

Clarion

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The Law and The Christian

Text of an address given to the Easter and Thanksgiving Study Conferences of the C.R.Y.P.S. in 1972, slightly altered.

The topic which I was asked to introduce to you this morning is "The Law and The Christian."

I accepted the request of your executive to talk on this subject with some fear and trepidation, for while I am a Christian and am also trained in the law, the two do not necessarily go hand in hand. My legal training certainly did not give me a Christian view of the law. However, neither did my training for the Kingdom of God give me that perspective. Oh certainly, we all have some idea about law and also a more or less vague notion of how a Christian should regard the subject, but to really understand the relationship between the Christian and the law, that requires a thorough study.

That is what we want to do this morning. I say we, because I can do no more than introduce the subject to you. Hopefully the seminars following this hour can carry the discussion further. And I think that then we will find there is only one view, if you wish, only one correct view, of the law, and that is the Christian view; let me be more precise, the Reformed view.

Suppose someone were to ask the question: What is Law? How would you answer it? You could, if you were trained in philosophy, give a learned discourse on various theories of law. But if you did that we might be here for some time, because that question has engaged philosophers since the beginning of time, and all sorts of schools of philosophy have different theories about the subject. Besides, we did not come here to study philosophy, interesting though that subject is; and in any event, I am not a philosopher.

So what are we to do? Let us ask the question again: What is law? "Well," some of you may say, "a law is a rule laid down by the government which has to be obeyed by everyone because if you don't you can be fined or get a jail sentence." Some others who have studied the physical sciences may say, "Yes, but there are also other laws: the immutable laws of nature, such as the law of gravity, or even the law of probabilities." And a third group will submit, "In addition there are moral laws which everybody accepts." And someone else may retort, "Don't forget the ten commandments and the other laws of God and Church law."

Well, that gives us quite a list already, doesn't it? We have here laws

given by God, laws given by man, laws which everyone accepts, or perhaps ought to accept, and laws inherent in the natural order of things.

You will realize that this sort of inquiry does not really get us anywhere. What we should ask ourselves is the question: Why do we on this earth have laws; in other words, where do these laws come from; what is the origin of law?

When you put the question this way - and this is how you should ask it because the Bible uses this approach, and the Bible is normative also for the way in which you ask your questions - then the answer is not too difficult, for God gives us the answer in His Word.

This morning we read together Romans 13, and this will be our starting point. We find there in verse 1 that "there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God." You may say, "But that is not law. All it says there is that God has created states." But you must be careful here. The Bible does not speak about states. It talks about rulers, thus civil magistrates, i.e. persons in government, and about subjects or nations. And if you read on in this chapter you find in verse 2 that if you resist the power, i.e. the ruler, you resist the ordinance of God, etc. Now what does "resist" mean in this context? It may mean rebellion and open revolt, but it also includes any disobeying of the rules, regulations and requirements laid down by such rulers; in short, of their laws.

We find, therefore, that God, because He ordains the powers, the magistrates, also empowers them to rule and thereby gives them the right to pass laws and to demand obedience to those laws. Here lies the rejection of all revolution and revolt. God says, "You must needs obey (that means: you have no choice but to obey) your government because I have invested them with power and authority so that if you do not obey them and the laws they promulgate, you disobey my ordinance, because I have set them in authority over you. (Cf. The Fifth Commandment, and Heid. Cat., L.D. 39.)

Now you may say, "All right, that's true, I accept that, but your statement is much too broad. I have to obey just laws, but not unjust laws; therefore I don't have to obey the government all the time, nor do I have to pay tribute (taxes) to evil governments; and for the same reason I don't have to obey evil rulers, such as Hitler, or Stalin, or the present regime in Soviet Russia, or in other totalitarian countries, because they per-

secute the Church of Christ." But if that is your view, you are wrong, for Paul does not make any exception in this directive. If that had been Paul's intention, it would have been spelled out here, for Paul wrote in the days of Nero, one of the worst persecutors of Christians. Yet Paul does not say: "You don't have to pay taxes to this emperor Nero and you don't have to honour him." On the contrary, he says that you must do so, and in that he follows Christ's precepts, for did not Jesus Himself say: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's"? (Matt. 22:21)

But you may object and say, "That can't be right. What if the government asks me to sin, surely then I don't have to obey?" And you are right, for you should always obey God rather than man. (Acts 5:29) But that is the only time in which you are justified in refusing to obey.

The question should now be considered: Why does God require us to obey civil governments? And the answer again is quite simple. In the words of Heid. Cat., L.D. 39, we must do so because "it pleases God to govern us by their hand."

This is the important point. God has appointed kings, princes and magistrates for the governance of the world, and for that reason we ought to obey them.

Why, we may ask, did God do so? Is not the Christian free from the law? Let us turn to our Belgic Confession, Art. 36, and we find there that God has appointed kings, princes, etc. because of the depravity of mankind. So, that appears to be the answer then. We have governments because of sin. And, of course, this is true, and we can even substantiate it by pointing to Gen. 9, the chapter in which God re-establishes the covenant with Noah, the covenant of nature. In verse 6 you read: "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man." This is then the institution of capital punishment, and the argument goes like this: God requires it as a *rule*, i.e. as a law, that this punishment be carried out (in certain circumstances at least), but, because it is a rule, and a divine rule, it is implied that not everyone may do this for then you would have chaos. Again by implication, some persons who are authorized to do so carry out the punishment. (Cf. also the orderly way in which persons who killed someone were brought to justice under the Mosaic laws.) Furthermore, since it is God's rule, it is also God who authorizes the person in authority, i.e. the magistrate, to enforce the rule, and

thus he is God's servant; he is fulfilling an *office* given him by God.

Others have argued that you must go back further than that. The origin of government is to be found in creation. And again this is true in a certain respect. The argument goes like this: Even without the Fall there would have been governments, not indeed to impose sanctions as at present, i.e. they would not need the power of the sword - which is the result of sin - but for an orderly development of society and of the world. It is, of course, not possible to say what society would have been like without sin, nor is it, I think, too important to speculate upon it, although I may refer you to certain texts and arguments that are cited and made in support of this contention.

Thus, for example, Deut. 32:8 says: "When the most High divided the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." And Acts 14:16, 17, "Who (i.e. God) in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways. Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." And especially Acts 17:26, 27, where Paul speaking on the Areopagus in Athens said that God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." A further argument in support of the contention is that there are also powers and authorities in the world of the angels and therefore they probably would have been found in the society of mankind as well for the good ordering of society.

I said that both of these arguments have some validity, but you must be very wary of them for two reasons: (1) They have been used in support of certain philosophical-theological constructions which are not founded in the Scriptures, and (2) They do not say all there is to say about the institution of governments and laws.

As to the first point: What do you think of the argument: The office of government, in effect, of authority, is grounded in the creation ordinance - the culture mandate - and was modified, somewhat expanded and particularized in the covenant of nature. That being so, that ordinance is still effective, and it is still effective in the same way, i.e. it still has the same purpose. What is that purpose? We have already discovered it. It is to restrain sin. It is God's grace that we have governments to curb sin. God, it is said, did not have to curb sin. But he did so in a common grace, i.e. a grace

directed to all people (all creation, in fact) in order that after the Fall society might still be possible. Without this common grace we should have had chaos. With it, society is preserved and can develop in an orderly way.

But this is the second point, it is not enough to say that governments are appointed by God to curb sin. Just look at Art. 36 of the Belg. Conf. again. It does say that sin is a reason for governments, but that says nothing yet about the duty of the civil magistracy. One of these is to curb sin in public life, but they must also "protect the sacred ministry . . . that the Kingdom of Christ may thus be promoted." And why is that? Because Christ has risen and he has also ascended into heaven where He sits on His throne at the right hand of the Father, and God the Father has given Him all power in heaven and on earth. *All* power, thus not just over His Church, but also over all kings, princes, dictators and governments on earth, for He is King of kings and Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth.

Christ is King of His Church, indeed, but He is also King of this world, because Christ is subjecting all things to the Father, and when that is completed He will return His power to the Father, so that God may then be all in all. (Ps. 2, and 1 Cor. 15:24-28)

And therefore it is not enough to say that we have governments to curb sin, or to preserve the creation order, because God did not create a static order. He has a purpose with this world, and it is one purpose, the establishment of His Kingdom. That Kingdom was coming at the time of creation and at the time of the Flood, and to prepare for that Kingdom He instituted governments and gave them the power of the sword, because they were necessary in God's great Plan, the Plan to redeem and deliver this world and all creatures from the curse of sin through the redemptive work of our Saviour and Lord, Jesus Christ.

