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Variety in Our Church Service

The subject of this article has been assigned to me. I mention this, you must understand, not with the idea in mind to criticize but rather to pay due respect. The committee or board could scarcely have acted more appropriately in choosing this topic for the feature article which is to appear in “Beacon Lights” in the beginning of the year 1957. The reason for this is plain: this topic bears such a weighty thought. A thought that should occupy the central position in all our contemplation, not only in the new year but in every new month, new week, new day and new moment in our lives. I dare to say the most important thought.

By this time we well know that that thought is the Church Service. And, I hasten to add that this does not include the thought of variety which also appears in my topic. For as it is connected in this topic with the church service the idea is, of course, a change from our usual procedure. This I would never advocate.

As young people, therefore, of the Prot. Ref. Church who confess the purest manifestation of the truth, and that by grace, let us properly fix in our minds the idea of the church service. There are several reasons which establish her importance. First and foremost is the fact that it is God’s service, that is, the service of the I AM. Even as God Himself establishes His covenant, “I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed . . .”; even as God dwells with His people and Sovereignly brings His church through the fierce trials of the Old Dispensation witnessing that, “I am thy God that brought thee forth . . .”; even so in the church service God witnesses that it is He Who thus dwells with His people who worship Him. Second, and like unto the first, is the fact that it is God’s service and that in His Sanctuary. In this adorable and holy place, which is not so because of the building but because of the presence of Majesty—God, God reveals His face through His Word and by His Spirit so that we see Christ in whom it pleased God to reveal Himself. From this it is apparent that we have an obligation when in God’s Sanctuary: “God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and in truth.” Third and final is the fact that it is God’s Service in His Sanctuary performed through the various offices of the church.
Hence for this very reason God established offices in His Church for His service. Eph. 4:11-13.

From the preceding facts we may conclude that the church service is the will and purpose of God in Christ Jesus and by His Spirit whereby He gathers, leads, directs and guides all those who are the objects of His love in Christ and the center of the creation of God because of Christ into a saving knowledge and wisdom which is revealed in His Sanctuary and through the means of which they are prepared to sit with God in the Heavenly Sanctuary forever. Thus the church service is God's service and of the loftiest importance for the objects of His love.

* * *

There are several aspects or parts to this service. They are all necessary but to comment sufficiently on them would require more than the number of pages allotted to me. Briefly, however, let me state that all these aspects presuppose the participants. The participants are the entire congregation and they participate in the entire service. That is the fact and that is the way it should be. The minister, by virtue of his high appointment by Christ through the church into his office, is the central spokesman who performs the various functions of the important church service. A choir, which is composed of a representative few of the congregation and can be found in many churches, has no separate pews or place or calling and therefore have no place in that service. Their place is with the entire congregation. There are other offices we know, yet the minister is the leader. He leads in all the parts of the service which can be divided into these three groups: (a) The group containing the symbolism as connected with the declarations of blessing. This is the salutation and the benediction with the votum. (b) The second group can readily be seen to be centered about the exposition of the Word of God. Included in this is the Scripture reading, the prayer, songs; the Law or the confession (apostles creed); and, the offering. (c) The final group can be labeled as those aspects that concern our forms, such as, sacraments, ordinations, marriage, etc.

It is true that the above groups are self-explanatory. However it is necessary to say a word about the first group, that is, the part of symbolism. When the minister stretches forth his arms and declares the blessings we should not imagine that grace flows forth from his fingers. If we imagine this, we err. However as symbol it is extremely important and we must by all means retain it, for it witnesses of the spiritual reality of the wings of God as He shelters His own in the pavilion of grace and showers them with blessings in spiritual places.

* * *

It should become evident now that we put our topic into a question form that my answer would be an emphatic NO. From the very nature of the service, the particular participation of the entire congregation of whom the ambassador of Christ is leader, and other reasons mentioned, it is evident that we utilize the correct method and conceive of it properly.

The question has often been asked whether or not someone other than the minister may read the Scripture and the law as was the custom sometime ago in various churches. To this we reply that there truly is none other more capable of reading that portion of Scripture than he who has contemplated on it in dealing with his text. Besides, as the one sent officially by Christ for the very purpose of leading, the minister should by all means lead also in this field.

Our people have asked the question whether or not we may read parts of our three forms of unity in the place of the Apostles' Creed or law? Her-
again I would answer, no, because of the exact Scriptural content, brevity and comeliness of those in use. But in all friendliness to our young people and without casting any disparaging remarks upon our comely and important confessions I would advise ourselves that a good place and time to read our three forms of unity, as well as the Scriptures themselves, is just prior to the church service. This provides excellent meditation for us and has proven very fruitful.

