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REFORMED YOUTH*



November, 1974

Children -

A Heritage of the Lord



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Editorial

Children - A Heritage Of The Lord

by Tom De Vries

Recently, **Time** magazine in its Behaviour section featured an article on the declining birth rate among Americans. On six full pages there was a description of the attempts by many in this country to reach zero population growth in approximately fifty years. There were stories of a non-fertility rite "which honored the non-parents of the year," and also of a family of eight children who were harassed by obscene phone calls because of the size of their family.

This article gave five reasons for the declining birth rate. First, America is a modern society in which people feel no need for having children. Second, there are few people left who have any moral objection to birth control or abortion. In 1973 the lives of 800,000 children were taken by abortion. Third, women have become "liberated" and seek careers away from home, not wanting the responsibilities of children. Fourth, there are some who are concerned the world will become overpopulated and that food and energy resources will become exhausted. Finally others feel that children are too great a financial burden, wishing to use their money for themselves alone.

Let us hope that none of these ideas work their way into the sphere of the church. They reveal an attitude of selfishness and lack of concern for God's Kingdom. They also show a lack of confidence in God, who has promised to guide His people in any circumstance on this earth.

This is not to say that the world will not continue to produce children. This will never be so. The world always passes on its heritage to the next generation and it will continue to do so until the end of the world.

The world has its reasons for wanting children, be they for personal satisfaction, perpetuating a family name or tradition,

or whatever.

God does not give children to parents to be used for their own selfish purposes. Nor does He, ultimately, allow parents to determine the number or the time of their children's births. Children belong to God who entrusts their care to a husband and wife for a short number of years.

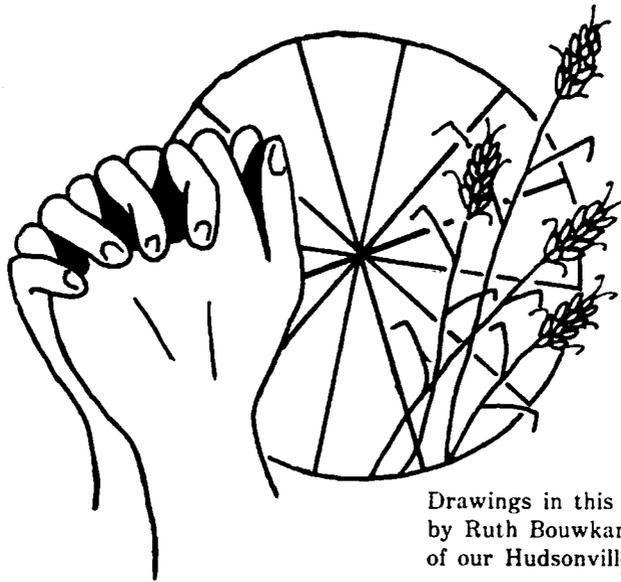
"Children are a heritage of the Lord." (Psalm 127:3a). Now the world also has a heritage, something passed down to and received from one's ancestors. Its heritage is one of rebellion, of attempting to determine its own fate, and of flying in the face of God. The church's heritage also comes from its ancestors. It comes in the form of the covenant, the same covenant which God made to Abraham and his seed. God promised to take Himself children unto which He would be a God and Father always.

The whole church rejoices at the birth of a new child. Each new member brings us that much closer to the fulfillment of God's covenant and to the end of time. That new child is not merely a cute little baby to be played with, but is a child of Christ and a member of the church.

In that heritage that child is baptized, signed and sealed as a member of Christ's body. The parents and church members continue to joy in that child and the responsibilities of raising it in God's faith. That child is not looked upon as a financial burden or as a liability to the world.

We cannot, as children of God, share in any of the values of the world. Our children of the church are one of our most precious possessions.

"Lo, children are in heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them" (Psalm 127:3, 4, and 5a).



Drawings in this issue
by Ruth Bouwkamp
of our Hudsonville church.

Feature

THANKS FOR 1974

by Donna Boven*

In our lives we have already faced a few Thanksgiving Days. We, when looking back, should be able to say that each Thanksgiving Day expressed the fullest thanks we had to give. After thinking seriously of them let's look at Thanksgiving Day 1974. Thanksgiving is telling God he is good. To appreciate everything we have, Rev. Vos has written that it is a good thing to walk in the wilderness before giving thanks. In other words let's see what little we really need to survive, then take a big long look at what God has given us.

We know that we are to thank God for our physical goodnesses since the Pilgrims began Thanksgiving Day when they, with their religious background, saw the abundance God gave them. Therefore we too should be able to see and thank God for these physical goodnesses: food, clothing, shelter, christian instruction, etc.

Now look again, has God blessed you with sorrows or even a death this year? Yes, I said blessed. Sometimes when we

really experience the need for heavenly guidance, our quiet personal talks with God can give more thanks than in our richest, most exalting moment because we have the proper outlook of the relationship of God the Father to us the child.

God cares about your spiritual life of 1974. How about it, do you? Did you say this year, "All that I am I owe to thee"? As a child eats food to grow physically it is a must that we eat the knowledge of the Word to grow spiritually. Just giving thanks to God on November 28 and stopping there is a mock of God.

Thankfulness is getting excited about the Word and even Society. You can't give thanks to the heavenly Father for everything and sit like a bump on a log. Neither can you give thanks and in the same breath express that you are too old to go. Do you know everything that could be brought up there? If that is true, have you nothing to offer from your own experience?