Already in creation this was God's purpose, and it was His purpose in Noah's time. He was preparing the world for Christ's coming, he was making room for the coming of Christ by the institution of governments and His demand for just laws. The governments thus have a duty, not to maintain the world as it was, nor to curb sin as an end in itself, but to make room for, no, more than that, to protect, honour and promote the Church of Christ, because it is God's pleasure to redeem the world through the preaching of the gospel in His Church. And, therefore, the Church must be given the opportunity to do so. And, therefore, God says to all rulers: "You are my servants, my office-bearers, whether you like it or not. I am using you in my great work of redemption. And therefore you *must* protect my Church and you *must* promote a society in which my Church

can prosper, i.e. a society in which there is order and decency, in which there is justice and equity, in which evildoers are punished and those that do well are protected and *honoured*. Because I want all men to believe. I want to redeem the *whole* world, and therefore I am using you to make this possible. And you had better believe it because I have given Christ all authority over you. I shall laugh at you if you hinder my Church and I shall destroy you in my wrath (Ps. 2) because I have not given you power for your own glory or for your own profit. You may only exercise your power because I have authorized you to do so. 'Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the LORD with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little.' " (Ps. 2:10-12a)

Do you understand now why we do not say enough when we say that we have governments and their laws because they must preserve the creation order, or because God in His grace provided them to curb sin so that society could develop? God's grace is not directed to unbelievers but to those who accept Him with a believing heart. God is not interested in preserving the order of creation or to ensure the society can develop in whatever way it chooses. No, not even if it were a Christian society. He is interested in only one goal, to complete His plan in this world and that He is doing in great haste.

We cannot speak, therefore of a particular grace of God shown to his elect, i.e. a grace which has effect in the Church, and of a common grace shown to all men by which sin is curbed and by which the world is preserved. You cannot thus divide up God's work into two parts. The LORD our God is one God. (Deut. 6:4, 5)

Certainly, our Confession speaks of the "small remains" in all men of the excellent gifts which we received from God (Belg. Conf., Art. 14). But this is not by reason of a supposed common grace. It might appear so at first, since the translation, "small remains", gives the impression that while the largest part of the gifts are gone, some remain and therefore man still has a scintilla of good in him. But that is not so, for we know that man's entire nature was corrupted. Fallen man is unable to do God's will at all, let alone do any good of his own motion. Rather he can only do the will of his father, the devil. (John 8:44; Can. of Dort, III & IV, Rej. of E., para. 4) Therefore the English translation of the Confession here (as also the Dutch, which has "kleine overblijfselen") is clearly inexact. The Latin text (though not authoritative) is more correct. It speaks of *vestigia*, which is usually translated as traces, and that is all right, provided it is not taken in the sense of

"small remains". It can mean that; for example, you can speak of traces of a chemical still being present in another substance. But here by traces is meant a mark or sign or evidence of something or some quality which was there once but is no longer present. The word "track" is not suitable in this context, but it indicates what is meant. Just as a dog or a wild animal leaves tracks which indicate to an observer that the animal has been there, so also there are traces, "tracks" if you like ("marks" would be a better word), of the original godly gifts still in man. (The example is Prof. Dr. K. Schilder's.)

I said a moment ago that this is not grace, for the confession tells us why they remain. They are there to leave man without excuse. In other words, God needs them not only for the furtherance of His Kingdom and thus to fulfill His predestined will of granting the elect eternal life, but also to condemn all others to eternal damnation. And therefore it is not God's grace that we have these traces of our original gifts, nor is it grace that there are governments to curb sin. Rather it is God's wrath that we were left in sin. It is only grace that we are redeemed, cleansed from our sins by the blood of Christ.

We have now established why we have governments that proclaim laws to govern us. They exist as instruments in Christ's redemptive work. Now then, what does that mean to the Christian vis à vis an unbelieving government? We have already said that subject to Acts 5:29 ("obey God rather than man") the Christian must be subject to those set in authority over him. But there is much more than that. Just look back at Art. 36 of the Confession, which is based on Romans 13, 1 Tim. 2:1-6, and 1 Peter 2:13-17.

You can see, especially from the latter text, that God uses both the individual, the subject, as well as the governors and kings in His divine plan. They are both His office bearers. Each has his own calling in God's Kingdom.

There are, of course, many other texts in which Scripture speaks of the duty which the governed owe the governors. There is Christ's own example ("Render unto Caesar", etc., Matt. 22:15-22). And think also of David, who spared Saul's life because he was the LORD's anointed.

Much more could be said about our duty towards the civil magistrates. But we must leave the subject for now. Only this. It is a perversion of God's command, and of the institution of government if we view this office as those around us do - i.e. as persons who govern only by the consent of the majority and who must account to the people for their actions. They govern by the consent, by the authority, of the Most High, and it is to Him that they have to account. And therefore the basic tenets of democracy

are evil. They are humanistic because they do not take into account the divine origin of the authority of government, resting it instead in the will of the (majority of the) people. For this reason too, the notion of "participatory democracy" which we heard so much about four and a half years ago (though not any more) must be rejected because it proceeds from the same false premise.

What we should talk about now are the duties of government. We have established that the office of government is instituted by God and that therefore the laws proclaimed by governments must further Christ's kingdom. We need not say too much about this, since I think our Confession is quite clear: they must so order society that the Church can prosper, i.e. that the Kingdom of Christ may be promoted. It is sometimes suggested that the "state" and the Church have two spheres of jurisdiction, each being sovereign in its own sphere. The state looks after matters temporal, the Church concerns itself with matters spiritual, and they cannot cross those boundaries. This is the basic argument for the separation of Church and state, and it also forms one of the arguments in support of the Kuyperian theory of "sphere sovereignty". These theories of course admit that the state has jurisdiction in areas of conflict, e.g. in property disputes between two church groups, but they say that the state has nothing further to do with the Church. But it is one thing to say that Church and state should be separated; that each has its own jurisdiction. It is quite another to separate religion and the state. Our confession is very clear on this point; the government has a religious duty, it must promote the Kingdom of Christ, i.e. in large measure, His Church. This is a God-given task, remember. God has also wanted to use the temporal powers in His Plan. No, not to preach the gospel, but to remove all impediments for the spreading of the gospel, to prepare the foundation on which the Church can stand.

All right then, how does the government do this? By executing justice and righteousness, by preserving the good order of society, and by maintaining peace within its boundaries, because it is under those conditions that the gospel can flourish. (See Deut. 16:18, Ps. 82, and Prov. 14:34). Remember the *pax romana*, the Roman peace. The Roman Empire was evil, it was corrupt. But because it created order and peace over all the then known world, the gospel of Christ could be spread to its farthest reaches.

And therefore all laws must be directed to that end. You ask, "All laws, but that can't be, surely? Of course the criminal law is necessary because in that way the government punishes those who do wrong even to the extent of taking a person's life in some cases; and

the marriage laws, all right; but what about laws governing property, contracts, succession on death, and the various commercial laws? Surely those have nothing to do with the Kingdom of Christ?"

But if you think so you are again distinguishing between what belongs to Christ and what belongs to the world. Dr. A. Kuyper once said: "There is not an inch in the whole of life of which Christ has not said, 'It is mine.'" And therefore Christ is very definitely concerned with all those laws which I have listed. He has indeed given governments power to regulate civil life. What do you think would happen if we had no laws for the protection of property, e.g. a law which protects your right of title and possession to your home? If we didn't have such a law another person could come and take possession of it and kick you out. Knowing the depravity of man, we can predict that the strongest would usurp the rights of the weakest. The same thing would happen if contracts could be broken at will, i.e. at the will of the strongest. Now you may say, "But it is right that governments pass laws of that sort, for otherwise we should have chaos; society cannot function without them." And that is so. But is that an end in itself? Is that the purpose of such laws? No, says our confession. The purpose of laws, of order and justice in society is that the Kingdom of Christ may be promoted. Peace and order - our God is God of order - are the prerequisites to the spreading of the gospel. And that applies not only within each nation but also internationally. When we pray for peace in this world what we are really asking is that God may provide the conditions necessary for the spreading of the Gospel so that all who are chosen may be gathered in His House, and so that Christ's Kingdom may come, with haste.

If we say that laws are necessary so that society can develop and be preserved and so that civilization and culture may prosper, we are not speaking scripturally. For this society and this culture are not worth preserving. They are totally corrupt. And God hastens to destroy them.

"But," you may ask, "what about the Providence of God, about which we confess that He, 'after He had created all things, did not forsake them or give them up to fortune or chance, but that He rules and governs them according to His holy will, so that nothing in this world happens without His appointment' (Belg. Conf., Art. 13, and see Heid. Cat., L.D. 10). Does not God want to preserve creation?" But you must remember that God does nothing without a purpose and also in His governance of all things His purpose is to push this creation to its two-fold conclusion of salvation or damnation.

[First of Two Parts] A. H. OOSTERHOFF

THE SECTS

The Armstrong Cult (2)

3. *British-Israelism.*

A. *What does it teach?*

Armstrong was quite early converted to British-Israelism. In his *Autobiography* (Vol. I, pp. 345 - 346) he implies that this was a new truth, revealed by God to him. In his book *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy* he states that the Master Key to unlock the prophecies is found *now*. This Master Key is the knowledge that the Anglo-Saxon race is Israel, the "Lost Ten Tribes".