So we do well as young people to contemplate at the new year and every new moment in history on the loftiest thought of all: God with His people in His Sanctuary. Then we see that we are more than conquerors and we hopefully view each new moment as one nearer to the perfect Sanctuary of God in glory, which is eternal in the Heavens.

A. Mulder

THE FEARLENSNESS OF FAITH

Jehovah is my light,
And my salvation near;
Who shall my soul affright,
Or cause my heart to fear?
While God my strength, my life sustains,
Secure from fear my soul remains.
When evil-doers came
To make my life their prey,
They stumbled in their shame
And fell in sore dismay;
Though hosts make war on every side,
Still fearless I in God confide.
My one request has been,
And still this prayer I raise,
That I may dwell within
God's house through all my days,
Jehovah's beauty to admire,
And in His temple to inquire.

Psalm 27:1-3
As products of an orthodox denomination, we pride ourselves that our doctrines and beliefs are logical, well-thought-out, and free of emotional influences.

These qualifications are lacking, however, in our approach to church music. A quick check will show that while we may preach about the song of the angels to the shepherds, we may not sing about it, even though the words be a direct quotation from Scripture; the Lord's prayer may not be sung over our radio broadcast unless it is sung to an approved tune; the qualification of an anthem varies according to the time of the year.

In this investigation we will find that we may sing the Psalter numbers that predict the birth of Christ, but not songs based on the New Testament fulfillment of this prediction. We will find that according to our present system of judging church music, thirty-eight of the thirty-nine books of the Bible are judged as unworthy to be used as basis for church approved music.

These confusing, illogical regulations stem from Article 69 in our Church Order. This article states that only the 150 Psalms of David and a few other "songs" (such as the Song of Mary) may be sung in the churches. The latter not in common use, and also seem to follow the rule that only that which was sung in Scripture, is fit to be sung today: a rule which has no sound basis for existence.

If the Psalter followed the original phrasing and rhythm of the Psalms, we might have some basis for promoting them above the other thirty-eight books of Scripture. But the Psalter we use in our churches, was made by paraphrasing the Psalms; many in such a manner they only vaguely resemble the original Psalm.

This illogical, distorted veneration of the "Psalter only" philosophy says in reality, "The Psalms are more desirable than any other book of Scripture; that's the book we want imbedded in the mind of the church more than any other part of Scripture." Granted this is never even implied, why the elevation of the Psalms to a position higher than all others? Since the Almighty God inspired the whole of Scripture, may we imply (not in so many words but in actual practice) that all but one book is unfit to be sung in our churches?

The Psalter should never be replaced but augmented. For where within it can we find, for example, songs that clearly tell of the rising of Christ from the grave, or of the actual descention of the Holy Spirit? Granted, these doctrines are embodied within the Psalter, but generally their presence is so obscured by the muted tones of the Old Testament, that they can only be detected by a complicated series of associated doctrines.

Two incidents which clearly demonstrate the weakness of this "Psalter only" rule took place recently in conjunction with the Reformed Witness Hour. In the first instance, Rev. Heys' fine version of the Lord's prayer was sung as part of the program. As soon as the person in charge of music for that particular broadcast returned home from the broadcasting studio, an irate brother called him on the telephone and began to berate him for allowing the Lord's prayer to be sung over the air.

(Continued on page 9)
In the article of last month's Beacon Lights we discussed the question of corporate responsibility. This is a fundamental question, it stands to reason, for on the basis of the fact of corporate responsibility rests our objections against the union to a great extent.

We are therefore, particularly concerned with the principles of a labor organizations. For the principles of any organization define what the character of such an organization is. But, we may also speak of the actions of these labor groups, for although it is true that generally the actions of a group are based upon and in harmony with the principles which were adopted, it is also conceivable that a group or organization may perform certain actions which are contrary to their principles.

The question is therefore, whether it is possible that the principles of existing labor organizations are not in conflict with the principles of Christian conduct and life — of the principles of the kingdom of heaven of which the elect are citizens.

If it is true that a member of an organization is responsible for the action of that organization and the principles upon which it is founded, then these principles and actions must meet the standards of his own principles lest he fall into the serious danger of being held accountable for that which is contrary to the conduct of a citizen of the kingdom of heaven. And the mere question of active support and participation makes no difference in this fundamental principle. It makes no difference whether or not he agrees with the principles of an organization, nor whether or not he actively supports the principles and makes propaganda on their behalf; it makes no difference whether he is personally involved in wicked actions or takes no part in them, nor whether he is an active participant in the evil fostered by such an organization; as a member he remains both responsible and accountable.