*Donna is a member of our Hudsonville church.

Being thankful spiritually isn't for the "old" christians only, but also for us "new" christians. We have grown and we are thankful. We are thankful that God sent Jesus to pay for our sins and that we, in the covenant, are able to see our salvation,

expressing it to others by living God's law and above all thanking God for it in prayer.

I give thanks to God now "for all I am I owe to thee".

Feature

Our Youth Coordinator Writes

by Jim Schipper, Youth Coordinator

When asked to write an article for Beacon Lights, I was glad, because it gives an opportunity to say something to our Young People. But the subject of our Young People and an evaluation of them scares me. What does one say about them? Where do you find reference material for such a subject? If you are critical, the Young People resent it. If you have nothing but praise—they know better. This article will, I hope, help to give our Young People and parents of Young People some warnings, but especially some encouragement and direction for the times in which we live.

I'm convinced that our Young People, and by that I mean P.R. Young People, are the single most important objects our churches have. I don't mean as opposing the Truth or doctrines we hold dear, but in distinction from the work and people of our churches. We, who are the fathers and mothers and all older people in our churches, must take a back seat in importance to our young people. And also the direction of our churches' work must be with that in mind. This is said with a view to the preaching, teaching, and our mission work.

The previous statements were made from the point of view that our Young People are the future Prot. Ref. Church. The things we learn as Young People will give the basis for the direction of our churches, not only politically but most

importantly, doctrinally in the future. The importance of catechism, and our own schools can not be over estimated.

But there is more. And this is not only to be read and applied by our Young People, but by parents and ministers as well. I believe the sermons preached should be directed to our Young People. Not the entire sermon, but specific points made and emphasis laid on the admonitions of Scripture. And where the minister leads the catechism classes or Young People Societies that application is made for our walk as Young People.

And to our parents—How do you help our young people in a Christian walk? I've heard parents talk. What can we do for our Young People? What can they do 5 or 6 nights a week? If they go bowling one night in a week and spend another just wandering around the various shopping malls or plazas or maybe another at some circus or local fair, what can they do with the remainder of their time? Some parents are probably even encouraged to see their own Young People stay home and watch T.V. instead of running around like their friends' children in the local bars or other night spots.

All this is negative thinking. And to come with something positive with respect to our Young People is next to impossible. However, in this respect, I think much improvement could be made. I'm convinced that all our parents could be

much more diligent in encouraging our Young People to attend local young people activities. I know that writing this in the Grand Rapids area is different than in many of our western churches. But I believe this encouragement can also be applied there. And I'm not only thinking of the conventions and local mass meetings for the spiritual benefit of our Young People but all the things our young people do as Young People—whether this be swimming parties, hay rides, basketball games, or any and all Young People sponsored activities. The value does not always lie in what spiritual value does it have, but in the communion and fellowship of our own Young People. I know too that everything the kids do is not good or healthy for them, but the importance lies in being together. For after all, that sets the pattern as to where their friends and associates are looked for.

Now to you Young People. As Youth Coordinator of the Federation Board, I'm again experiencing first hand the exuberance and endless source of energy of you Young People. I've heard it said that this past convention had less sleep time than any previous one. Having been there, I agree. I couldn't help but think, if only this energy were directed in the right way.

Having been young once myself, I know that one thought comes to mind—FUN!! How can I have a good time? Not what can benefit me spiritually but where can I go to have a Blast. And if you are restricted in your movements to a designated place such as the previous convention, then you are resourceful enough to make your own fun—card games, basketball, etc. And I'm glad that as young people you can do that.

However, if instead you would get seated around a fireplace or lounge at the convention or in the living room of our various homes and sit and talk over spiritual situations and problems which are unique to young people, you might be surprised how much FUN this would be. We could all benefit from studies of various Scriptural passages. I know,—I can hear it already. "Do you think we are a bunch of square old fogies?" Let me ask

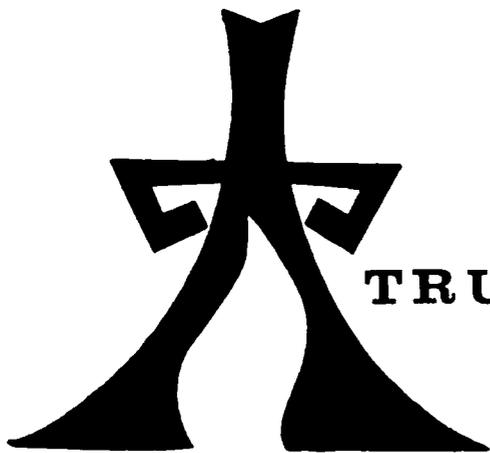
you this. Have you ever tried it? I mean, instead of looking for fun times apart from God's Word and our Confessions, to sit and go over some of these things. Not an in depth study to begin with, but as you become acquainted with what you are studying, the Scriptures and/or Confessions will begin to open new avenues and ideas for discussions and personal blessing. As I stated near the beginning of the article, you Young People are the future P.R. Church. And as we near the end of time this becomes increasingly more important. I wish there were some way to make all of our young people more aware of this.