In reality, this theory is a lot older. In 1822 Richard Brothers published "A correct Account of the Invasion and Conquest of this Island by the Saxons, necessary to be known by the English Nation, the Descendants of the greater Part of the Ten Tribes".

So we see that British-Israelism teaches that the nations of North-Western Europe are the descendants of the house of Israel, the Ten Tribes, who were carried into captivity by Assyria. Britain is Ephraim, the people of the U.S.A. are Manasseh, France is Reuben, the Danes are of course the Danites, etc. (I have never been able to find out to what tribe the Dutch are supposed to belong, seeing that the Dutch are a mixture of Frisians, Franks, and Saxons.) Consequently most of the Old Testament prophecies refer to them. All the blessings and curses of the Sinaitic Covenant are applicable to them.

Related to this is the belief that the British Royal House is the House of David. The prophet Jeremiah accompanied by Baruch went with Zedekiah's daughters to Ireland. One of the girls married into the Irish Royal House and from this marriage, via the Scottish kings, we come to the present monarch of David's line, Queen Elizabeth II.

B. *What "proof" does British-Israelism adduce?*

It starts with the statement that there are unconditional promises made by God in the Old Testament. But it forgets (or does not know) that *all* promises made by God are conditional, for those promises will only be fulfilled in the way of faith and obedience.

The following promises and prophecies are cited (among others) by the British-Israelites:

Gen. 17:4: "Thou shalt be a father of many nations."

Gen. 22:16-18: "Because thou hast done this thing . . . thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

Armstrong comments on this passage: "God put Abraham to the test, and Abraham, through faith, obeyed - even to be willing to sacrifice his only son, if need be. And after that the covenant no longer was conditional. Now it became unconditional . . . The nations who are Abraham's racial descendants are to possess the gates of their enemies. A gate is a narrow passage of entrance or exit. When speaking nationally, a 'gate' would be such a pass as the Panama Canal, the Suez Canal, the Strait of Gibraltar . . . We must look for a people forming more than one nation . . . who possess the sea gateways of the world, or we must deny the Word of God."

Gen. 35:11: "a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee."

I Chron. 5:2: "but the birthright was Joseph's."

Gen. 48:19: "he also shall become a people . . . but truly his younger brother shall be greater than he, and his seed shall become a multitude of nations."

II Sam. 7:13: "I will establish the throne of his kingdom for ever."

Armstrong writes, "If the throne of David ceased with Zedekiah, then it does not exist today."

I Kings 11:31: "I will rend the kingdom out of the hand of Solomon."

According to British-Israelism the Jews are the two tribes, the house of Judah, while the ten tribes are the house of Israel. As Armstrong puts it, "Remember that the term 'Jew' is merely a nickname for Judah. Hence it applies to the one nation, or House of Judah only - never to the House of Israel."

The ten tribes were carried away captive to Assyria, while the Jews, the two tribes, were carried to Babylon, from whence they returned.

If those promises and prophecies are unconditional, there must somewhere be a group of nations which are the descendants of the ten tribes and especially Ephraim and Manasseh, because the ten tribes (according to British-Israelism) never returned to Palestine.

Using some other prophecies such as, I Chron. 17:9; Ho. 12:1; Ps. 89:25; Jer. 3:11, 12, 18; 31:7-10; Is. 49:12; Ho. 11:8, 10, Armstrong concludes, "So,

finally, today, as in Jeremiah's day, the House of Israel is in the Isles, which are 'in the sea', the Chief of the nations, northwest of Jerusalem! A coast-dwelling, and therefore sea-dominant people. Certainly there can be no mistaking that identity! Take a map of Europe. Lay a line due northwest of Jerusalem across the continent of Europe, until you come to the sea, and then to the islands in the sea! This line takes you direct to the British Isles!"

Additional proofs given by Armstrong are, "The Hebrew for 'man' is *iysh*, or *ish* . . . The Hebrew word for 'covenant' is *beriyth*, or *berith* . . . the Hebrew word for 'covenant' would be pronounced, in its Anglicized form as *brit*. And the word for 'covenant man' or 'covenant people', would, therefore, be simply, *Brit-ish* . . . To Abraham, God said, 'In Isaac shall thy seed be called,' . . . They were descended from Isaac, and therefore are Isaac's sons. Drop the 'I' from 'Isaac' (vowels are not used in Hebrew spelling), and we have the modern name, 'Saac's sons', or, as we spell it in shorter manner, 'Saxons'."

When Jeremiah went to Ireland, he brought with him the stone which Jacob in Bethel had used for his pillow. This stone (the stone of destiny, also called the Stone of Scone) is now under the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey.

Of course they use a lot more "proof" to maintain their idea that the Anglo-Saxon people are descendants of Ephraim. Books with so-called proofs are written in order to maintain racial supremacy.

A. H. DEKKER

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Dr. J. Faber Speaks on "Understanding Scripture"

In the first of a series of public lectures sponsored by the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students, Dr. Faber spoke to a group of young as well as older people in the Bethel Canadian Reformed Church in Toronto, Jan. 13, 1973. Though still recovering from the flu, Dr. Faber nevertheless presented a stimulating and thought-provoking speech about "Understanding the Scriptures".

Dr. Faber traced some of the trends which influenced much of the present-day thinking about Scriptures. The theology of Karl Barth and Rudolf Bultmann had wide influence in Europe first and then in North America. Rudolf Bultmann was a follower of the existentialist philosopher Heidegger. He is perhaps best known for his views on "demythologizing" the Scriptures, an interpretative approach which denies the historical validity of many of the events related in Scripture. To him, and others like him, the Bible has to be seen as the theology of the first Christian congregation, not necessarily the infallible word of God.

Men like Dr. Kuitert and Dr. Baarda were also influenced by this thinking as reflected in their respective publications, *Do You Understand What You Read* and *The Trustworthiness of the Gospel*, which were a cause for much concern in the Reformed churches. Prof. Kuitert denied the historicity of Adam and considered the Scriptures as a time-bound package from which man can extract the kernel of truth.

The views of Prof. Kuitert also had their repercussions in the Christian Reformed Church in North America as is evident from the discussions at recent synods, as well as at the Reformed Ecumenical Synod. In November 1972 the Dutch synod ruled that the views of Dr. Kuitert do not deviate from the confessions to such a degree that special measures have to be taken. It is clear from this that they do not want him out of the church.

In the Christian Reformed Church, Report 36 (44) spoke about the nature and extent of Biblical authority. It contained seven main points which caused much discussion in this church, a discussion which is still going on today, as can be seen from the Jan. '73 issue of *Outlook*, in which Synod '72 is criticized and in which it is claimed that the reports contain the

views of Berkouwer and the "new theology".

Dr. Faber also spoke about the World Council of Churches (W.C.C.), which issued a report on the "Authority of the Bible". The upshot of all these reports and discussions are the continual undermining of the truth of the Word of God in its totality. It shows the arrogance of sinful man interpreting the Scriptures according to his own norms.

In his positive critique, Dr. Faber spoke about the authority of Scripture. When we speak about this authority the first thing we acknowledge is that "the Bible has the say in our lives." The nature of the authority of the Bible is divine as opposed to human authority of the state, parents, etc. In 2 Timothy 3 we read that all Scripture is inspired by God. When Scripture says something, God says it. The two are interchangeable. This was illustrated by a number of textual references. When Jesus quotes from the Old Testament for instance, He says "and God says"; Matt. 22:31, "Have you not read what was said to you by God?" God speaks to us! Thus the Bible speaks to us in its totality. It would be a mistake for us to go to the Bible with our own assumptions and presuppositions and seek their confirmation. Rather, we should let Scriptures speak to us. Our approach should be one of comparing Scripture with Scripture, thereby dis-

covering what the Word of God has to say about itself.

During the question period Dr. Faber was asked to comment on Dr. Olthuis' view of Scripture as confession. In his remarks, he stressed that we cannot make a dualism between creation and redemption. God showed His favour in His Son in His creation already. (Cf. Gen. 1 and John 1). To the question whether there is revelation in Scripture apart from Christ, Dr. Faber answered with an emphatic no. Dr. Olthuis in his book, *Ambiguity is the Key* speaks about the confessional nature of Scripture. He speaks about general revelation in a wrong way, according to Dr. Faber. We cannot speak about creation apart from the revelation in Scripture. We need Scripture in order to speak about His handiwork. In Dr. Faber's words, "Confession is the answer to the revelation of God".

After several more questions the meeting was closed. This was the first of a series of lectures under the general theme of "Preaching and Interpreting Scripture in the '70's". Further lectures include: "Preaching God's Word" by Rev. G. VanDooren, M.Th., on Feb. 10; "Liturgy" by Rev. D. VanderBoom, M.Th., on Mar. 24; and "Interpreting Genesis" by Dr. H. Ohmann on April 28.

