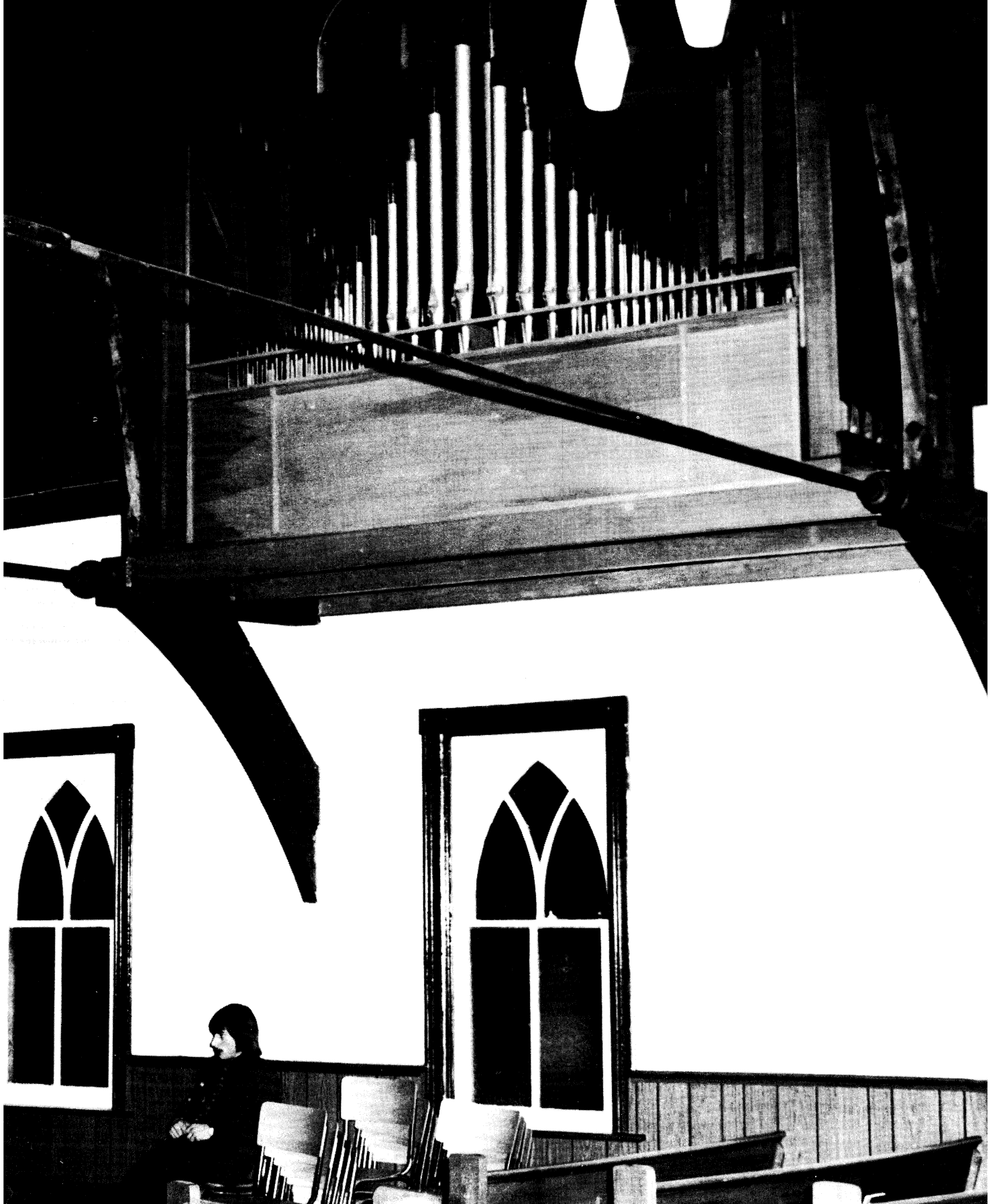


# Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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## . . . Who Desire to be Rich . . .

For many years already many organizations have tried to increase their income and to maintain their operations by means of bingo-games, draws, and outright lotteries.

Every so often I receive an envelope from *The Reader's Digest* with a booklet containing facsimile cheques bearing numbers which I - and I *only* - have, numbers which may already have secured me a monthly income for life, for no one else, no, *no one else* has these numbers. Imagine: One hundred dollars per month for as long as I live; and I don't have to do anything for it: all I have to do is sign the cheques which will arrive with the regularity of my electricity bill. And all this from generous people whom I do not know, who do not know me, but who are so genuinely concerned about me that they just support me out of pure concern with my well-being.

When you enter a Shopping Center, you have a better than ten to one chance that you see there a little table behind which representatives of a charitable organization are smiling sweetly and invite you to support their club or society by buying a ticket, at the same time doing yourself the favour that you become eligible for a big prize.

The Olympic Games are in trouble. Well, they have already been in trouble for a long, long time, for they have since long ceased to be an opportunity for *amateurs* to meet and to compete; they have become a second "United Nations Forum" where nations try to outdo each other by means of their (mostly purely) professional athletes. Simple facilities are not sufficient: whole cities have to be built to accommodate the guests and the host country is faced with the necessity of producing (I would almost say "to spasmodically cough up") the money for such a costly enterprise. That's where the city of Montreal is in trouble: where should the money come from? Special coin-sets are minted and produce some of the income. Stamps with a surcharge help, too. As for the rest? Organize a lottery with prizes of up to a million dollars, all of it tax-free! Extend it if you haven't collected sufficient revenues. Give away more millions (and rake in many, many more from the gullible bettors).