Let's not see how close to the world and worldliness we can walk, but instead how close to God and His Word we can walk. This begins at home with personal devotions. Very little time is spent by us in prayer and Scripture reading alone. And this is true not only of you Young People but also our parents. The more time we spend benefiting our spiritual lives the more we want to spend. In that way also we will be equipped to fight in the battle of life as the good soldier of the Cross, putting on the whole armour of salvation, which is the Word of God.

In conclusion, let's remember this in the new society season. Let's prepare ourselves in the study of God's Word. Let's be determined anew to equip ourselves to fight in God's army and be ready to take our places in the Church so that God's Word may continue to the end.

That means also in our education and training. When thinking of occupations in the future, we think of the ministry and teaching professions. Maybe this isn't what we like or desire to do, but maybe God has called us to these vocations. Study and prayer will determine many of these things. Always remember this Scriptural admonition in II Tim. 2:15—"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."





TRUTH vs. ERROR

REV. ROBERT C. HARBACH

GREAT-HEART

God gave him largeness of hear.—I

Kings 4:29.

This man goes past lions, through the Valleys of Humiliation and the Shadow of death, gets victory over the slain bodies of the Giants Grim, Maul, Slay-good and Despair, to conduct safely pilgrims on their way to the City of Righteousness. He is out-fitted with the Sword of the Spirit, the Helmet of Salvation, the Shield of Faith, in fact, the whole armor of God, so that, of course, he was wearing the Breast-plate of Righteousness. Like Noah, he is a preacher of righteousness, fights for righteousness, and delights in discoursing on the Righteousness of Christ.

He is known for the saying, "The hen by her common calls gives no meat to her chickens." This call, which is a call to repent and believe the gospel, is in a certain sense common, yet, although it be declared and published to all nations and all persons promiscuously and without distinction, does not reach all men, but only those "to whom God out of His good pleasure sends the Gospel." It is a call which is not accompanied with a gracious, and so efficacious, operation of the Holy Spirit by which the heart of man is changed, his mind illuminated, and his will

turned to God, and he is drawn to and enabled to come to the Lord. The effect of this call is to leave men without excuse and to maintain their responsibility before God. Great-heart is saying that the mere external word of the Cross, unaccompanied by the regenerating and illuminating grace of the Holy Spirit, is not grace to all who hear it (it may harden, and be a savor of death), but is an instructor, teaching man his responsibility to God, informing him what will be acceptable to Him, namely, that all who are called should come unto Him. But the external call gives no ability to come. Says Great-heart, "This you have by special grace."

It was Great-heart who pointed out that when Christian passed by Simple, Sloth and Presumption, they were, as typical of them, sound asleep. But when Christiana went by, she found them hanged. What was their crime? They had brought up an evil report about the land of Promise and about its King, persuading certain "pilgrims" that He was a hard taskmaster, and so turned these people out of the way. Who, exactly, were these misled push-overs? there was one Short-wind who with

just one look at the Hill Difficulty, when he came to it, quit that Way on the spot. Then there was Slow-pace who never got in sight of Difficulty Hill. There were twins, No-heart and Linger-after-lust, who at nearly every persuasive pitch of Simple, Sloth and Presumption's sneered, "Yeah, yeah, we know! So what else is new?" Then there was a young woman, whom many thought her name was, because they overheard Linger-after-lust call her so, Doll, which really was Dull. But Really Doll is Doll to Linger-lust! There was a Dr. Lack-wit, a mad scientist who worked among the pygmies where he invented a vitamin he called "Q" and labelled, Add-a-Q-Bit.(1) He also put up brown bottles of steaming, liquid body-detergent which he labelled, **Ethiopem Lavere**.(2)

This man got to be Great-heart because he had been Mr. Great-trouble. He comforted Mr. Fearing who used to trip over a straw, and dreaded, when a drop of rain splashed on his nose, a flood! He rescued Mr. Despondency and his daughter, Miss Much-afraid, from the dungeon in Doubting Castle of Giant Despair. There they had come close to starving to death, coming down to skin and bone. He conducted Mr. Ready-to-halt on the way to his happy place. With him, as everywhere, Little Faith was always safe, but Little Faith rarely knew this. Like Mr. Fearing, he was sometimes afraid of hell and often that the wrath of God was on him. He thought himself too much a worm to be chosen a citizen of Emmanuel's Land. Sometimes he was afraid he was not elect; at other times that he had not been called with an effectual calling, or that he would hold out to the end. Kill his thousand fears today, and he would have a horde of them tomorrow. Little Faith's unbelief did not entirely die out until he died, in the Lord. Then there was Mr. Feeble-mind who carried his feeble mind with him all the way to the banks of the river, then left it, and ordered it to be buried in a dunghill, that none might inherit it. All these he knew intimately, and knew to be elect, holy and beloved. He himself in his own

time had been every one of them. But when we meet him, he is to be classed with Old Honest, Mr. Stedfast, Mr. Standfast and Valiant-for-Truth.

The strongest faith will have its depressing "lows." Most Christians have doubts whether they are accepted in the Beloved One. But Great-heart so cultivated his faith that he became sure he was a child of God, so sure that occasional doubts imposing on him do not get the advantage of him. He was as sure of his acceptance in the Beloved as he was of his existence. He always had a sense of sin, but also always a sense of the power of the blood of Christ. Great-heart is not a proud, but a humble man. He lies low, not before you, but before the Cross. He can look you boldly in the face and tell you that Christ is able to keep that which he has committed to Him against that Day.