And therefore it is a very serious error on the part of professing Christians when they would fain retain their membership in the kingdom of heaven, but at the same time hold a union card in their pocket.

In this article I would like to make a few remarks about the oath. It is not my purpose to go into detail concerning the place of the oath in the life of the believer. Nor is this necessary. And it is often objected that the swearing of an oath is not a condition to membership any longer in existing labor unions. The one who seeks to join or is forced to join, so it is said, need not formally take an oath, nor need even make any reference to an oath. Whether or not this is true, I don't know. I know that many unions and branches of larger unions have oaths. And I know that this oath is also considered to be a condition for membership whether the applicant formally swears to it or not. I have for example, the Constitution of The International Union United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of America, (UAW-CIO). This is also their latest copy adopted at Cleveland, Ohio,
in March of 1955. Under Article 41 which is entitled “Initiation Ceremony” we read, “The President shall say to the Guide: ‘You will now place the candidate before me for the obligation.’ The Guide advances with the candidate and places him in front of the President’s station. All newly elected members before being admitted to full membership shall subscribe to the following obligation: ‘I pledge my honor to faithfully observe the Constitution and laws of this Union and the Constitution of the United States; to comply with all the rules and regulations for the government thereof; not to divulge or make known any private proceedings of this Union; to faithfully perform all the duties assigned to me at all times as not to bring reproach upon my Union, and at all times to bear true and faithful allegiance to the International Union, United Automobile, Aircraft and Agricultural Implement Workers of Amerika (UAW-CIO).’”

And yet the mere formality of taking an oath is not the important matter, for there is often implied in becoming a member of a union the swearing of adherence and loyalty to that organization. And the oath is just as real whether sworn actually and whether implied in membership.

Apart from the contents now, of any oath which one must swear to become a member of an organization, it is certainly clear to anyone that the oath under such circumstances is altogether wrong. Consider that in the first place, the life of a child of God must be of such a nature that an oath is never necessary to force him to tell the truth. He must always see to it that his yea is indeed a yea and his nay always a nay. He must never under any circumstances tell a lie, so that an oath ought never to be required of him. Consider in the second place, therefore, that he may swear an oath when it is necessary to further the cause of the Son of God, when it is definitely a question of God’s glory, and when the cause of the kingdom of heaven is involved. Those occasions may be rare, but if they come about, the Christian may take an oath upon his lips, not as if this time he is extra particular about telling the truth, but rather that God’s cause may be enhanced and furthered. But it stands to reason therefore, that no organization may demand of anyone at will to swear an oath of allegiance to it. Nor may any individual swear an oath for trivial reasons or insignificant occasions. And I doubt very much whether anyone would dare to maintain that the cause of God’s glory and the welfare of the kingdom of Jesus Christ is advanced by swearing an oath of allegiance and loyalty to a labor organization. In fact this is sheer mockery even to say such a thing. And then it makes no difference whether the oath is formally sworn or whether it is implied in membership. The fact is that a believer may never misuse the oath in such a fashion.

I know that in order for an alien to become a citizen of this country he must swear an oath of allegiance to the Constitution and to the country of which he shall become a part. But remember that after all the government is, according to Scripture an institution which is ordained by God, and to which we must be subject according to God’s ordinances. For God is the supreme power who rules through governments as His own institutions. And this can never be said of existing labor unions.

I would say that if there were no other objections against labor organizations except this one, that would be sufficient reason for us to refuse to be members under any circumstances. In a special way, when we swear an oath we stand

(Continued on page 11)
"The Apocrypha"

It was a cold, blistering, wintry evening but this did not retard the advance of a goodly number of Protestant Reformed young folk. They fought the fierce winds, laughed off the cold, and struggled through the massive heaps of wind-driven snow.

Among them you could also find a few strangers, faces of those who ordinarily did not assemble with Protestant Reformed youth.

And the occasion?

Well, it came about this way. Jim, a Protestant Reformed lad of about sixteen, worked in the neighborhood shoe store after school and on Saturdays. While waiting on a customer the other day, Jim had become involved in a discussion about the Bible. Bob, the customer, was a Catholic lad of approximately the same age as Jim and he had charged that the Protestant Bible was incomplete and that only the Roman Catholics have the complete Bible. For this Jim would not stand and, consequently, an interesting discussion ensued. However, since this was a place of business and Jim, conscientious about his work, felt it unfair to his employer to engage in this sort of thing while other customers were waiting to be served, did not at this time extend the discussion. Instead, he invited his Catholic acquaintance to an open discussion of the question at a later time and, somewhat to his own surprise, Bob said he would be glad to accept.

