

consuming, dedicated study and restudy of our material in the light of God's Word. The work is admittedly difficult, but the way of faithfulness to God's calling and admonitions will also result in His richest blessing upon our teachers and our covenant schools.

Our second feature article comes from what was a chapel speech delivered by Cal Kalsbeek at Covenant Christian High School about a year ago. A couple of friends of Perspectives suggested that we ask him for his manuscript. They did that because the speech had dealt, in an effective way, with some of the things which constitute real temptations for young people in the church of Christ today, and which therefore are of vital concern to our parents (many of whom, we trust, are becoming Perspectives readers). What Mr. Kalsbeek did was to challenge the students to ask themselves what it really was on which their minds and spirits were feeding. We print his speech in the hope that it will serve a dual purpose, namely, to be informative in itself, and also to demonstrate something of what our schools try to accomplish with respect to instruction in values. Here it is:

Crumbs? or Sawdust?

Cal Kalsbeek

The title I've chosen for my chapel speech this morning is "Crumbs? or Sawdust?" Let me first explain what I mean by those terms. You may have heard the story about the farmer who was talking one day to a visiting neighbor about a prize horse that they were looking at in his pasture. The farmer had many good things to say about how well the horse worked in the field, but he had one major complaint: the horse ate too much. The farmer went on to explain how he was correcting the horse's appetite problem by supplementing the horse's daily diet with sawdust. It seems that each day the farmer would add more sawdust and at the same time give him less grain. He bragged about how well his new feeding program was working, and how the horse

seemed oblivious to the change in his diet. About a month later the neighboring farmer observed that the pasture where the farmer kept his prize horse was empty and asked about it. The farmer replied, "The new feeding program was working fine, but just when I had him on a total sawdust diet the dumb thing keeled over and died."

Now for the "crumbs." I think the best way for me to explain what I mean by this term is to read Matthew 15 verses 21-28:

Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us. But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Then came she and worshipped him saying, Lord, help me. But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord: Yet the dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their master's table. Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

It's not my intent this morning to explain this passage in detail. Rather I would have you focus your attention on the crumbs that are mentioned. Obviously the woman is not concerned here with physical crumbs of bread. Her concern is for the spiritual food which the Jews had, but which was not available to the Gentiles. So each time in the course of this speech that I mention "crumbs" remember that I refer to this good, wholesome, spiritual food which this woman so greatly desired.

Now that you have an idea of what I mean by sawdust and crumbs, I must put a question to you: What are you eating these days, sawdust or crumbs? And what about me, what am I eating? And what am I feeding my children? A few weeks ago, as you know, the Lord gave my wife and me our eighth child, Heidi Jean. God has entrusted her to our care, to feed and nourish both physically and spiritually. God's word concerning this feeding is that we may not give her just anything. Rather, He gives us His Diet Book, the Scriptures. There we have His perfect menu given in the minutest detail, a menu which we must follow without question. I'm tempted to respond in despair, "But, but... what if...?" Or I'm tempted to rebel and say, "But God, You've put me into an impossible position! Can my Heidi be expected

to eat and live according to this Diet Book when there are so many things in this wicked world that seem so much more attractive? And what will this world be like 15 or 20 years from now if the Lord tarry? When I was in high school things were pretty tame compared to today. And what will the next 20 years bring? Does my Heidi Jean stand a chance? Is it even remotely possible that she will seek the Crumbs from the Master's table when the world in which she lives makes the sawdust so attractive?"

God gives an answer to those questions when He says in Proverbs 22:6, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." That's it! That's the key! We must give her a steady diet of those crumbs so that she will develop an appetite for them. And then we must go forward in the confidence of God's promise.

For you, young people, that steady diet of crumbs has been fed you by your parents for many years. You are at the stage in your life now that you must pick up the spoon and feed yourself. You prefer that anyway, don't you? But what is it that you are feeding yourself — crumbs? or sawdust? In the rest of this speech I will direct your attention to four specific areas of diet, and in each case you will be required to answer for yourself whether it qualifies as crumbs or sawdust.