But we cannot be great or do such great things unless first God work in us to will and to work for His good pleasure. Then we will work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. He must first change the heart, take away the stony heart, give a heart of flesh, give us a new heart, then unite the heart, encourage the heart, strengthen the heart and enlarge the heart. David said expectantly, "... Thou shalt enlarge my heart" (Ps. 119:32). Then everything in the Christian life of the believer is of grace. All is to be attributed to free, sovereign grace. So David was a man of enlarged heart. He was a Great-heart, and his religion was no mere intellectual or philosophical speculation, but was **heart-work**. (See how many times the word **heart** is found in Psalm 119.) David's hope was not, Thou shalt enlarge my mind, or my mental capacity. The Lord does enlighten the understanding, but the most fundamental divine work in the being of man is to enlarge his heart. Lesser men than such Great-hearts as David and Solomon are far more ready to learn than to love. But God commands, Thou shalt love thy God with all thy heart. The heart is the center of man's being, the throne of his whole nature and all his faculties. There "God hath sent

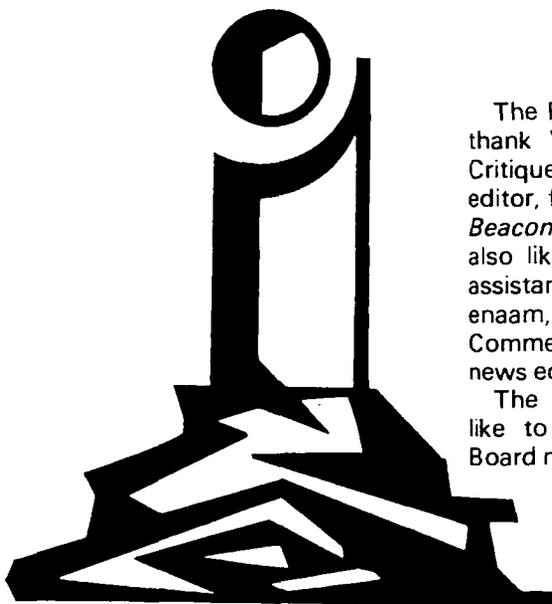
forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts." The living God dwells in the living heart, and there takes possession of us at the core and marrow of our being. It is from the heart that life and the issues of life do flow. God moves the heart of man, therefore also his intellect, will and all his feelings (Proverbs 16:1). He renews, illumines, sanctifies and strengthens heart and mind to ultimate perfection.

Enlargement of heart is needed (and may be said to be the first work of God in His elect, that of regeneration) because man is shut up in the solitary confinement brig of sin. "God hath concluded them all in unbelief" (Rom. 11:32), shut them all up completely on all sides, with no outlet, no means of escape. Jews and Gentiles were together in unbelief and disobedience, and so all were locked up together, not in a house of correction, but in the prison of disobedience. Sin reigned as tyrant-king over them there (Rom. 5:21). So "the Scripture hath concluded all under sin," or "shut up and doomed all under sin," i.e., under the curse and power of sin. In divine judgment, everything of men has been

condemned as sin. So the heart of man by nature is fast closed by sin, and there is no escaping this locking up "by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy," by a door of mercy only is there an outlet from this maximum security prison. Moreover, the prison is on fire, and the prisoner, shaking with fear, runs back and forth like a caged animal, frantically seeking an out, moaning and crying through the grating of his flaming prison, when God breaks the bars of his prison and snatches the captive out of his deathly dungeon. When the Lord does that for us we are said to be enlarged. Then the heart is brought out into a large place. We are set free from the slavery and bondage of sin, with the heart enlarged and its enlarged and liberated capacities to serve God. "Grace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God and of Jesus Christ our Lord" (II Pet. 1:2). In this way God enlarges the heart of His people and makes them Great-heart.

(1)Matt. 6:27

(2)Jer. 13:23



Thank You

The Federation Board would like to thank Vi Van Den Top, author of Critique and Jeanne Karsemeyer, news editor, for their hard work to make the *Beacon Lights* a success. We would also like to welcome Vickey Klamer, assistant secretary, Gwen Van Eenenaam, author of Current Events and Comments, and Karla Kalsbeek the news editor.

The Federation Board would also like to thank all retiring Federation Board members.

Lavonne Kamps, Secy.

CONTRIBUTION

The Mild Use Of God's Name In Vain

by Aaron Schwarz*

The title of this small article could well be "Horrors" relating to the way we should feel about God's name used loosely.

God's name is used in vain in the Church (PRC, also). It is not the boldest form but it is somewhat smoother whether in disappointment or surprise to exclaim Go- Guy, or Gol. Even at a missed basket in a basketball contest or some news or slight disappointment. One could almost say at the drop of a hat.

The boldest of all sins has crept into the church. Why? I can almost see many hands go up and shrug as if we're not the guilty party. Is this how cool our love for God is? Are we just going to pass by this sin? It is easy to do but Scripture says in Lev. 5:1 that if we fail to rebuke we are guilty also.

Do not let these mild forms such as Gol or Go- get by us. We must kill this sin or be killed don't you see. Listen to God's Word "Whosoever is partner with a thief hateth his own soul: he heareth cursing and berayeth it not. The fear of man

bringeth a snare: but whosoever putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe."

