hold that thou hast and receive the hope of the morning in your hearts.

Think and do these things in the Lord.



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