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Matthew Martin, Associate  
Douglas Alvarenga, Hispanic

**VISIT US SOON!**

**Sunday:**

Bible Study..... 9:30 A..M.  
Morning Worship.....10:30 A.M.  
Evening Worship..... 6:00 P.M.

**Wednesday:**

Bible Study .....7:00 P.M.

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Far East/World Evangelism  
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In Search of the Lord's Way  
Kakinada, India  
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Murmansk, Russia  
Truth for the World  
Words of the Master

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**THE CENSORIOUS EYE**

Frank Chesser

Clothed in perfect innocence, the first human pair walked with God in a world of ineffable delights. They greeted the dawn of each day in anticipation of hearing the voice of God making its way through their paradisiacal home. Their countenance was free of furrows of grief or regret. Pain and sorrow were as alien to their experiences as sin is to the mind of God. Their thoughts were laced in flawless purity. Their words matched the unblemished beauty of Eden. Their lives were monuments of liveliness, moving in impeccable harmony with the will of him in whose image they had been made.

When Adam and Eve left the world of Genesis 1 and 2 and entered the world of Genesis 3:6, they broke the heart of God. But “in wrath” God “remembered mercy” (Heb. 3:2), and commenced a 4,000-year journey that would culminate on Golgotha. Because of Calvary, from sin’s beginning to time’s end, God looks on the penitent, compliant heart with eyes of intense love, tenderness, compassion, mercy, and forgiveness. “He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Mic. 7:19). “For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more” (Heb. 8:12).

Manasseh wielded the scepter over Judah for 55 years. He carried the nation into depths of sin that surpassed the depravity of the heathen nations that preceded them in Canaan (2 Chron. 33:9). He extirpated every vestige of God from national life and permeated Judah with multiple forms of idolatry. He desecrated the temple with an idol and even murdered his own children as an act of homage to a graven image. He extracted the spiritual heart from Judah in a bloody assault upon the righteous remnant. The words of the text are striking, “Manasseh shed innocent blood very much till he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another” (2 Kings 21:16). Wrapped in chains of suffering, Manasseh clothed his heart in deep contrition, penitence, and humility. As a result, God “heard his supplication, and brought him again to Jerusalem into his kingdom” (2 Chron. 33:13).

While fellow Israelites were locked in a life and death struggle in the heat of war, David arose from his bed on a tranquil spring evening, ascended to the roof of his house, and beheld a woman of unusual physical beauty bathing herself. Linger- ing eyes turned lustful. Learning of Bathsheba’s marital state did not prevent David from converting his lust into an overt act of adultery. Deception and inducement to drunkenness could not conceal his treacherous act with another man’s wife. Uriah’s unexcelled loyalty and integrity enabled David to send a letter to Joab by Uriah’s own hand containing a blueprint for his death. A childlike story of a poor man and his lamb kindled David’s wrath and moved him to exact a fourfold payment and the penalty of death. When the prophet told David that he was the object of his own wrath, he humbled himself mightily before God, and in deep penitence confessed his sin. Though the consequences of his sin encompassed the remainder of his life,

God looked upon his penitent heart through the eye of “tender mercies” (Ps. 51:1), and “put away his sins” (2 Sam. 12:13).

Peter viewed himself as a bulwark of spiritual strength. He boasted of his ability to stand alone in the presence of fearful men like a mountain in the midst of a storm. “Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended” (Matt. 26:33). He opposed the very words of Christ, and adamantly affirmed his choice of death over denial (Mat. 26: 34-35). At the moment of testing, he severed himself from the presence of Christ, followed him from afar, warmed himself by the enemies’ fire, and culminated his third denial with an oath laden with curses. When he wrapped his penitence in tears of bitter remorse (Mat. 26:75), God looked forward to his Son’s blood, now only hours yet future, and buried Peter’s sins in the graveyard of the past.

The passion of lust bore the fruit of adultery. Hands infused with hypocrisy and impelled by an invective spirit, thrust the woman into the presence of Christ (John 8:3). They could already hear her screams of death; visualize the earth reddening with blood, as her body lay broken under a hail of stones. The incessant inquires as to the judgment He would make punctured the silence of Christ. A void of sinless hands to cast the first stone found Jesus and the woman alone. Mercy supplanted a stone; forgiveness nullified guilt and liberated a soul from the killing power of sin.