So it was that a mass meeting of Protestant Reformed Youth in the area was arranged at which was to be featured a Round Table Discussion on the subject: "Is Our Bible Complete?" In addition to Jim and Bob, two others were chosen to complete the panel; Sue to represent the Catholic view and Mary to defend the Protestant position. Hence, the strangers also in the crowd,—those who belonged to the side of the opposition, friends of Bob and Sue.

The moderator for the evening took his position before the interested audience. "Now we know," he began, "that there is a difference between the Catholic and Protestant views concerning the Bible. I wonder, Bob, if you would care to present the issue?"

"Be pleased to," responded confident Bob, rising to his feet in excitement. "You see, we Catholics claim that our Bible is the complete Bible. We deny the charge that is sometimes hurled against us that we have added something to the Bible. This is simply not true. On the contrary, we claim that the non-catholic versions of the Bible have omitted something from the real Bible and, therefore, your Bible is not complete. You have taken seven books out of the Old Testament. These books belong there and to omit them is a serious error."

"No, no, no!" burst Mary, who at this point could not be restrained. "Bob is talking about books that are 'Apocrypha' and these do not really belong to the inspired Canon of God's Word. The term 'Apocrypha' which I used, literally signifies something that is hidden, doubtful, secret. As I used it, it denotes those books or writings that purport to be Holy Scriptures but which, upon closer investigation, can be shown to be un-
worthy of the title, 'Word of God.' Incidentally, there are more than seven of these but I think it is correct that the Roman Catholics have included only seven in their Bibles."

"I just want to make one correction here," inserted Sue. "We ought to bear in mind that in our discussion the word that Mary used is a Protestant term with a Protestant meaning. We Catholics do not agree with her statements. We deny that the content of these books is 'hidden, or doubtful' but we maintain that they are God's Word and not simply that they purport to be."

"Nevertheless," and now it was Jim's turn to speak, "Mary is still correct. Now I know that you who maintain the Catholic position will not agree with this but, nonetheless, the truth is clearly stated in our Confession. I would like to read part of this in order to make our position clear. I'm quoting the Belgic Confession, Article 6:

'We distinguish those sacred books from the apocryphal... all of which the church may read and take instruction from, so far as they agree with the Canonical books; but they are far from having such power and efficacy, as that we may from their testimony confirm any point of faith, or of the christian religion; much less detract from the authority of the other sacred books.'

That's our stand."

"You make a wild assertion there," chided Bob. "You simply imply that these books about which we are speaking do not agree in content with those that you call the Canonical Books. This you will have to prove most conclusively."

"Let me do that," said Mary, impatiently waiting to explode her mind. "I have read some of those books in preparation for our discussion tonight and I would like to show you that what Jim says is certainly true. In these books, for example, we read about offerings for the dead and that atonement can be made through human efforts and that angels bring our prayers to God. Now such things are in conflict with what the Bible teaches. Do you want the references?"

"No, the references are not necessary," responded Sue. "But I want to say that here is where you are wrong. The things you mention are not in conflict with the Bible. The trouble is that you think that you can interpret the Bible and that's why you can find conflict. Really, the conflict is only with your interpretation. We Catholics believe that only the Church may interpret the Bible for us and then we have no conflict at all. The Church says that the Bible teaches these things."

"That's interesting," said Jim, "but false. There are two things here. First, how do you harmonize this position with this passage from the Bible: 'But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you; but as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it has taught you, ye shall abide in Him.' (I John 2:27). And, secondly, if the Church taught that the Bible said that stones were good to eat and that the moon is made of green cheese, would you believe that too?"

At this point the moderator, eager to continue the discussion, had to break the long silence that followed. "Suppose you tell us," he went on to say, "Why the Catholics claim these books to be Canonical."

"Yes," and now it was Bob speaking, "I will do that. You see before the time of Christ, there were two divisions of Jews. Some remained in Palestine and continued to use the Scripture written in Hebrew. Others, scattered throughout foreign lands, particularly in Egypt, were better acquainted with Greek because Greek was then the common language
For the use of the Greek speaking Jews, the Old Testament was translated into Greek several centuries before the coming of Christ. And it was these Greek speaking Jews who, even before the time of Christ, regarded the seven books of which we speak as inspired. Now the apostles used the Scriptures of the Greek-speaking Jews, and it is upon the authority of the apostles that the Old Testament, with the seven books under consideration was held to be inspired. We, therefore, regard them as such upon apostolic authority.