H. J. LUDWIG

School Crossing

Under this heading we hope to publish, from time to time, a selection of newsworthy items culled from the bulletins of our Schools and School Societies. These bulletins often contain information deserving of a wider readership. Therefore we are pleased that Mr. J. J. Kuntz has been found willing to serve *Clarion* readers by passing on any such material. But unless all these bulletins regularly come into his possession, it will be impossible to give equal space to each of our schools and societies. Of all the bulletins being published, only three are at present available to him. We therefore request all those who are responsible for the distribution of their local school bulletin or newsletter to put him on their mailing list: J. J. Kuntz, 84 San Antonio Drive, Hamilton 43, Ontario. Thank you!

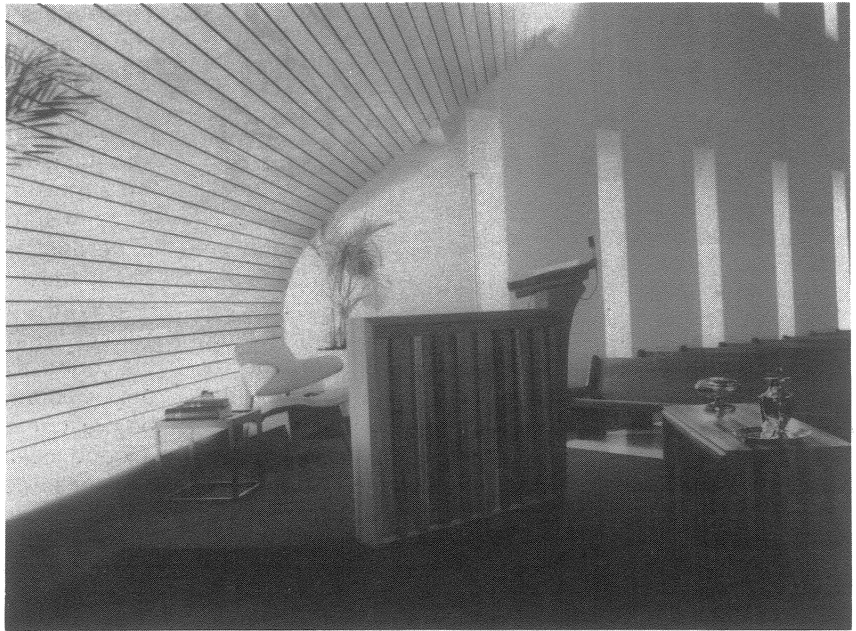
-Ed.

Hymn 4

O God, the rock of ages,
Who evermore hast been,
What time the tempest rages
Our dwelling place serene.
O God, thou faithful God,
Thou Fountain ever flowing,
Without Whom nothing is,
All perfect gifts bestowing.

Paraphrase

O God, our Rock, Ps. 92:15; Who hast been from before the mountains were given birth, Ps. 90:1, 2; Who hast been our hiding-place from the wind and a shelter from the storm, Isa. 32:2; Ps. 91:1, 2; Thou faithful God, Ps. 33:4, 89:37; Isa. 49:7; Thou art an ever flowing Fountain, Ps. 36:9. Nothing exists without Thee, Heb. 1:3; Gen. 7:4. From Thee come all good and perfect gifts, James 1:17.



Front Cover and picture above are interior views of the new church at Toronto.

YOUTH COLUMN

An Introduction

In order to make *Clarion* truly a family magazine it was decided [so I understand] to include a youth column. By "youth" is meant the teenagers or the young people of the church. For this task yours truly was asked. Somewhat reluctantly he accepted. Being young yourself is not always an advantage when addressing other young persons. One's "youthful" knowledge and experience handicaps one.

In order to make this column most meaningful for you young people, you are invited to send in any requests, issues or problems that you would like to have discussed in this column. Or you could offer your insights on a matter crucial for many or all young people. This column could take many forms. What will work best depends partly on your response. Lastly, you are invited to suggest a name for this, your, column.

A Need For Standards

One of the main difficulties for young people (and for all people) concerns the setting of standards. During the teens a youth learns to assume responsibility. Part of this responsibility involves the establishment of norms for one's conduct and behaviour before God and man. Living in a country of a variety of standards and double standards does not ease this difficulty. It only makes it harder. And the world's standards "rub-off" so easily on one. This is particularly true for young people. Faced with many tempting habits of the world, you have a momentous task. To complicate matters further, youth very often wants to choose its standards independently, and rebels at the idea of having someone else setting

them. Therefore this period of life sees many storms and much stress. Yet this question of standards must be asked and answered.

One cannot run away from this matter of standards. Everyone has standards whether one is aware of it or not. Unconsciously or consciously everyone adopts some principles to guide one's life. These principles may be consistently applied or may be changed to suit a particular situation. The latter seems to prevail in our society. Moreover, and this is the weightiest matter, these standards can either be right or wrong. But before we get into this, let's be clear about the meaning of standards first.

Instead of standard the word "canonical" could be used. Both mean the same thing. A canon (originally) meant a rule by which one regulated one's life. It also involved a goal toward which one aimed one's life. For example, the Word of God is "a lamp unto my feet, and a light upon my paths" (Psalm 119:105) to guide me in my daily life. That same Word also tells me the goal or aim of all that I do - "whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God". (1 Cor. 10:31). Now you can understand why the church says in the Belgic Confession (Art. 4) that the Scriptures are "holy and canonical, for the regulation, foundation, and confirmation of our faith". As Reformed youth we must therefore answer the question of standards as Psalm 119 did:

How can a youth preserve his way, O LORD,
And keep it free of evil and transgression?
By guarding it (his way) according to thy word.
(Stanza 4, from the Book of Praise).

W. HUIZINGA



news medley

In the previous News Medley we congratulated two of our couples who received the privilege of celebrating their, respective, fortieth and forty-fifth wedding anniversary. Too late for that same "Medley" we discovered that two more couples should have been included. They are br. and sr. Veldkamp in Coaldale and br. and sr. Oosterveld in Burlington. Also to them we extend as yet our heartfelt congratulations. Br. and sr. Veldkamp actually do not live in Coaldale, they belong to the Church there. We recall the many pleasant stays at their home in Rocky Mountain House, where we enjoyed the fellowship when the Church was still there, and where we together enjoyed the "biest" which they learned to appreciate! I wonder whether they still eat it once in a while. During the Synod of Hamilton 1962 br. Oosterveld sent a belated piece of "incoming mail" which - fortunately - was as yet declared admissible: it was a box of home-made wine, and following the example of the fathers of Dordrecht, the members of that synod saw to it that no unfinished business was left when Synod adjourned. Both families were and are active in the work in the midst of Christ's Church and we wish them many more years in His service.

The several bulletins and Church Newses which we receive inform us about the happenings in the various Churches. There is much activity and this is gratifying. Yet, there seems to be some slackness too. Some Consistories still report on their "Oversight and discipline". It might be better if the brethren kept silent about their "oversight" and reported only on their supervision. We are well aware of it that "oversight" may mean "supervision", but still we get an uneasy feeling when we see the word.

However, let's inform our readers.

Beginning with the preaching of the Word, we mention that CHATHAM decided to discontinue the Dutch services. They state, "After more than twenty years we should be able to have all our services in the language of our country." To help the brethren and sisters who really do not understand a sermon when it is delivered in English, br. and sr. Van Dieren open their house every second Sunday to play some tapes with sermons from the Netherlands. That might be the solution also in other places, for more and more the younger people are complaining that they do not get anything out of a Dutch sermon.

As for sermons in the English language, REV. MULDER again sent a letter to all ministers with the request to provide him with sermons for the series.

There are still several Churches where reading-services are a regular feature. The increase in the number of ministers is being felt, for Calgary, for instance, will have a minister for three weeks in a row, an almost unknown luxury for them! (Congratulations with your new bulletin.) Yet, there are still sermons needed and we express the wish that Rev. Mulder will be enabled to send some to the Churches, to be used when there is no minister. It may take some self-discipline to do it, but it must be done.

With the preaching of the Word goes the administration of the sacraments. In one of the bulletins we found the request to inform the Consistory *before* the celebration of the holy Supper if a member would be prevented from attending. We would add that this is a good custom not only for Sundays when the holy Supper is celebrated but for every Sunday. We know Church members who will not fail to inform the Consistory if they plan to be absent on a certain Sunday. That facilitates the supervision and is a matter of courtesy.

The singing during the worship services also has the attention of the Churches. CLOVERDALE is thinking about selling its present organ and buying a new one. Maybe they can save it for another Church, if one is formed inbetween Cloverdale and New Westminster. The latter Church appointed a committee to consult with Cloverdale's committee regarding that matter. And, to stay in the Valley for a little while, Rev. Van Spronsen plans to come with furlough in July of this year; it will be somewhat easier for them to come now that the fam. J. Kuik is there. They can, at least to a certain extent, continue the work and keep it going for as long as the missionary family is absent.

The CHOIRS of Cloverdale and New Westminster plan another concert, or music evening. They have had this now for several years and it makes it easier on both choirs when they can combine their performances.