First, I would like to spend a little time with our diet of alcoholic beverages. Great is the concern of your parents, this school, your church, and even the State of Michigan with the use of alcohol by young people. Recently Miss Lubbers gave me this red folder which was sent to us by the State of Michigan. Let me expose you to some of the enclosed material. The cover letter reveals that the purpose of this packet is to inform our young people concerning the dangers of drinking and driving. Let me read some of what is found in a section called, "Talking to Your Teenager about Drinking and Driving." (At this point in his speech, Mr. Kalsbeek quoted rather extensively from the above-mentioned publication, citing grim statistics relating to the sometimes fatal consequences of alcohol consumption. We will not reproduce all of that here. [ed.])

We as Reformed Christians might prefer to emphasize that it is against the law for teenagers to drink alcoholic beverages, rather than emphasize as this material does, the *fear* of the results of drinking. At any rate you should be aware of the facts presented, if you are not already.

Enclosed in the materials from the State of Michigan was this bumper sticker. It says: "A Lot of Teens are Dying for a Drink." Will

my Heidi Jean be one of those? Will you? If you had to label alcohol one or the other, what would you call it, sawdust? or crumbs from the Master's table?

A second area of diet that I will address this morning is the area of drugs. The Michigan Substance Abuse Information Center has compiled the following facts about teenagers and drug abuse:

- * Nearly two-thirds (62%) of all American young people use an illicit drug at least once before they finish high school, and 40% have used drugs other than marijuana.
- * Approximately 2.4 million young people, age 12-15, have used marijuana at some time during their lives; 770,000 of these young people have used marijuana in the past month; 1.8 million have used marijuana in the last year.
- * At least one out of every 20 high school seniors smokes marijuana on a daily basis.
- * Current use of cocaine among seniors was 6% in 1984.

Now I'm sure that those percentages do not accurately reflect the number of Covenant students that have been, or are currently, involved in drugs, but there are students here that fit into most, if not all, the categories mentioned.

In this connection the March, 1985 issue of *Discover* magazine had some startling things to say in an article titled "Coke: The Random Killer." Allow me to read some excerpts from that article:

- * Cocaine is one of the most dangerous drugs on the underground market. It's physically debilitating, whether you snort it, swallow it, inject it, or smoke it.
- * For the casual user... the most frightening finding to emerge from the last decade of scrutiny is this: taken in any form, and at any dose from 60 milligrams — about two lines — on up cocaine can be fatal.
- * The deaths to date have been totally random. We have no way of predicting who'll die from the drug and who won't. It could be a regular user or it could be a first-time user. Some people die after a small dose, and some after massive doses. It depends on their tolerance.
- * In addition, there are an astonishing number of cocaine-related deaths in which the drug isn't the direct cause. Fatal motor vehicle accidents are common. . . .
- * Our statistics show that by the end of this year one out of five high school students will have tried cocaine before graduation, and ten per cent of suburban high school students will be regular users.
- * The evidence is everywhere and people have to relearn it: cocaine isn't the champagne of drugs. Cocaine kills.

Some time ago I had contact with a former Covenant student who had been a user of cocaine. From his personal experience he testified of its horrible influence. According to him the drug could make the user believe that he had unlimited power. No wonder we read in the newspapers from time to time about young people on drugs who leap from buildings to their deaths. Will my Heidi Jean be one of those? Will you? And if you had to call drugs one or the other, what would it be, crumbs? or sawdust?

Alcohol and drugs are, of course, items of a very physical nature. For them to do a person harm one must in some way assimilate them into his blood stream. The next two areas of diet that I want to address might be termed mental food. A recent writer to the "Public Pulse" column of *The Grand Rapids Press* wrote something that applies here, I think:

It is always amazing that people who are careful that babies' bottles are sterilized, that their food is pure, the air unpolluted, and their seatbelts are fastened, — in short, that their child's physical health is protected — are completely unconcerned about the health of children's minds. They allow all kinds of uncleanness to enter children's minds via television, movies, comic books, and even school.

... I would like to make a plea for purity in the mental diet of young people. ... What is more important to a human being: his body, which lasts a few decades and returns to the ground, or his soul, which lives forever?

For our first area of mental diet as so labeled by the author of that article, let's examine two of the examples mentioned: television and movies. I've been told that about 80% of our young people regularly attend movies. How accurate this figure is only the Lord knows. Nevertheless, you and I both know that a goodly number of you do regularly attend movies. Now I don't expect anyone here to change his viewing habits as a result of what I have to say about it this morning, but I do expect you to be informed.