In our fluent society these exclamations are pretty well accepted, but in times of old men would be stoned.

Do you think those who would stop short of accentuating the d in God's name were spared from being stoned in Old Testament times? I would hate to debate against the assumption they too would be stoned.

I know how difficult it is to refrain but God is jealous of the name and are we for the sake of a little delight or disappointment going to throw God's terrible and awesome name around as our sinful nature pleases or let those about us even hint or use His name in part before our very faces. Let us be ashamed and vexed in our soul for days and even weeks until God's name is only used with fear and trembling before our very eyes.

*Aaron is a member of our Southwest Church

CONTRIBUTION

MORNING

Adapted from C. H. Spurgeon's Morning and Evening Meditations, the 17th of May, published by Zondervon's, used with permission. Ed.

"So to walk even as He walked" I John 2:6

Why should Christians imitate Christ? They should do it for their own sakes. If they desire to be in a healthy state of soul, if they would escape the sickness of sin, and enjoy the vigour of growing grace, let Jesus be their model. For their own happiness sake, if they would drink wine

on the lees, well refined; if they would enjoy holy and happy communion with Jesus: if they would be lifted up above the cares and troubles of this world, let them walk even as he walked. There is nothing which can so assist you to walk towards heaven with good speed, as wearing the image of Jesus on your heart to rule all its motions. It is when, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you are enabled to walk with Jesus in His very footsteps, that you are most happy, and most known to be the sons of God. Peter afar off is both unsafe and uneasy.

Next, for religion's sake, strive to be like Jesus. Ah! poor religion, thou hast been sorely shot at by cruel foes, but thou hast not been wounded one-half so dangerously by the foes as by thy friends. Who made those wounds in the fair hand of Godliness? The professor who used the dagger of hypocrisy. The man who with pretences, enters the fold, being nought but a wolf in sheep's clothing, worries the flock more than the lion outside. There is no weapon half so deadly as a Judas-kiss.

Inconsistent professors injure the gospel more than the sneering critic or the infidel. But, especially for Christ's own sake, imitate His example. Christian, lovest thou thy Savior? Is His name precious to thee? Is His cause dear to thee? Wouldst thou see the kingdoms of the world become His? Is it thy desire that He should be glorified? Art thou longing that souls should be won to Him? If so, imitate Jesus; be an "epistle of Christ, known and read of all men".

CONTRIBUTION

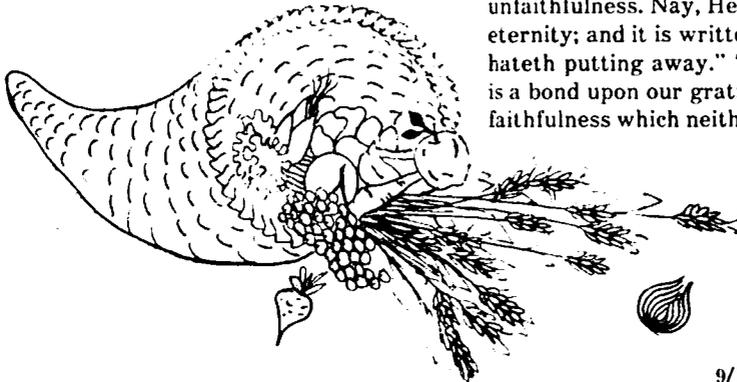
EVENING

"Thou art my servant; I have chosen thee" -

Is. 41:9

If we have received the grace of God in our hearts, its practical effect has been to make us God's servants. We may be unfaithful servants, we certainly are unprofitable ones, but yet, blessed be His name, we are His servants, wearing His livery, feeding at His table, and obeying His commands. We were once the servants of sin, but He who made us free has now taken us into His family and taught us obedience to His will. We do not serve our Master perfectly, but we would if we could. As we hear God's voice saying unto us, "Thou art my servant", we can answer with David, "I am thy servant; thou hast loosed my bonds." But the Lord calls us not only His servants, but His chosen ones—"I have chosen thee." We have not chosen Him first, but He hath chosen us. If we be God's servants, we

were not always so; to sovereign grace the change must be ascribed. The eye of sovereignty singled us out, and the voice of unchanging grace declared, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Long ere time began or space was created God had written upon His heart the names of His elect people, had predestinated them to be conformed unto the image of His Son, and ordained them heirs of all the fullness of His love, His grace and His glory. What comfort is here! Has the Lord loved us so long, and will He yet cast us away? He knew how stiffnecked we should be; He understood that our hearts were evil, and yet He made the choice. Ah! our Saviour is no fickle lover. He doth not feel enchanted for awhile with some gleams of beauty from His church's eye, and then afterwards cast her off because of her unfaithfulness. Nay, He married her in old eternity; and it is written of Jehovah, "He hateth putting away." The eternal choice is a bond upon our gratitude and upon His faithfulness which neither can disown.





FROM THE PASTOR'S STUDY

by: Rev. M. Kamps

Freemasonry (2)

The last time we talked together about the Masonic Lodge we were discussing its organizational aspects. At the conclusion of the previous article, I asked you to consider a definition of Freemasonry. It was a definition not of my making but given by one of its own adherents. I trust that you did contemplate the definition and its implications. The definition of Masonry given by Newton provides a little insight into the religious purpose and ideals of the Lodge. As I promised you, we will now take a brief look at the religion of the Lodge.