Rev. and Mrs. MOES celebrated their twenty-fifth wedding anniversary, with which we wish to congratulate them as yet also via our *Clarion*. From the Church News of the Fraser Valley we learned that they have received many cards, letters, and even telephone-calls from this side of the Atlantic Ocean. May the Lord grant them His grace also in the difficulties which they experience.

ABBOTSFORD's Consistory was surprised when a delegation from the boys and girls presented them with photographs of Rev. Moes and' of the Faculty of our College, which photographs are to adorn the walls of the Consistory room in the new Church building. The photographs were made especially for this purpose. This shows that the bond with the College is kept alive. The contributions for the action of the women of the Churches for our College shows the same. For this we are thankful.

The Churches in Ontario are able to enjoy the proximity of the College more easily and they do use it. Prof. OHMANN, for instance, spoke at more than one place about the development of the Netherlands Churches after the Liberation of 1944. About the

"Ministers' Workshop" Rev. Huizinga reported in the previous *Clarion*, so that we can skip that.

This is the time of the congregational meetings where budgets and financial statements are discussed and further all sorts of other matters are brought up which concern the life and well-being of the Churches. At a congregational meeting BRAMPTON Rev. Vander Boom will speak on the Articles of the Belgic Confession which deal with the Church.

The matters concerning the Church, such as preaching, liturgy, understanding of the Scriptures also are the subject of various meetings which have been planned by the Fellowship of Canadian Reformed University Students. The fact that half a dozen universities are within easy reach in Southern Ontario facilitates the contact and combined activity.

Previously we already reported on the fact that BURLINGTON EAST (actually Ebenezer Church at Burlington) considered a change in the liturgy during the services. They have now adopted some changes which may not be as drastic as they might sound. Rev. Van Dooren explained them in the Bulletin, and an

explanatory note has also been sent to the ministers who conduct services in that Church for as long as the vacancy in Burlington-West lasts.

As for our *Book of Praise*, the *Standard Bearer*, organ of the Protestant Reformed Churches, contained a very appreciative review by Prof. H. C. Hoeksema. The criticism which he uttered concerned more the fact that we have retained the Genevan melodies than the contents of the songs as such. We were also told that one of the advisers - who was of so much help when we were still in the process of putting our *Book of Praise* together - went again through it Psalm by Psalm and Hymn by Hymn, and had only two remarks of a critical nature. Meanwhile, in the bulletin of Barrhead we found a correction: On page 414, first line, the word "ant" should, of course, be changed to "and". Further corrections will be gladly received.

On this note we would like to close, hoping that we may be back two weeks from now. We once more thank those who so faithfully send their bulletins, and wish to express our happiness about the increase in the number of Churches doing so. So long. vO



Hypothesis or Truth?

You have no doubt heard of the Dead Sea Scrolls, discovered in 1947 and following years. In what became known as Cave 7, located west of the Dead Sea, a number of papyrus fragments were discovered in 1955. The famous papyrologist C. H. Roberts used old and modern methods to determine the age of these fragments. He came to the conclusion that they date back to the time between 50 B.C. and 50 A.D.

The same fragments were studied by Dr. José O'Callaghan, a Spanish Jesuit and, like Dr. Roberts, a well-known papyrologist. One fragment in particular fascinated him. It was the one which contained, among others, four letters: m.n.es. Assuming that it was a fragment of a text from the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, Professor O'Callaghan tried to find a passage in the Septuagint which would prove to be the key to the seventeen Greek letters of which the fragment consisted. Nothing turned up, however. So he sought in another direction, that of the New Testament. Suddenly it dawned on him that the four above-mentioned letters could be part of the Greek word "Gennesaret". This discovery led him to Mark 6 and to the conclusion that the seventeen letters, complemented by three missing words, contained the

verses 52 and 53 of Mark chapter six.

If the identification of the fragment with Mark 6:52-53 is correct, it would mean that this fragment is the oldest text of the New Testament which has been discovered so far. Until now the oldest was a fragment of the gospel of John dating back to 125 A.D. That is however not the main thing. If the identification is right, it would also mean that the gospel of Mark was already in circulation in 50 A.D. Although it is generally accepted that this gospel is the oldest of the four, it is usually dated around 70.

For us it is not all that important when exactly the gospels were written, for we believe that the Holy Spirit guided the Evangelists infallibly in what they wrote. Whether He did that in 50 A.D. or 70 A.D. does not make any difference as long as the Holy Spirit did it. Modern theology however denies the inspiration of the Bible books, taking them as just human writings which contain in a more or less pure form the teachings and acts of Jesus Christ. The idea is that between the time when these words and act of the Lord Jesus were spoken and done and the time of their inscripturation, the early Christian Church worked over the tradition of Jesus' words and deeds and changed them in agreement with their belief in

Him. To find back the original words and deeds you then have to find the gospel behind the gospel by removing the various layers wherein it is hidden; the theologian is the man who will do that. You might say that he takes the place of the Holy Spirit.

This whole theory would be demonstrated in its falsity if the gospel of Mark was already written in 50 A.D. For that would not leave time for the changes which, in this view, were made by the church in the course of the decades which passed between the ministry of the Lord Jesus and the inscripturation of his words and deeds in the Gospels.

The reaction of the world of learning to the theory of Professor O'Callaghan has been mixed. Beside those who are convinced that he is right, there are those who point out certain weaknesses in his reasoning and proof, and who are consequently not convinced. Further evidence from other fragments is necessary before it will be generally accepted.

As to the question how these fragments ever got in the caves of Qumram, the suggestion has been made that this happened during the last insurrection of the Jews under Bar Cochbah in 131-35 A.D., a theory which of course can never be proven.

L. SELLES

De Afscheiding en de Gezangen (2)

Blijven de zusterkerken in Nederland in de lijn der Afscheiding?

In ons vorig artikeltje werd iets doorgegeven uit De Reformatie betreffende de daad van Hendrik De Cock die geheel de zijde koos van Jacobus Klok. We concludeerden dat velen onder ons blijkbaar niet weten dat deze houding van De Cock later is afgekeurd, niet alleen door Prof. Van Velzen maar zelfs door De Cock's eigen vrouw.

In Nederland wordt tegenwoordig nog al over "De Afscheiding en Gezangen" geschreven. Enige tijd geleden informeerden we onze lezers daarover aan de hand van artikelen van Ds Krijttenburg. De zaak is namelijk, dat onze zusterkerken in Nederland bezig zijn met een uitbreiding van de bundel Gezangen (Het is niet gezegd dat de Synode te Hattem daarmee al klaar komt.) Natuurlijk komt dan de vraag op: blijven ze daarmee wel in de lijn der Afscheiding? Velen zijn direkt met hun antwoord klaar; met hun oordeel dat ze heel vlot over de kerken in Canada geven. Zo heel vlot zal dat oordeel wel niet komen over de zusterkerken.

Ds F. Mul schrijft een serie artikelen in Calvinistisch Jongelingsblad om de Gereformeerde Jeugd aldaar duidelijk te maken dat zijn antwoord op bovenstaande vraag een duidelijk JA is. Misschien niet in de lijn van De Cock, maar wel in de lijn van vele vaders en zonen der Afscheiding. We willen daarvan nu iets meer doorgeven.

Brummelkamp.

Een van de eerste docenten aan de Theologische School te Kampen. Van hem wordt geciteerd dat hij grote bezwaren had tegen de *inhoud* van veel gezangen uit de bundel die in 1807 aan de kerken opgedrongen was. Ds Mul schrijft dan: "Daaruit blijkt wel dat Brummelkamp op zichzelf geen bezwaren had gezangen te zingen. Maar zijn ogen waren opengegaan voor de *verkeerde inhoud* van deze bundel en voor de verkeerde invoering daarvan."

Gispen.

Bekend predikant uit de kringen der Afscheiding, "de oude Gispen" genoemd. Hij maakte de vereniging van 1892 nog mee. Van hem wordt het volgende aangehaald. "De allesbeslissende vraag is of het gebruik in de openbare godsdienst-oefening van andere dan in de Bijbel voorkomende gezangen met het formeel beginsel der Gereformeerde Kerk, de Heilige Schrift de enige regel van geloof en wandel, strijdt. *Naar mijn mening is dit niet het geval.* De Heilige Schrift spreekt van psalmen, lofzangen en geestelijke liederen, waarmee de gemeente zich moet stichten en de gelovigen elkander vermanen (Efeze 5:19, Col. 3:16). Ook onze Kerk heeft door haar Synode het gebruik van gezangen nevens psalmen *nooit ongeoorloofd verklaard.*" Ds Mul laat volgen, "Het blijkt dat ds Gispen een sterke voorstander was van het zingen van gezangen in de eredienst" (natuurlijk geen humanistische en methodistische gezangen, maar schriftuurlijke).