"But," bombastic Mary queried, "Can you explain then why it is that even though the New Testament writers, who often quoted from the Greek translation of the Old Testament, never once quoted from any of these books? Nowhere do you read that the apostles approved any of these books. I claim that you cannot appeal to the apostles at all."

"What is more," added Jim, "Jesus also frequently quoted from the Old Testament but he never did from the books which you claim are part of those Scriptures."

Sue, desiring to come to Bob’s defense in this matter could only think of one thing to say. "There are several other books in the Old Testament from which quoted, none of the New Testament writers quoted, aren’t there?" she asked. "You don’t claim that there are not Canonical just for that reason, do you?"

Jim answered. "No, we do not. Remember, however, that all of these books belonged to the Hebrew Canon which was closed before the time of Christ. It seems more reasonable to conclude from the fact that Christ and the apostles did not refer to these additions to the Greek translation that they did not approve of them than it is to simply assert that these books have apostolic authority without offering any concrete proof."

Much more was said. Questions were asked by the audience. But here we must close the discussion for our space is more than occupied for this issue!

G. Vanden Berg

EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 1)

As soon as possible, the committeeman reminded his caller of the two versions of the Lord’s Prayer included in the Psalter. Hearing this, the brother was shocked. Nonetheless, the Lord’s prayer required the sanction of appearing in the Psalter before it was acceptable to him.

Another incident concerns the music to be sung by the Radio Choir. In its recent revision of the choir’s constitution, they were instructed to delete the provision that one high grade anthem could be sung with each broadcast, and to substitute the provision that approved anthems may be sung only during the Christmas and Easter seasons. While this indicated a healthy recognition of the fact that although the Psalter is the ideal basis for a strong, orthodox church library, it is incomplete by itself. However, this provision forced the musical renditions of the Christmas and Easter stories, as told in the New Testament, to derive their sanctity from the calendar!

Just as the Old Testament contains the entire gospel, yet is only the basis for the New Testament, so also the Psalter, while it points towards the full gospel, still lacks the luster of joyful radiance that is found only in the New Testament.

This is not being written to discourage the use of the Psalter, but to urge that we look on it as the basis for a more complete selection of songs that may be sung with full approval in any of our church functions. Our selection should not depend on the time of the year or a possible appearance in the Psalter, but on the contents of the song and its conformity to Scripture and our Reformed heritage.
Spiders

In the present article we will discuss the so-called "courtship of spiders," some interesting kinds of spiders, and some interesting facts concerning spiders.

In the webless spiders such as the runners and jumpers, the male usually has elaborate feelers (palpi) which he displays prominently, waving them back and forth in semaphore fashion when courting the female of his choice. Sometimes the male disports himself before the female in the manner of a cocky young swain, strutting back and forth before the female. At other times he sways and dances toward the female, who in a few cases rather shyly backs away. Occasionally she also becomes excited and joins in the dance. When this takes place, the male's suit is successful. In certain species of one family, the Pisauridae, the male catches a fly and carefully swathes it in silk and then presents it to the female of his choice.

In some of the house spiders, the male drums upon the web of the female with his palpi. She immediately comes to the entrance of her hiding place; and the male advances with gusto, swaying, dancing, and walking on his hinder legs. He finally with a quivering of his body touches the female; and she immediately falls into a cataleptic trance. The male then seizing her by a leg and drags her about finally mating with her. She apparently does not awaken until the activity is completed.

In another of these spiders the male approaches the female, constantly vibrating the threads of the web and dancing in circles about her retreat. When the female becomes so inclined she answers the male's signal by also pulling at the threads.

In the orb weaver the male ascends the web of the female and finally seizes the communicating thread which leads to her retreat. The two signal by plucking the threads as though playing a harp.

In most species courtship is rather dangerous for the males, which are usually much smaller than the females. If the suit is unsuccessful, the female rushes out and attacks the male as though he were an imprisoned fly, carries him into her nest, and devours him.

There are many different kinds of spiders, with many different habits. The trap-door spider digs a burrow in the ground, and covers it with a lid of silk. It waits in its burrow until it feels the vibration of an insect's footsteps above. Then it pops open the trap door and catches the insect. The wolf spider is another kind that digs a burrow in the ground. Instead of building a web, it creeps up on its insect victim the way a cat stalks a mouse. Then it springs, and its poison fangs quickly end the insect's struggles. The mother wolf spider carries her young on her back for a few weeks after they have hatched which gives them a better start in life. The crab spider can move backwards like a crab. Its two front legs spread three times the length of its body. This spider does not make a web, but waits for insects inside a flower. It catches them when they come for nectar. Some crab spiders can change color to match the color of the flower. Most crab spiders are white or yellow. Jumping spiders have a habit of almost letting a person touch them. Then wher
a person is just ready to pick them up they jump away. Jumping spiders can be found on old weather beaten fences and court their mates with the previously mentioned dance. The water spider spins a web under water. It carries air bubbles which it collects on the hairs of its body to the nest and inflates it. The inflated nest thus keeps the water out of it.