It is a proud religion. "It is true that Masonry is not a religion, but it is Religion, a worship in which all good men may unite, that they may share the faith of all."¹ A rather proud assertion, you understand. Masonry, accordingly then,

transcends all the peripheral elements in all other religions or faiths and unites them into one grand principle, which supposedly is the heart and core of all religion. Hutchinson remarks; "Masonry directs us to divest ourselves of confined and bigoted notions and teaches us that Humanity is the soul of Religion... and as Masons we only pursue the universal religion, the Religion of Nature."² And from Mackey we read; "The religion of Masonry is cosmopolitan, universal... God is equally present with the pious Hindu in the temple, the Jew in the synagogue, the Mohammedan in the mosque, and the Christian in the church."³ The religion of Masonry is indeed the religion of nature. The religion of Humanism. Its principles and goals are the expression of what man will do in the

name of the goodness of Humanity. As such Masonry does not recognize God's act of revelation. Masonry refuses to recognize that God stands as the independent, self-sufficient One, who is the creator and ruler of all things. Masonry identifies God and nature. Man becomes his own god. Man defines his own religion. "here lies the great secret of Masonry that it makes a man aware of that divinity within him, where from his whole life takes its beauty and meaning, and inspires him to follow and obey it."⁴

The god of Masonry has many different names. He is the "Grand Architect", the "Supreme Being", the "all seeing eye", "the Grand Being", "the Father in Heaven." The scriptural name "Jehovah" is the ineffable name for the Mason as well as for the Jew. This god of the Mason's is not the One, Triune, Living God of the Holy Scriptures. Rather the Masons have a pantheistic concept of God. God is Nature and Nature is God. Man has divinity in him. "Its G.O.D is merely a symbol for nature; Nature self originated, the cause of its own existence, as Pike says,"⁵ The god of Masonry is the god man invented for his own purposes. The Mason's god is an idol of the mind. That kind of god man need not fear, no matter what name one gives him.

Earlier we saw that in the lodge meeting place there is an altar and placed on that altar a Bible. What conception of the "good book" does Masonry have? Freemasonry accepts men of all creeds into its brotherhood and, consequently, it accepts all the "Good books" of all religions. Masons are broadminded! They exercise the "virtue" of toleration! Masonry often quotes the Holy Bible, which fact lends to this evil movement a covering of respectability. Their favorite passages are those concerning the building of the temple, the prophets, and the four gospels. In Masonic writings one will find repeated references to the good shepherd, the good samaritan, the ark of the covenant, the golden candlestick, the temple and its priesthood and even the resurrection. But all these expressions

and what they mean and represent are corrupted and distorted by Masonry.

Masonry rejects the concept of divine self-revelation. "Its Bible is not the Christian Book of Divine Revelation, but merely one of many religious books, such as the Koran, the Vedas, the Zendavesta, the Book of Mormonism, etc."⁶ Masonry is very tolerant. It is "mature" religion.

But true Christianity is intolerant. The believer confesses that only God Himself can and does reveal the Truth. The only record of the self-revelatory speech of God is recorded for us in Scripture. The believer denies the claim of revelation to any and all books other than the Bible. Truth is intolerant of the lie. Christianity condemns as products of sin and rebellion the Koran, the Book of Mormon, etc. Only through the revelation recorded for us as the Holy Scriptures, has God made Himself known as our creator and savior of his elect people, the Church, through our Lord Jesus Christ. You perceive then that Masonry has too many "good books." Through it claims to accept the Bible as the Word of God, it in reality denies this fact. This is true for Masonry fails to acknowledge the **exclusive** position of the Bible as the **only** infallible, wholly inspired record of the revelation of the one triune God. Masonry's attempt to equate the Bible and the Koran, for example, viewing them as having equal value and validity, is to deny the sole, exclusive position of Holy Scripture, the Bible. The matter is not relative.

What does Masonry have to say about Jesus Christ? The answer; . . . nothing! At least I could not find an explicit denial or acceptance of the fact that Jesus is the eternal Son of God in the flesh. Masonry chooses to **ignore**, in preference to denying explicitly, the divinity of Christ Jesus. But their attempt to **ignore** this cornerstone of the Church will not free them from condemnation. The Bible, as God's Word, demands of everyone that they **believe**; no one has the right to ignore the issue. Christ confronts every man with the pertinent question: "Whom say ye that I am.?"

Many there be that condemn the secrecy of the Lodge. Many there be that condemn its "bloodcurdling oaths", some of which I have quoted above, Oh, one can say that these oaths are just innocent fun, kids stuff; but that is not true. The matter of the oath is a serious spiritual matter. when one takes an oath he calls the living personal God to witness to the truth of his statement. The Masons understand that fact too. What must we say to the following: "To all of this and these I solemnly ... swear ... binding myself under no less penalty than having my throat cut from end to end, my tongue torn out by its roots...should I violate. ...So help me God..." Yes, to take the oath of the Lodge is to place oneself in danger of Hell fire.

One could write on and on about the evils of the oaths of the Lodge and its secrecy; but what we must clearly understand is that its secrecy and its oaths in all their repulsiveness are only peripheral matters. The Masonic lodge is wrong at more basic points. Know too, that their basic wrongs are not innocent errors of judgement, but are **deliberate** rejections of the truth of Scripture. The Masonic Lodge denies the truth concerning the One, Living, Eternal, Triune God; it rejects revelation, it refuses to confess the eternal divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the heart of the matter! Since the religion of the Masonic Lodge is wrong at its center, it is dead wrong in all its aspects. It is man's religion, Humanism. Masonry holds to an unbelieving concept of anthropology, sin, brotherhood, unity and salvation.