Nou, toen had de arme "oude Gispen" het nog niet gehad! Ook wat dat betreft is er niets nieuws onder de zon . . . Het regende klaag - en dreigbrieven in zijn brievenbus. Hij zelf vertelt het volgende daarvan: "Gij weet, mijn vriend, wat mijzelf wedervaren is, toen ik eens de stoutheid had van te beweren dat het gebruik van

Christelijke gezangen in de openbare samenkomst der gemeente in beginsel niet on-gereformeerd en in vele opzichten wenselijk is. Als een gevallen morgenster zag men mij in de tien provinciën des koninkrijks, van de kerkhemel in de diepte terneer slingeren. Op sommige kansels werd tegen mij gewaarschuwd (ook dat is dus niet nieuw, vD). Anderen wierpen mijn portret in het vuur . . ." (veel Afgescheidenen hadden het portret van de geliefde Gispen in hun huiskamer hangen, vD).

Zo ging het dus toen. "Door domheid voortgedreven".

Professor Lucas Lindeboom.

Weer zo'n echte zoon der Scheiding. Hoe heeft hij voor de Afgescheidenen op de bres gestaan tegen bepaalde leringen van Dr. Kuyper. Hoe was hem de Kamper School lief. Hoe was hij tegelijk ook de baanbreker van Gereformeerde Evangelisatie (welke tegenwoordig door sommigen met afkeuring wordt 'begroet' als een gevaar voor Gereformeerde Kerken).

Hoe dacht hij over gezangen?

Ds Mul schrijft: "Ook professor Lindeboom was een vurig voorstander van de gezangen in de kerk. Hij had veel critiek op de wijzen (!) en de berijmingen van de psalmen, maar zag het ook als een *armoede* dat de gemeente niet de waarheden van het Nieuwe Testament zingend kan belijden (de psalmen zijn immers alle oudtestamentisch)".

Uit die woorden tussen haakjes, ze zijn van Ds Mul, moet natuurlijk niet verkeerd geconcludeerd worden. De Psalmen zijn messiaans, zingen van de komende Messias, en zo zingt de nieuwtestamentische gemeente ze. Maar ze zingen inderdaad niet van de *gekomen* Messias.

Dit dus over Prof. Lindeboom. Hij heeft het niet meegemaakt dat, onder leiding van zijn schoonzoon, in die 'armoede' zou worden voorzien.

Prof. Dr. T. Hoekstra.

Wie hem gekend heeft zoals ik, zegt: weer zo'n echte zoon der Scheiding.

Hij heeft een leidende functie gehad in de tot standkoming van de bundel 29 Gezangen. Die werd aangenomen in Middelburg, 1933. Ds Mul schrijft nogal heel wat over die Synode. We willen dat niet allemaal overnemen. We herinneren er aan dat op die synode breed gesproken is over "onrust in de kerken", ja zelfs "het gevaar van scheuring" (zo diep zat Jacobus Klok velen nog in het bloed). Ook al weer niets nieuws onder de zon. We hoorden het ook onder ons: het Book of Praise brengt verdeeldheid in de kerken. De synode was het met de commissie eens, "dat dat gevaar niet bestond, omdat het niet denkbaar is dat iemand om een niet-principiële zaak zich van de gereformeerde kerken zou losmaken."

"Niet denkbaar . . .", dat is mij een beetje te optimistisch. Uit 1933 is inderdaad geen bloed gelopen maar de Jacobus Klok mentaliteit van sommigen doet ons soms vrezzen.

Prof. Dr. K. Schilder.

Tenslotte deze zoon der Scheiding.

Eerst iets van hem over de bundel ingevoerd in 1933. Ds Mul haalt uit De Reformatie aan dat Schilder "vreugdevol gestemd was" over het commissie voorstel,

aangenomen in 1933, "Hij zag graag gezangen ingevoerd in de kerk." Hij had wel bezwaar tegen sommige uitdrukkingen, maar zegt nadrukkelijk: "In deze bundel zijn vele mooie en treffende bewerkingen van bijbelteksten te vinden.

In de tweede plaats iets van Schilder over:

"In Gods Huis alleen Gods Woord.?"

Dat zeggen velen. Dat heeft ook de Comm. voor het B.o.P. wel gezegd. Al wordt dat tegenwoordig door sommigen zo uitgelegd alsof bedoeld was: alleen en letterlijk Gods Woord. Als dat de bedoeling was geweest, was die Commissie zeker niet gaan uitkijken naar berijmingen, die zich altijd nogal wat vrijheden moeten veroorloven om op de melodie te passen.

Schilder "heeft daar indertijd zeer klare taal over laten horen. Het lijkt me goed en leerzaam, ook voor onze jonge mensen, (en wij vullen aan: en de ouderen niet te vergeten! vD) daar iets van te zeggen. We moeten hier wel goed onderscheiden. In de eredienst zijn er woorden van God tot de mens (prediking, lezen van de wet); en er zijn ook woorden van de mensen tot God (gebed, zingen).

"Nu is zingen altijd mensenwoord. Uiting van wat er leeft in de belijdende kerk. Die zingende kerk kan wel in haar lied Gods Woord overnemen, maar dan wordt het een belijdenis-acte. Prof. Schilder zegt het heel sterk: *'Men zingt in de Kerk nooit Gods Woord.'* Hij bedoelt daar dit mee: de gemeente wordt niet geroepen om al zingende Gods Woord te verkondigen.

"Zingen is Gods Naam belijden. Maar dat behoeft niet alleen met bijbelteksten. Dit ligt in dezelfde lijn als het vrije gebed. We zeggen toch ook niet: een dominee moet een formulier-gebed doen dat bestaat uit bijbelteksten!"

Prof. Schilder wijst in dit verband ook op de berijming van de Wet; "het eerste vers (Mijn ziel herdenkt met heilig beven . . .) is zeker niet Gods Woord, maar een woord van een ziel tot zichzelf." Het laatste vers is een "vry gebed." (In ons Book of Praise Hymn 28:1, 2.)

Ds Mul besluit het noemen van 'K.S.' met: "God geeft in de voortgang van het kerkelijk leven een vrijheid waarin, in strikte gebondenheid aan Gods Woord, de gemeente haar verantwoordelijkheid beseffen zal om God te loven en te prijzen." We voegen er aan toe: dat moet dus, wat Christus' werk betreft, ook met Nieuwtestamentische "gezangen en geestelijke liederen" geschieden.

Besluit.

We hebben ons in beide artikeltjes tot het uiterste beperkt. Er is zo veel meer te zeggen over deze goede zaak. Hoofddoel was de "eenvoudigen" te waarschuwen zich niet te laten misleiden door Jacobus Klok-achtige beweringen, waarvan er één is: dat gezangen zingen indruist tegen de door God gegeven reformatie in de Afscheiding.

Het moet, zo hebben we geleerd, niet worden: voor of tegen gezangen. Dat is een onschriftuurlijk dilemma, en dus dwaas. Noch ook het getal zonder meer (van onze "Hymns" is de helft Psalmen en berijmingen van andere Schriftgedeelten; de andere zijn meer vrije bewerkingen van schriftuurlijke gedachten. Rev. VanOene zal dat aantonen door Schriftbewijs).

Het enige wat moet overblijven is: is er onschriftuurlijke inhoud. Wie dat meent, en dat aantoot uit de Schrift, doet de Commissie die het Book of Praise uitgaaf als *Rapport* (en dus altijd Proefbundel, die verbeterd kan

Honourable Invitation



The Faculty of Westminster Seminary in Philadelphia has invited Prof. Dr. J. Faber to deliver a series of lectures on "An analysis and critique from a Reformed perspective of the documents of Vatican Council II". The month January 1974 will be dedicated to a detailed study of the developments within the Roman Catholic Church since the days of Pope John XXIII. Dr. Faber has been invited to contribute his share in this programme because, as a result of his studies, he is known to be well-versed in the above-mentioned documents.

This invitation is a recognition of the scholarly ability of our professor and as such also an honour for our College.

worden) een dienst. Zo worden de kerken ook gediend. Maar ze worden niet gediend door oude paardjes te laten voordraven, die in de geschiedenis der Gereformeerde Kerken al zo vaak afgekeurd zijn.

G. VANDOOREN

P. S. Als men "in de Kerk alleen Gods Woord" letterlijk neemt, dan zou men alle preken, en vooral de Catechismus preken moeten afschaffen. Want hoe trouw een predikant ook is, hoe schriftuurlijk onze Catechismus ook is, preek noch belijdenis zijn op 'e' n lijn te stellen met Gods Woord. (Het is Gereformeerd om dat te zeggen: "geen enkel menselijk geschrift, hoe heilig ook, mag gelijk gesteld worden met de Goddelijke Schriften", Geloofsbel. art. 7). Dan moeten we ook alle Formulieren afschaffen, want die zijn geschreven door mensen. Dan moeten zelfs alle kerkleden Hebreeuws en Grieks leren, omdat we allen wel weten dat vertalingen "vertalingen" blijven.