Many creatures eat spiders but the wasps are the worst enemies. The wasps kill the spiders and then seal them up in cells for the larvae to feed on.

Spiders kill all kinds of insects, including many that are harmful to man. Insects would destroy many of our crops of grain, vegetables, and fruit were it not for spiders, birds, and certain wasps.

It is said that a rope of spider's silk one inch thick would hold up 74 tons. It would be three times as strong as a one-inch rope of iron. Amazing strength!

From their mode of life spiders attain their largest size and are found in greatest profusion in the tropical regions. One of the largest known spiders, found in Brazil, measures upwards of two and a half inches in length, with legs nine inches and upwards in span. The smallest known spider, found in England, is but one twentieth of an inch in length.

Spiders, besides being skillful and crafty, are very clean. One of the common spiders may often be seen brushing and cleaning its forehead and eyes with its hairy palpi, as a cat uses its paws for a similar purpose.

When we speak of the better qualities of spiders, we must note their attachment to their young, and the frequent fondness for each other as seems to be evidenced by the apparently happy life of male and female of some species in the same web. We must not overlook the other side of the picture, however, as has been well confirmed, that in some species the female will seize and devour the male even immediately after the exercise of his natural office.

Observing therefore in nature the marks of sin we explain with the apostle in Romans: "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who had subjected the same in hope, because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travailleth in pain together until now." And it will continue to be in pain until Christ comes in glory and makes all things new.

A. Lubbers

CHRISTIAN LIVING

(Continued from page 6)

before the face of God and call God as our witness that what we say is as truthful as He is the Truth. And this is absolutely impossible to do when we take an oath of a labor union upon our lips.

And I have said nothing yet about the contents of these oaths. To read only a few is to be convinced that it is blasphemy to take their words upon one's lips. But to this we shall return.

H. Hanko
Should We Have Choirs in Our Protestant Reformed Church Services?

Since this article presents only the negative side of the question in what was originally planned as a pro and con discussion, the opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the writer. The affirmative will appear next month.—ed.

(NEGATIVE)

In order to find the place of a Choir in the church service it would not be out of place to gain some information on the nature of worship as found in the church service.

Worship is the primary and eternal activity of redeemed mankind. Worship needs to be vitalized and intensified by that most spiritual of all arts of self expression; namely, music.

Worship may be simply defined as the offering of all our faculties to the glory of God; according to Winfred Douglas—Canon in the Episcopal Church.

Let us see why music enhances the act of true worship. Music expresses human life. Music is the art of expression which directly voices the human soul in tone governed by rhythm. So in its combination of the sensible and the spiritual it corresponds to the nature of man, and to the sacramental idea characteristic of the religion of Jesus Christ. This is true moreover because both religion and art are qualitative expressions of the nature of being as opposed to science which is a quantitative expression of an approach to reality.

Pursuing our subject further; we find that there is a double source of music in the individual. In the first instance an impulse of emotional self expression produces tone or sustained sound. This is a manifestation of life as personal feeling. The second source is an impulse of law relating the individual life processes to the universe. This impulse is the basis of rhythm, the combined result can be seen as personality in action.

With this general knowledge in mind, we can see that church music expresses the life of the Church as the Body of Christ. The Catholic life of the first Christian centuries was not the sum total of individual human lives organized for government or administration, but was the life of the mystical Body of Christ, a living organism. The church music of the early Christian centuries expresses this organic life.

A study of the music of the early Christian centuries gives us these principles:

1. Since the object of redeemed life is the praise of God, the music was sung only to the praise of God.
2. The music was an integral part of each service and was sung as the voice of the whole church not as individualistic prayer.
3. Provision was made for each and every member to join in the active praise to God.
4. The music was purely religious never secular and always subordinate to the Word of God.

The common practice of modern day churches pertaining to their choirs would seem to violate these ancient principles of church music.