The censorious eye would have cut Adam and Eve to shreds and put their helpless souls on the road of perdition. This judgmental spirit would have driven the stake of death into the heart of Manasseh, pinned David’s headless body to the gate of Jerusalem, nailed Peter to a cross of wood with the two thieves on Golgotha, and pelted the defenseless body of the adulterous woman with rocks.

The censorious eye takes no prisoners. It moves across the landscape of humanity, rending into pieces all those who refuse to be in its own image. Exhibiting a “scorched earth” mentality, it converts lives and reputations into fragments and boasts of a trail of unending bodies. Its assumptive mystical powers transform the hearts of men into literary objects, analyzing and condemning feelings, motives, and intents.

The censorious eye is destitute of mercy. Willfully oblivious to its own faults and failures, it scrutinizes the lives of others with the spirit of condemnation. It struts about with a superior air, viewing with disdain all those who are not kindred in spirit. It dips

its pen in venom and poisons the bloodstream of men who, many times, are unknowingly objects of its influence. It bloodies reputations, fuels suspicious, fosters distrust, and foments strife. It transforms ambassadors of love into warriors of hate. Smiting one’s breast with an introspective look and a plea for mercy (Luke 18:14) is conduct wholly foreign to its own experience.

The censorious eye is insecure. Honesty would elicit admission of a feeling of discomfort in its own skin. Bigness in its own eye is secured by diminishing the size of others. Advancement made in the life of another by hard work, sacrifice, and discipline is viewed as a personal threat to be suppressed instead of conduct to be emulated.

The censorious eye lacks discernment. The hypercritical man is often a self-appointed purveyor of truth. He is unable to perceive the difference in contending and being contentious. It ranks personalities above principles. The rancorous nature of its words negates the sound of its message. It wraps the truth in a verbal thunderstorm. It walks with cleated feet in an ostensible defense of the gospel of love.

The censorious eye is prejudiced. It grants diplomatic immunity to its friends. It peers indulgently at beams in the eyes of allies while exhibiting a search and destroy mentality regarding the motes in the eyes of assumed enemies. It ignores errors in those of like mind while inflating and publicizing the faults of those who refuse to bow to its own demands. It claims consistency for its own actions while decrying the absence thereof in the lives of others.

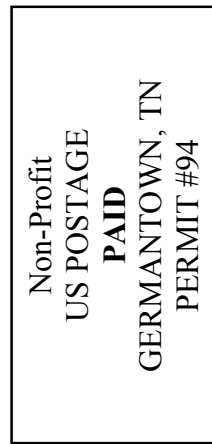
The censorious eye is unrelenting. It never quits. Its eyelid never droops in weariness. It can hammer a perceived fault for years and never experience fatigue. The passing of time does not abate the strength of its vision. Its sphere of operation is never invaded by doubt as to its conduct. It is ever vigilant. It has an insatiable thirst for new prey to be added to the old list of those it has deemed to be “heretics.”

The censorious eye is evil. It traverses the sewers of life in ceaseless search of ammunition to riddle the character of objects of its wrath. It shoots to kill. It possesses the heart of a vulture and the spirit of a tabloid. It screams with sadistic delight over human debris that its own efforts have fashioned. It wraps a piece of truth in a package of lies. Its ear is ever open to rumor. It revels in “hearing and telling some new thing” about those whose hearts are not kin to its oven. It holds

“Gnostic” view of itself. It hates with vigor. It can justify in its own sight the most vicious act Perpetrated upon victims of its own anger. “But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness” (Mat. 6:23).

The censorious eye runs roughshod over every tender sentiment of the gospel. Its bullying disposition and threatening demeanor darken the spirit of all who come under its influence. Its lungs breathe the air of envy, and its heart pulsates with bitterness. It quenches evangelistic ardor, breeds fear, nullifies love, and positions brethren on the field of battle, at war with one another. When God calls an end to time, the censorious eyes shall cry in vain for mercy, “For he shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy, and mercy rejoiceth against judgment” (James 2:13).

(From *Firm Foundation*, March 2006)



## THREE THINGS

- Three things in life that may never be lost: Peace, Hope, Honesty
- Three things in life that are most valuable: Love, Self-confidence, Friends
- Three things in life that are never certain: Dreams, Success, Fortune
- Three things that make a man: Hard work, Sincerity, Commitment
- Three things in life that can destroy a man: Wine, Pride, Anger
- Three things that are truly constant: Father, Son, Holy Ghost

(from *Glad Tidings of Good Things*)

**The Forest Hill News**  
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