Allow me to ask a question. What movies have you seen lately? You need not raise your hands, but let me read through some of the movie titles that are currently showing in the Grand Rapids area. Have you seen: "Beverly Hills Cop"? "Choose Me"? "Code of Silence"? "Desperately Seeking Susan"? "The Gods Must Be Crazy"? "Gotcha"? "Just One For the Guys"? "Lust in the Dust"? "Rappin' "? "Rustler's Rhapsody"? "Sticky"? "Witness"?

I need not tell you what your parents, teachers, and ministers think

about the viewing of movies and much of the current television programming. You know what they think, but do you know what people of the world are now saying about it? In a *U.S. News & World Report* article titled, "Why Children's TV Turns Off So Many Parents," we find some rather startling statistics. They report that "... the average child between 2 and 11 watched a record 27 hours and 21 minutes a week... compared with 23 hours and 18 minutes a decade ago." The article goes on to report that "... violent acts on television ... increased 65 percent in the last four years. The group counted 46 acts of violence an hour on NBC's 'The A Team.' " In this same vein a recent article in *The Grand Rapids Press* under the title "Violence of Television" also had some interesting things to say. Allow me to read a few paragraphs:

Some observers believe that as a result of more than three decades of television, viewers have developed a kind of immunity to the horror of violence.

By the age of 16, for example, the average young person will have seen 18,000 murders on television. One extension of this phenomenon may be an appetite for more varied kinds of violence on TV....

So what? You've heard similar stuff before. Does it really make any difference? Does what you see on TV have an effect on you? More and more studies show that it does indeed make a difference. Concerning this the article "Why Children's TV Turns Off So Many Parents" informs us: "A new study, by the Task Force on Children and Television of the American Academy of Pediatrics, says TV contributes not only to violence but also to a high rate of drug and alcohol abuse and encourages smoking and obesity. The report pinpoints advertising on children's programs and prime-time broadcasts as major influences." Further, the article "Violence on Television" reports, "Only last September, the Attorney General's Task Force on Family Violence concluded that 'the evidence is becoming overwhelming that just as witnessing violence in the home may contribute to normal adults and children learning and acting out violent behavior, violence on TV and movies may lead to the same result.'" Later in the article another study is mentioned which concluded that there is "a link between televised violence and real-life violence."

... What about my daughter, Heidi Jean? What effect will TV and movies have on her? Do you think God will be pleased if I give her a steady diet of this kind of food? If you had to classify it as one or the other, what would you call it, crumbs or sawdust? And what about

FEATURES

you? Even the world admits that TV has a detrimental effect on those who watch it. You're only fooling yourself if you think that you escape unscathed! Could it be that you're on a sawdust diet and are just as oblivious to it as the farmer's horse?

The final item of diet that I will address this morning is that of the popular music of the day. Have patience with me as I expose you to what a number of people have written in recent weeks about it. I quote the following from an article in *Human Events* magazine:

The other day I was sitting at my desk paying the bills and tapping my foot to a pleasant little tune by Melissa Manchester called "Nice Girls Do" when I suddenly realized that what "nice girls do" is have sex if it's with the right guy in "the right situation." Well, as you can imagine, my ears perked right up at that. You should perk your ears up, too.

Tune in to a popular music station for a few hours and listen carefully to the words you hear. Perhaps you'll hear Olivia-Newton-John telling you to "get physical" and communicate "horizontally." Perhaps you'll hear Billy Joel singing a catchy little ditty about how Catholic girls are oppressed by the Catholic obsession with chastity. Perhaps... a duet with Barbara Streisand that urges women to leave their husbands when they get bored with them.

Newsweek recently published some articles on rock music. Kandy Stroud wrote an article titled "Stop Pornographic Rock" in which she demonstrates, by quoting some of the lyrics, how ghastly much of it is. She clearly shows that "Tasteless, graphic and gratuitously sexual songs saturate the airwaves..." Do they find ready access into our homes and cars? An equally shocking article found in *Newsweek* is "Rock's Mystery Prince." This article calls Michael Jackson, "A well-publicized bundle of contradictions, who flaunts slapstick pornography onstage and praises God in the same show." I'll refer to these articles again a little later, but right now let me challenge you to look them up and read them if you haven't already. If you are at all spiritually sensitive, those articles will nauseate you. If you read them and are not nauseated, I suggest that you do some very serious self-examination — especially concerning what you are listening to, and the impact that it is having on you.