The progress and growth of the church
from very early times to the Reformation is on a parallel with the progress of church music. Early church music was a blend of Hebrew, Greek and Latin elements. The Hebrew element was characterized by its impressiveness due to its grandeur and power. The Greek element was one of refinement and perfection of detail. The Latin element was one of organization. Since the Greek element was much the stronger in all phases of the church life and every day life the trend in church music was one of the refinement. As the church became larger the service grew more elaborate and the music became more complex. Another contributing factor in this connection was the common practice of using choral music to provide the setting and background of Greek drama. This was carried over into the church as the service became more dramatic and ritualistic. The result of the process was the monopoly of church music by the choir. This monopoly was made official by the Council of Laodicea, which declared in 367 A.D. that only recognized, artistic music was that given by trained choirs.

This Council set up schools for training choirs whose influence and power lasted until the 16th century.

The dawn of the Reformation accomplished a return to ancient and true principles in church music. The personal nature of the Reformation Doctrine of Salvation by faith required participation by the whole congregation in the service. In addition the active participating by the whole congregation required the use of the vernacular and the use of simplified music. Besides all this, there was no need for elaborate ritual and its accompanying choral renditions. It was a firm principle of the church at Geneva under John Calvin, that only congregational singing was permissible in public worship. And this congregational singing was limited to material taken accurately from the Bible, so that for all practical purposes only the metrical versions of the Psalms were used.

The next step in the historical process as relating the church services and the choirs is the decline of the true Reformation spirit. The Romantic movement in England influenced church music in various ways. There was a change from religious music to sentimental or dramatic. Again there was a shift from active vocal worship to passive listening. Lastly there was an awakening interest in instrumental music as opposed to choral music both by the composers and the people. The result again of these changes was a shift from congregational singing to the use of the choir. In fact the ritual of the Established English church—once Reformed—required the use of trained choirs.

On the European continent the rise of Pietism accomplished the same changes for the worse. This phase of religious activity emphasized emotional feeling and enthusiasm in worship. Again to bring about these ends, the choir was introduced and the famous composers of the day competed to produce elaborate music for these choirs.

From those days until the present, the decline continued. There was the rise of Independents in England whose music was formulated by the Wesleys and Isaac Watts. There was the growth of these and other churches in the United States; always accompanied by great use of the choir and small congregational singing. Modernism flourished along these same lines from its beginning in the seeds of the French Revolution.

From this elaborate historical background we can only draw the conclusion that the use of a choir in the church service is detrimental to the worship of the church. There is a twofold action involved here. The use of a choir detracts

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A Criticism

Popular Literature

After I had agreed to write upon this subject for Beacon Lights, I somewhat regretted my decision. I certainly do not feel myself to be any sort of authority on this subject. The letter requesting this article on this particular subject referred to popular literature as including that which we find on today's magazine racks. This then would include all current publications in the magazine world and I believe, comic books. While such things as comic books are primarily produced for the extremely young, yet due to their popularity among the younger set, we certainly may spend a few minutes time considering them. My acquaintance with comic books is limited to what I am able to read of them in the daily paper. For me, this is enough. If one can believe what the writers of the daily papers write in regards to this brand of literature, then they certainly have no place in the Christian home. They may, collectively, be classified as trash. It is astounding how many adolescents who find themselves in conflict with the law of the state, freely admit that the desire to engage in some unlawful activity was brought about by their becoming acquainted with a particular type of crime through the comic book. I do not like to think of our covenant children becoming acquainted with this type of literature. I do not like to believe that covenant parents would buy this type of literature for their covenant offspring. Certainly if they do, they do so at the instigation of the devil, who loves to lead God's people astray. What better way would there be that to pervert the minds of the young?

However I think, when we speak of popular literature in the world today we mean more that type of literature that would appeal to the adult. Magazines with stories of common, ordinary people, people with normal lives except for some extraordinary trait that warrants publication. I do not think I have to mention any magazines by name to tell you what is popular today. Look at any magazine rack and see what type of magazine is most prominently displayed. Oh, I know you will find those that you would not be ashamed to read, that you do not have to hide when the minister comes over. There are those, but they certainly are not popular. Natural man today, as is always the case, desires and demands the basest and filthiest type of literature to satisfy the lust of his darkened heart and mind. I say, this is always the case, yet as time goes by, and this world rapidly approaches the end of all things, there also is a more rapid development of sin in the heart of the natural man. What society perhaps frowned upon a century ago, today is accepted as a matter of course. It may be safely said that what today, openly and plainly reveals itself upon the publication stands of this land, would at least have been hidden from the eye of 20 or 30 years ago. In the past two decades this country has gone from a condition of national depression to a condition of national prosperity. Along with this change has come a more abundant display of all things which appeal to the carnal, natural man. Where previously the means to procure that which the natural man desired was extremely limited, today he has an abundance of this world's goods to satisfy his carnal desires. Prosperity is not good for
the natural man. And a truer picture of
natural man cannot be found anywhere
than in what he reads. Young people,
let us not be naive about these things.
Those magazines that you see displayed,
are not there just to take up space, to
fill up the racks. They are there because
there is such a demand. They occupy
such a prominent place on the rack and
they require so much space on the rack
just because their prominence and their
popularity are in direct proportion to
their demand. You do not have to guess
what this country wants, by and large,
to fill their reading habits. Look at
the magazine racks and you have the
answer.