Some will say that I am too condemnatory of the Lodge and they will point to "all the good" that the Masons do. We have heard that line before. It was used re the godless labor unions...remember! What ever alledged "good" the Masons do, let this be our standard in determining whether it is valid or not; that which is not of faith is sin. (Rom. 14:23) Mason's much vaunted benevolence is limited to "Masons only." That which is not done in Christ's name and for His sake

is sin. Believer, be not deceived by the alledged "good" of unbelieving men.

Let me by way of summation make a few remarks. You remember that my little study of the Lodge was occasioned by two events: the query of one, who contemplated joining the church and the lodge, whether membership in both was compatible; and secondly, by Rev. Vander Weit's article in the **Banner**. The Rev. Vander Weit does his church a disservice. His article is pregnant with specious arguments. He assumes that those who preferred the fellowship of the Lodge and membership in it to the fellowship of the church - that such are "committed Christians" in whom the Holy Spirit is obviously working. And then on the basis of such an erroneous assumption, Rev. Vander Weit writes: "...our present stand, which excludes committed Christians from the C.R.C. because they are members of lodges, makes little scriptural sense." It is foolish to exclude committed Christians from the church. But it is not foolish but rather perfectly proper to exclude Masonic Lodge members from the church.

The Masonic Lodge is an anti-christian organization. Their religion is not merely wrong...it is anti-christian. It is Man's proud attempt to establish this universal brotherhood of men over against the One, Holy Catholic Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only in the Church of Christ is there Brotherhood. Believers in all nations and in all ages are one in Christ, for Jesus Christ hath redeemed us in order that we should be one faith in Him.

Let me conclude this discussion with the following succinct evaluation of the Masonic Lodge: "Freemasonry ...is a religious sect diametrically opposed to Christianity... The morality of masonry is a pagan sensuousness; its much vaunted benevolence is devoid of the charity of Christ; its history shows Masonry to be the renaissance of pagan mysticism, the religious application of the principles of the humanists, who strove to carry the world back to paganism."⁸

In all fairness to the Christian Reformed

Church it must be said that it did **not** take Rev. Vander Weit's advice and allow Masonic lodge members to be members of the church. At its last synod the C.R.C. maintained the position that lodge membership was incompatible with membership in the Church of Christ.

1. Newton, J.F., *The Builders*, Macoy Publishing And Masonic Supply Co., New York, 1930 p. 251

2. *Ibid.*, p.258

3. Mackey, Albert., an *Encyclopedia Of Freemasonry*, Published by Moss and Co., Philadelphia 432 Chestnut St. 1875, p. 315

4. Newton., *op. cit.*, p. 293

5. Pruess, Arthur, *Dictionary Of Secret And Other Societies*, B. Herder Book Co., St. Louis Mo., 17 S. Broadway; 1924 p. 143

6. Pruess, *loc. cit.*

7. Whalen, William J., *Handbook Of Secret Organizations*, Bruce Pub. Co. Milwaukee 1966, p.57

8. Pruess, *loc. cit.*



Creeds-Necessary?

Vi Van DenTop

As a youth of a denomination, we often tend to think of creeds as being rather "stuffy" or cold. Creeds are equivalent (in our minds) to the vast sea of obscurities and less understood intricacies of doctrine. When we are asked if we feel that creeds are necessary, our automatic response is a fundamental yes.

Why? To answer this question, volumes have been written and one can never in one short article assume to discuss thoroughly that which scholars have delved into for years. Perhaps a few aspects of the importance of the topic will motivate us to think more on these things.

First of all, God is the God of order. Within Himself as He exists as one in three, there is order. In the vast creation

we can attest that the Creator is a Being of order for "to everything there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven" (Eccl. 3:1). Events do not take place "willy - nilly."

God's people, then, desire to manifest this order within their own individual lives and also in their church life. A creed helps to attain this order.

A creed can be defined as an authoritative formulated statement of the chief articles of Christian belief necessary for the well being of the church (both as individuals and as a unit). Creeds are the very basis of order for the church of Christ. For example, our *Apostle's Creed* is a formulation of scriptural truths which we as members of one faith believe.

There is a unity, an agreeing harmony based on the creeds. Those not believing in these confessional articles cannot be members of our church. We share one faith and the tenets of that faith are briefly but explicitly stated in a creed. The result is some order in the church - an order which is essential to reflect the order of God.

A creed is also authoritative. The men who formulated the creed certainly do not give it its authority or credibility. The authority of the creeds must be based on the Word of God, the ultimate authority. We do not believe because a creed says, rather, we believe because scripture testifies to the fact that God is Almighty, maker of heaven and earth and that Christ is His only begotten Son etc. If we may be so bold, we might say that a creed is scripture in brief.