Maar we belijden dan ook niet: "in de Kerk alleen Gods Woord". We belijden (art. 27) dat de ware kerk is de kerk waar "men zich aanstelt *N A A R* het zuivere Woord Gods, verwerpende alle dingen die daar tegen zijn, houdende Jezus Christus voor het enige Hoofd". Van Hem zingt men in zulk een Kerk dus ook, van Zijn lijden en sterven, opstanding en hemelvaart, heerschappij en wederkomst, *N A A R* dat Woord, b.v. in Eph. 5:19: "Wordt vervuld met de Heilige Geest en spreekt onder elkander in psalmen, lofzangen en geestelijke liederen en jubelt den Heere van harte"; "brengt Gode dank met psalmen, lofzangen en geestelijke liederen", Col. 3:16. Dat is niet een schriftuurlijke vrijheid maar een schriftuurlijk *gebod*. Wie de kerken bindt om dit niet te doen, bindt tegen de Schrift in.

vD

Synod In Australia

From the press release of the Synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia, held at Armadale, October 21-28, 1972. [The Free Reformed Churches, our Australian sister churches, consist of three congregations: Launceston, Tasmania, and Albany and Armadale, Western Australia.]

On behalf of the convening church, the church of Armadale, the Rev. K. Bruning opens the meeting and gives his opening address. The moderator is elected as follows: Rev. G. Van Rongen, president; Rev. J. D. Wielenga, assessor; Rev. K. Bruning, first clerk; br. J. A. Diek, second clerk. After constituting the meeting as the ninth synod of the Free Reformed Churches of Australia the delegates testify their agreement with the Three Forms of Unity by standing up.

In open session an answering letter is drafted to a letter from the Australian Council of Reformed Churches, which was an answer to a previous letter by our Churches and contained a renewed invitation to our Churches to join said Council as member church. The Council will be answered that correspondence by one of the member churches with the synodical churches in the Netherlands and the Council's participation in the Reformed Ecumenical Synod are still the obstacles to our Churches for joining the Council.

The report of the deputies for the training for the Ministry of the Word is discussed. The proposal is adopted to appoint deputies ad art. 19 of the Church Order, with the instruction to establish a fund to support students in theology who are members of our churches. Students will be left the choice between the Theologische Hogeschool in Kampen and the Theological College in Hamilton. It has appeared that a B.A. degree, dependent on the chosen subjects, gives direct admittance to the propaedeutical lectures in Kampen.

The Church of Armadale's proposal is adopted to instruct deputies for Correspondence with foreign sister churches to be attentive whether office bearers of our churches are to be delegated, and with which instruction, to synods of the sister churches abroad, if circumstances lend themselves to this.

The Church of Launceston's proposal to limit the validity of travellers'-attestations to a period of 6 months only is adopted. When expired the attestations should be renewed on the ground of gathered information by the church that issued them.

The proposal of the Church of Launceston to appoint deputies to study the desirability to give the sisters of the congregation the right to partake of the

election of office bearers is rejected. Synod considers that a church in which this matter is an issue should table definite proposals to synod.

Synod adopts the proposal of the deputies for a Churchbook in the English language:

- a) to advise the churches to put into use as a proof-collection the psalm-section of the newly published complete Book of Praise.
- b) to advise the same as to the English text of the Doctrinal Standards and the Liturgical Forms.
- c) to advise the Churches to confine themselves, as far as the hymn-section is concerned, to the by deputies selected number of hymns, and to consider these too as a proof-collection
- d) to re-appoint deputies with the instruction to continue to work for the composition of a more acceptable Church-book in the English language, especially to get the hymn section of sub. a mentioned Book of Praise revised according to the outlines given by previous synods.

A letter from the Presbyterian Reformed Churches of Australia asking to be informed about the reformed character of our churches will be answered by the church of Armadale, the deputy-church in this matter, which will be instructed to keep contact with these churches.

Deputies for correspondence with the Government that, on investigation, they found recognition of the churches by the Government is without real meaning for the churches.

Mission reports of the church of Armadale and of the church of Albany are discussed. Armadale's proposal to build a meeting hall in Pinjarra, the centre of the mission activities, is adopted. Br. P.'t Hart of Armadale is appointed to full-time mission worker. Rules concerning his appointment, instruction, position, maintenance, etc. are laid down. Albany's report points out the good experiences gained by placing neglected aboriginal children in families of church members.

1. Concerning the relation to the sister churches in the Netherlands and to the so called churches 'buiten verband', Synod decides the following:

a. having heard the report of deputies synod ascertains that correspondence with De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland can be continued.

b. Regarding the churches 'outside the confederation' synod is of the following opinion: as there is no longer an interim-situation of the same kind as defined in the Acts of the Synod of



Declined for Grand Rapids,
REV. J. MULDER
of Cloverdale, B.C., Canada.

Launceston - 1970 (Acts art. 26, second part) and as these churches themselves have not yet found one another in a regular confederation of churches in accordance with the rules of the Church Order, while in the midst of these churches serious objections are raised against re-establishing a confederation of churches in accordance with the principles and rules of the Church order; and as still teachings that are in conflict with the Reformed Confession are found and tolerated in these churches, - attestations issued by these churches cannot be accepted, in accordance with the accepted rules for correspondence with churches abroad and thus the stipulation of Acts Launceston Art. 26 is no longer operative.

2. Regarding the Canadian Reformed Churches the wish for more fruitful contact with them is expressed.

3. Deputies are instructed to see that the sister churches in the Netherlands act in accordance with the rules for correspondence if they would introduce alterations in the Church order or the Liturgical Forms. (1)

4. Synod considers it meaningful to enter into contact with sister churches in Indonesia (Sumba).

Regarding the break in the Church of Pretoria - 1969 synod is of the opinion, among others, that Die Vrije Gereformeerde Kerk (pr. dr. v. d. Waal) cannot be recognised as sister church as long as the known theories on divorce in her midst are not rejected by the church council as unscriptural.

In the matter of an English Bible version synod is of the opinion that the churches as yet should continue to use the Authorised Version. Deputies are instructed to continue the search for a more modern version the churches could use.

Next synod will be convened by the Church of Albany, D. V., in March 1975 at Albany.

(1) One of the rules of correspondence of the Free Reformed Churches with the "Gereformeerde Kerken" is that no changes are to be made in the Creeds, the Forms, and the Church Order unless the advice of the corresponding churches has been asked and received. Our churches have the rule that the corresponding churches will be informed of any changes that are made. -Ed.

let's read

THE EARMUFFS [1]

Crrr . . . crrr . . . crrr . . . The snow crunches under Peter's warm boots. The trees, black and sad, do not move in the cold. They seem to thrust their arms up in a desperate call for help, and are frozen on the spot. Crrr . . . crrr . . . Peter puts up his collar and buries his mouth in the soft fur, but even that is cold. Brrr . . . And his hands . . .

Under the trees snow, behind the trees snow, and far to the left small farms; white-topped farmbuildings huddling together against the fierce cold; defiantly they blow their thin plumes of smoke into the washed-out sky. Brrr . . .

He lays his red hands against his cheeks; he folds them around his mouth and blows; he cups them over his ears . . . Put them in your pocket, boy! There they will be snug and warm. No! Not in his pockets, not there! Why not . . . ?

The lonely track, the endlessly winding track curves to the left. Ahead loom the mountains: immense, huge masses of snow and ice, as if a giant had been busy clearing snow, a giant, or . . . ? No, don't think of your hands, don't think of your pockets, don't think of God! For oh, the shame . . .

It had been so good at home! Mom was sitting at the table behind the sewing machine; the lamp in the corner shed a warm, yellow light; the sewing machine purred like an earnestly contented cat. The cold with long slender fingers might tap the window with the tinkling of tiny pieces of glass, he could do no harm here, inside, the cold . . . "Oh good, you are home, Peter! How was school?"

Before he could answer, Mom said, "Better put on the big light; I am ruining my eyes."

But reluctantly he switched on the light: it made the room look so spacious, so big at once. He sipped his tea, both hands around the hot cup, the vapour almost burning his cheeks. Then he went downstairs to work on the little plane he was building. He had pictured it all in his mind: he would hang it over his bed at an angle as if it were going to dive right into his pillow. Then, at night, the light of moon and stars would play on the graceful wings, and he would fancy exciting stories of fights in the air: bombers that burst into flames and clumsily spiralled down, little Messerschmidts that cut the air like light-flashes . . .

"Peter!" His Dad! He had not heard him coming home.

"Peter!" It sounded impatient. There must be something wrong . . .

There had been something wrong indeed: when he entered the living-room he saw them lying on the table, the horrid, ugly things . . . the earmuffs . . .

Crrr . . . crrr . . . crrr . . . The snow stretches endlessly to all sides, rounding and softening the ruggedness, deadening all noise. There is not any sound but the soft thud of snow falling off the loaded branches and, occasionally, the harsh cry of a crow, indignant and reproachful, haunting too . . . Crrr . . . Peter does not know what to think of himself: on the one side he hopes the house will come into sight soon, on the other hand . . . It will mean warmth and care; it will mean humiliation and scorn too. If he only knew the people! As he recalls the heavy voice of his father, the pale face of his mother, his cheeks feel feverish with shame. And it is so cold . . . Brrr . . . !