If you are in the habit of reading the
editorial page in your daily newspaper
you will many times find contributions
demanding the popular literature of our
day. Frequently the papers themselves
will attempt to wage a crusade and con-
vince the publishers that their publica-
tions should be made more respectable.
Sometimes it seems as though the glim-
merings of natural light still exist, and
natural man is able to take stock of him-
self and to recognize himself for the
depraved creature that he is. Then he says
that, if only the temptations that sur-
round him would not be so enticing to
his flesh, if only society would eliminate
that which his natural heart desires, if
only his eye could not see and his intellect
could not discern he could be a better
man. What a fool the natural man is. He
believes that if he is not able to satisfy
the longings of his heart, then the long-
ing will disappear. Because his heart is
foolish his mind is also foolish. The wis-
dom of this world is foolishness in all
things. Therefore his attempts to make
respectable that which is not respectable,
his endeavours to cleanse that which is
nothing but filthiness, are also doomed to
failure. Hence we cannot expect that
which we find as popular literature to-
day to ever do anything but to become
more degrading than it already is.

Recently I paged through some maga-
zines as they were stacked on the rack.
It is hard to believe that the laws of the
state permit that type of pictures and
stories to be printed. It would be foolish-
ness to say that we cannot condemn
these magazines in the strongest terms
without reading them in their entirety or
even in part. It has been said that a
critic may not criticize until he at least
has made an attempt to become familiar
with that which he would criticize. Not
so in this case. We need have no com-
punctions about branding popular liter-
ature as nothing but trash and to be
treated as such.

There is still another type of literature
that is extremely popular today. This is
not the same type of literature that we
have been writing of, yet is in a certain
way related to it. I have reference es-
pecially to the books of the type which
deal primarily with the philosophy of
modern man and his conception of the
various political "isms" in the world to-
day. A good example would be the late
Wendell Wilkie's One World. In this
and various other manuscripts is found
a philosophy which is becoming increas-
ingly popular among the people of the
world and especially in the modern church
world of America. This philosophy basic-
ally and briefly is that all men together
should live at peace with one another and
should literally become brothers. I call
this a philosophy because essentially
that's all that it is. We know that God's
plan is not that all men should be at
peace with one another but that in these
latter times there should be wars and
rumors of wars. The doctrine of natural
man then becomes revealed as an idea
that if he can avoid these pitfalls of wars
and rumors of wars he can then frustrate
God's counsel and so assure himself and
his posterity and endless number of gen-
erations upon this earth. This philosophy was also present just previous to the tower of Babel, when men said that they would be one people and would become as God. You will note the analogy between man's philosophy of that day and today.

In light of what we know concerning the popular literature of today and the depravity of the citizens of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of Abraham, you will again note the similarity between the people of that day and today. I do not have to repeat that history. Young people, we are living in the latter day. This literature which we have today is also a sign of the times. Let us heed it as such.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

"For we wrestle not with flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Ephesians 6:10-13

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SHOULD WE HAVE CHOIRS IN OUR PROTESTANT REFORMED CHURCH SERVICES?

(Continued from page 13)

from the rightful individual participation in the worship service and the choir has a tendency to draw interest which should center on the Word which is preached.

We think it significant that among us as Protestant Ref. Churches the usage of choirs in our church service is not common.

Maurice Klop

SIN AND FORGIVENESS

How blest is he whose trespass Hath freely been forgiven,
Whose sin is wholly covered Before the sight of heaven,
Blest he to whom Jehovah Imputeth not his sin,
Who hath a guileless spirit, Whose heart is true within.
While I kept guilty silence My strength was spent with grief,
Thy hand was heavy on me, My soul found no relief;
But when I owned my trespass, My sin hid not from Thee,
Then Thou forgavest me. So let the godly seek Thee
In times when Thou art near; No whelming floods shall reach them,
Nor cause their hearts to fear.
In Thee, O Lord, I hide me, Thou savest me from ill,
And songs of Thy salvation My heart with rapture thrill.

Psalm 32
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