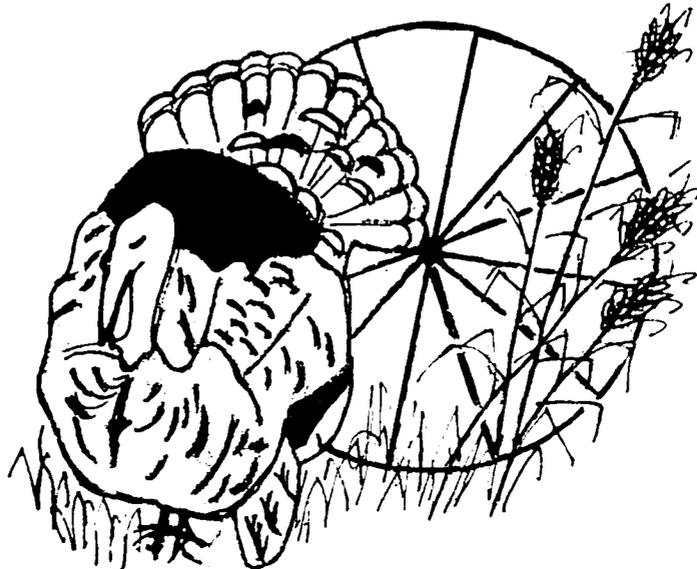
Realizing the aforesaid, we can see how distorted our idea is when we think of the creeds as "stuffy." An organized formulation of the truths of scripture does not smother us, but affords a means through which we can express our **undoubted Christian faith.** (We hear these words every Sunday but did you ever stop to

think of their potency?)

Communion of the saints is an important aspect of the church life. This fellowship of believers is possible because we have a unity in Christ expressed in our faith. People with contrary ontological presuppositions do not afford us any real communion such as we can enjoy with other children of God. The creeds are our basic presuppositions; our "forms of unity."

The "organized church" is bombarded with charges of all types. People are actually criticizing the idea of having any creed or order in the church. They feel stifled by a "creed", loudly proclaiming a better way; that being to let everyone believe what he wants. No communion of the saints can be enjoyed there, no true preaching of the Word, for the manifestation cannot exist apart from scripture and God's Word leaves no room for every man to do what is right in his own eyes.

Are creeds necessary? They form a unifying basis built upon God's Word which nothing else can replace. May we by the grace of God ever cherish the beautiful confessions of our creeds and live in them forever.



NEWS

from, for, and about our churches

Karla Kalsbeek

From our Southeast Church

On September 8 public confession of faith was made by Rick Noorman, Gary Vander Schaaf, Linda Vander Vennen, Sharon Vander Vennen, and Marsha Westra.

Mr. & Mrs. William Pipe rejoice in the birth of a son given them by the Lord on September 13.

From our South Holland Church

Membership papers of Richard Flikema were transferred to our First Church, at his request.

Paul Haak and Debra Rodden made public confession of faith on September 15.

Mr. & Mrs. Melvin De Boer and daughter Martha were received as members from the Reformed Church of Rengle, Wisconsin.

From our First Church

The annual pre-convention singspiration was held August 4 in First Church.

Mr. & Mrs. James Gerritsen rejoice in the birth of a daughter, Ann Marie, on July 23.

Mr. & Mrs. John ten Haaf rejoice in the birth of a son, Jonathan Brian, born July 27.

At his request a certificate of dismissal has been sent to James Wigger.

Mr. & Mrs. Jack Feenstra give thanks to God for the birth of a daughter, Marcella, born August 2.

Miss Cynthia Noordyke and Mr. Edwin Alofs were married September 6.

From our Southwest Church

Membership papers of Miss Jane Schipper have been received from our First Church.

From our Hope, Walker Church

The Federation Board sponsored a car wash and baked goods sale on August 3 at Hope School.

Mr. & Mrs. Steven Hauck made public confession of faith on September 1. Following their confession, Elizabeth Ann, their daughter, was baptized.

Jack Huizinga was discharged from the armed forces and arrived home August 31. Welcome home, Jack!

Mr. Greg Engelsma and Miss Elaine Karsemeyer were married September 6 in Hope Church.

Upon their request the membership papers of Mr. & Mrs. Robert Hoven and six baptized children have been transferred to our Holland Church.

The membership of Miss Betty Kuiper has been transferred to our Edgerton Church upon her request.

The membership papers of Mr. John Schipper have been received from our Holland Church.

The membership papers of Mrs. Joel Zandstra, nee Marsha Ophoff, have been received from our First Church.

Mr. & Mrs. Roger Kamphuis were blessed with the birth of a boy, Douglas Allen, on October 9.

From our Hope, Redlands Church

Sunday, August 4, the Young Peoples Society of Redlands sponsored a sing-spiration for the congregation.

Mr. & Mrs. David De Jong rejoice in thanksgiving to God at the birth of a daughter, Keri Lynn.

Public confession of faith was made by John and JoAnn Van Uffelen on October 6.

From our Doon Church

Mr. Harold Vis was received as a baptized member, and Harold along with Lila Thomas made public confession of faith on July 21.

The papers of Mrs. H. Kuiper have been given her upon request.

The membership of Mr. & Mrs. James Blankespoor have been transferred to South Holland.

A Fourth of July picnic between Hull and Doon churches was held at Hull Park with Candidate (now Rev.) Slopsma to give a speech.

Doon held its picnic July 17 with a pot luck supper.

Mr. Harold Vis and Miss Lila Thomas were married August 23.

Mr. Galen Te Slaa and Miss Laura Kline were married in Hull First Christian Reformed Church on August 28.

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