Well, now that I brought it up, do you think the music one listens to has an impact on listeners? Does it *really* make a difference? The evidence that it does indeed have a tremendous impact is overwhelming. A few quotes from the above-mentioned *Newsweek* articles will serve to illustrate this:

- * ... rock is turning sex into something casual. It's as if society is encouraging its youngsters to get sexually involved.
- * It would be a mistake to think that Prince's religious message isn't hitting home. A friend recently found his teenage daughter in the bedroom playing the album "Purple Rain" backward, like her pals at high school, in order to hear the secretive coded message Prince had left there. She was shaken to hear Prince, say, "Hello, how are you? I'm fine, cause I know that the Lord is coming soon, coming, coming soon."
- * Another friend reports that her adolescent son will not listen to Prince because he is upset by the cultlike fervor with which classmates recite the lyrics.

Also in connection with the impact of rock music, I recently read about a scientific study that was done to determine what impact music has on plants. Although I have no way of knowing how valid the results of that study are, the findings were rather interesting. I'll read those results as described on page 118 of David A. Nobel's book, *The Marxist Minstrels*:

One unusual standard of musical competence and taste might well turn out to be the family plant. In a series of experiments in which potted plants were exposed to everything from Bach and Beethoven to hard rock groups the results were predictable. "What acid rock did to the petunias shouldn't happen to our teenagers," was the conclusion!

The article entitled "Music that Kills Plants" begins, "For nearly two years now, Mrs. Dorothy Retallack of Denver has been killing off assorted potted plants by making them listen to rock music."

In her series of experiments, Mrs. Retallack discovered that just three hours of acid rock a day shrivels young squash plants and flattens philodendron and crumbles corn in less than a month. Wonders Mrs. Retallack: If the sound of rock does that to plants, what is it doing to our teenagers? "Could the discordant sounds we hear these days," states Mrs. Retallack, "be the reason humanity is growing neurotic?"

Well, what do you think? Does rock music have that same effect on people? Maybe even on you? Probably not? How do you know? In another place in the book *The Marxist Minstrels* a case is made for the brainwashing effect of rock music. Is that within the realm of possibility? Whether or not that is true may be in question, but there is no question that the rock performers themselves believe that their music has an impact on those who listen. A book I have here, *They're Out to Steal Your Children*, that was written by Ray Allen quotes rock per-

former, David Crosby as saying in the Rock Star Rolling Stone Interviews: "I figured the only thing to do was to swipe their kids. . . . By saying that, I'm not talking about kidnapping, I'm just talking about changing their value systems, which removes them from their parent's world very effectively." This book is replete with other examples of the impact which rock performers believe they have on their unsuspecting audience.

I ask you again, do you think you are immune to the effects which rock music has on others, and the intended effects of the authors? And what about my Heidi Jean? Will God be pleased if I expose her to the world's music, or do less than everything possible to keep her from listening to it? If you had to classify rock music as one or the other, what would it be: Sawdust, or crumbs from the Master's table?

We've come a long way together this morning. With regard to the items of diet that we have discussed, I wonder if it's possible that these words of wisdom from an unknown author are true? "Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit, reap a character."

Maybe you say, "Give us a break! Everyone is doing those things. And besides we gotta have some fun." If that's your attitude, what Charles Spurgeon writes is just for you:

"But Sir, you are too strict!"

Will you say that when the eyes of the Almighty are glowering on you? "Sir, you are too precise." Will you say that to God Almighty's face? Can you say that at the judgment bar of God at the last day? You will not dare to do it then. Ah! When Christ comes a second time there will be a marvellous change in the way men talk. Caiaphas, come and condemn Him now! Judas, will you kiss Him now? Barabbas, see if the people prefer you to Christ now!

Swearer, you have been a bold man; curse Him to His face now. Drunkard, stagger up to Him now. Infidel, now tell Him there is no Christ, tell God there is no God. Laugh at the Bible; smirk at the minister.

What is the matter? Why can't you do it? Because you have fled to the rocks and to the hills crying, "Rocks, hide us! Mountains fall on us; hide us from the face of Him that sitteth upon the throne."

So, there you have it! Just what *are* you eating these days? Sawdust? If you are, be warned! The farmer's horse didn't know it was doing him harm, but you do! Or do you taste of the crumbs from the Master's table: the bread of life? That will more than suffice for my Heidi Jean. . . and for you. □■□