"Peter, Peter . . .," Dad had said, so softly, so reproachfully. "Why did you do that? Did the boy wrong you in any way? How low . . ."

Father's eyes had been so stern and sorrowful, Peter had to cast down his, and in his throat had come a lump that seemed too big to swallow, "You are going to straighten this out at once, Peter. Here are the muffs." The furry earmuffs lay like sick little mice in Father's strong hands; as if he were holding something brittle and costly; he would never forget it. "You go there right now. The boy will need them tomorrow morning; they are his only ones . . ."

Fright had leaped into Peter's eyes, fright and disgust and shame. "I don't know where he lives!" he cried, "I . . ."

"It is the last house on Mannings Road. A very small house and very poor, but a good house, a . . ."

He wavered. There was a strange quiver by his mouth, as he said, "It could very well be that God loves that house more than ours; those people are not beneath Him . . ." He looked at Mom and nodded, as if he approved of his own thought, as very old people sometimes do. His voice hardened, froze. "I'll be there with the car as soon as you have delivered your message."

"Those people are not beneath Him . . ." The admonishing words echo in Peter's mind, reproachful as the cry of the crows over the deserted and frozen valley. Those people . . . Allen and his father and his mother . . . Would there be any other children? Little brothers or sisters? Would they be as grey and plain as Allen was? Thud . . . thud . . . crrr . . . crrr . . . Peter climbs the track up the slope to where the sky and the hill meet in a blurry line. Will the house be on the other side? Allen's house?

EWOUUD GOSKER

(to be continued in next issue)

our little magazine

From The Mailbox



Dear Busy Beavers,

I was glad to hear from so many of you that you had enjoyed your holidays, had good report cards, and were enjoying the snow. And of course during the long evenings we have plenty of time for our hobbies and for reading!

Have you read a good book lately? And are you going to write a BOOK LOOK for our BOOK NOOK? It will be good fun to share in the wonderful world that books bring us! I'm looking forward to sending out all the bookmarks that I promised you in return for your BOOK LOOKS. I really am interested in what books you enjoy most.

Remember when you write your BOOK LOOK to tell the name of the author, the title of the book, and what it is all about. Maybe it will help if you look back at the last issue of Our Little Magazine.

* * * * *

Maybe some of us are getting a little tired of the cold and dark and snow and slush. Just think of this poem.

The First Snowdrop

I am a little snowdrop
 Growing in the snow
 I thought 't was time to blossom
 That spring had come, you know,
 Because the sun was shining
 At first when I peeped out.
 But, now - oh dear, it's winter
 Snow storms blow me about.
 And then a dear old lady
 Said, "I'm so glad to see
 The first brave little snowdrop."
 And that, of course, was me.
 "Sweet flower, you are so welcome,"
 I heard the lady say,
 "The winter's nearly over,
 Spring isn't far away."
 So I shall go on growing
 The passers-by to cheer
 By telling all who see me
 That spring will soon be here!

CLARA SIMPSON

Thank you, *Sylvia Selles*, for sending it in for us.

First of all we want to welcome you to the Busy Beaver Club, *Joyce Jansen Van't Land*. I'm glad you enjoy reading Our Little Magazine. Do you like to read books too? Have a happy birthday on the 12th, Joyce!

Hello, *Clara Barendregt*, thank you for your nice letter and your pretty art work. Congratulations on a good report card! Do you enjoy reading? You had good marks on it.

I'm sorry you lost your new friend at the end of the holidays, *Joyce Welfing*. Were they staying in a trailer? I think by now you have other friends again though. Right? Your quiz was all right, Joyce. Keep up the good work!

Thank you for your poem and riddles *Leona Dam*. I think everybody will like them, so let's do them right now!

Riddles

1. What can run but can't get anywhere?
2. What can't bite but has teeth?

Like some more quizzes, Busy Beavers? How about these geography ones?

CITY, MOUNTAIN, SEA, OR ISLAND

In each case two of the names listed are either cities, mountains, seas, rivers, or islands. Pick out the name that is not the same as the other two.

1. Cities - Jerusalem, Tarsus, Horeb _____
2. Rivers - Jordan, Gaza, Nile _____
3. Where was Paul's birthplace? _____
4. Islands - Sodom, Cyprus, Patmos _____
5. Cities - Joppa, Athens, Kidron _____
6. Mountains - Sinai, Lebanon, Arnon _____
7. Seas - Tiberias, Gibeah, Gennesaret _____
8. Cities - Jericho, Gomorrah, Nebo _____
9. Mountain - Jabbok, Hermon, Ararat _____
10. Rivers - Moriah, Gihon, Abana _____

WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

Can you tell where the following events took place?

1. Where were the Ten Commandments given?
2. Where did the walls fall when the trumpets blew?
3. Where was Paul's birthplace?
4. Where was the first garden?
5. Where was Jesus born?
6. Where was Jesus baptized?
7. Where was the religious center of the Jews?

8. Where was Paul stoned?
9. Where was Paul let down in a basket?
10. Where were the followers of Jesus first called Christians?
11. Where did Elijah conduct a contest between God and Baal?
12. Where was John exiled?
13. Where was Paul when he was stricken blind?

Here are the answers to last time's Puzzle Wheel. How did you do?

Dan, Daniel, Elkanah, Ahab, Abel, Elisha, Hazael, Elisabeth, Thomas, Asa, Saul, Lydia, Adam, Micha, Herod.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers. I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

Yours,
Aunt Betty



Hymn 3

Father most holy, merciful and loving,
Jesus, Redeemer, ever to be worshipped,
Life-giving Spirit, Comforter most gracious,
God everlasting.

Three in a wondrous unity unbroken,
One perfect Godhead, love that never faileth,
Light of the angels, succour of the needy,
Hope of all living;

All thy creation serveth its Creator;
Thee every creature praises without ceasing;
We too would sing thee psalms of true devotion;
Hear, we beseech thee.

Lord God Almighty, unto thee be glory,
One in Three Persons, over all exalted;
Thine, as is meet, be honour, praise, and blessing,
Now and for ever.

PARAPHRASE

Holy Father, John 17:11, LORD our God who art gracious and merciful, II Chron. 30:9, Jesus, our Saviour, Mat. 1:21, Whom they worship for ever, Rev. 5:13, 14; 7:15; Holy Spirit, Giver of life, Rom. 8:6; Gal. 5:25; II Cor. 3:6 Gracious Comforter, John 14:26; 15:26; eternal and everlasting God, Isa. 40:28; Jer. 10:10; Rom. 16:26; Triune God, Mat. 28:19; II Cor. 13:14; Perfect God, Mat. 5:48, Who never failest in thy covenant love, Ps. 89:33, 34; Whose light even the angels cannot bear, Isa. 6:2; Who art the Helper of the needy, Ps. 109:31; Jer. 20:13; in Whom the living hope, Ps. 39:7; Rom. 15:13; 1 Pet. 1:21: the whole creation serves its Creator, and every creature sings praises unto Thee, Ps. 103:19-22; Ps. 150; Isa. 6:3; Rev. 5:13. We too join in this praise, and hear Thou us! Ps. 92; Ps. 95:2; Ps. 94:9; Ps. 4:1.

Lord God Almighty, Gen. 17:1; 35:11; to Thee be glory, Luke 2:14; Triune God Who art exalted above everything and everyone, Ps. 89:6, 7; Thine be all honour, praise, and blessing for ever, Rev. 4:11.

Dear Reader:

Since the beginning of the New Year we have become the Publishers and Printers of "Clarion", our Canadian Reformed Magazine. Although the change-over went very smoothly, we have experienced some problems. The area of greatest concern has been the time of mailing and the time of you readers receiving the magazine. This matter has been taken up with the Post Office authorities, but due to internal problems in the postal service across the country we don't know how much improvement will take place until these problems are solved. For your information this issue of the *Clarion* was mailed February 5th at about 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon.

We have decided to maintain the price to our subscribers at \$12.00 per year paid in advance. To those who have not paid already, their subscription and renewal notice is in the mail for you.

Last but not least, we wish to thank you, the reader, for your understanding and cooperation. We at Premier Printing hope that you, through your subscription to "Clarion", will make it possible for us to produce an even better magazine for tomorrow.

To those who have received "Clarion" for the last 3 issues free as an introduction we ask you to also become subscribers.

May this magazine be the media that binds us together and may it be a tool in the preservation of our Reformed faith. May the Lord bless us all, Editorial staff, contributors, readers, and printing staff in this endeavor.

The Publisher
G. Kuik

P. S. The correspondents of the magazine can expect a communication from us very shortly.

The Canadian Reformed School Society of Chatham and District, is planning to start a regular day school, grades 1 - 8, September 1, 1973. The board invites applications for a

PRINCIPAL
and one
TEACHER

Teachers with a desire to work in our own school, send your applications and qualifications to the secretary of the board,

G. Schutten,
34 Campbell St.,
Chatham.