The game is catching.

On Friday, the last day of January 1975, the newspapers told us that legislation was introduced to establish Ontario's "own lottery which might raise between \$40 million and \$50 million a year for physical fitness, sports, recreation, and cultural activities." The paper tells us that the minister who introduced the legislation suggested that sales might reach \$100 million within the next couple of years.

In defense of this legislation, the minister is reported to have said that apparently there is wide public support for lotteries in Ontario. Residents have bought more than \$40 million worth of tickets for the Olympic Lottery, and it is estimated that another \$40 million is spent on the Irish Sweepstakes and other lotteries.

Criticism from religious and charitable organizations

appears not to be expected, for these kinds of organizations, the minister is reported to have said, also made lotteries a source of funds for their work.

Something for our Ladies Auxiliaries might be the following invitation contained in a statement attributed to the minister: "I think the Ontario Lottery could provide a new source of funds for many non-profit groups who may wish to become sales agents and sell tickets directly to the public on a commission basis." If our Ladies really do their best, we might be able to run all our schools from the commission they get, which would give the parents and supporters the chance to spend what they otherwise would have to pay to the school on tickets for the lottery, which tickets they would, of course, buy from the Ladies, which, in turn, would increase the commission yield, besides giving the buyers more chances to win the big prize with which they could build better and bigger schools and maybe a university which then for their physical fitness programs and for their cultural activities could apply for subsidies from the revenue of the lottery, which . . . No, I stop, for the perspectives are so wide and the heights so dazzling that I get dizzy. It seems that here the *perpetuum mobile* has finally been invented, O Nicolo Paganini!

We shall not be able to stop this trend and I do not flatter myself with the vain hope that we shall even be able to slow it down.

What I am concerned about, however, is the influence which the longing for easy money may have on our membership.

Indeed, the temptation is great to "reach for the top" and to buy a ticket. What is the difference between doing that and dropping a card with your name and address into a barrel to win one of the big prizes given out on the occasion of the opening of a new Shopping Center or of the Completion of Our Remodelling Program?

You are right: there IS no difference! Even the fact that you have to pay for the one ticket and get the other ticket free makes no basic difference. In both instances you long for the things for which you have not worked, which belong to someone else, for which someone else pays without getting anything in return. We must refrain from participation in *any* such undertaking.

This applies to owners of businesses who are invited to take part in promotional activities which involve "draws": they should refuse to do so.

This applies to shoppers who receive "free tickets" to drop them into a barrel: tell the salesclerk or the cashier that you "do not believe in lotteries". He may look at you incredulously as if you were a visitor from outer space; you have made your point.

I always send the "sweepstake tickets" which I receive by mail back with the notation, "I don't want your sweepstake junk". I never accept a ticket in a store, but tell the clerk that I do not take part in lotteries, whether they are "free" or not. I would feel most ashamed if I should

take part and win something. Instead of being "soooooo thrilled!!!!", I would not dare to look up to my God and would not think of thanking Him for this windfall.

What should be our attitude?

They that desire to be rich, the Lord says, fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and hurtful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evils; it is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced their hearts with many pangs. We are told to shun these things.

Recently I talked with someone about lotteries and stated that we should refrain from such things. His reply? "If you don't try, you'll never win." He was not a Church member but he did profess to be a Christian. How many Church members are of the same opinion? How many do

take part in "free draws" or buy tickets in lotteries, hoping for the big killing?

We are to do our work faithfully, and our Father will see to it that we are rewarded.

We are to expect all our needs from Him alone and we should not covet that which belongs to our neighbour. Those who desire to be rich pierce their hearts with many pangs.

If you should strike it rich, could you give humble thanks to your heavenly Father for His abundant goodness and mercy?

If you should answer that question with "Yes", you would thereby prove that you have understood neither what the Father's goodness nor what a truly Christian attitude is.

vO

## Israel - Its Past, Present, And Future

### 6. PROPHECY: PRINCIPLES OF DISPENSATIONAL INTERPRETATION

As in the previous article, we'll cross swords with Premillennialism and Dispensationalism with regard to Prophecy, that is to say, the Interpretation of Prophecy, for that is where the ways part. We saw already that their main principle is that of literal interpretation, however inconsistent these extreme literalists may be. As we then followed Oswald Allis in his exposition, we'll now do so again since what is argued in his book fits wonderfully into that which has been pointed out by us in this series so far.

Under the heading "The Intelligibility of Prophecy" we read (p. 25): "If prophecy is to be taken literally, i.e., according to the letter, it would be natural to conclude that its literal meaning must be clear and obvious.

"The usual view on this subject has been that prophecy is not intended to be fully understood before its fulfilment, that it is only when God 'establishes the word of his servant and fulfils the counsel of his messengers,' that the meaning and import of their words becomes fully manifest. The reason for this is to be found, as Patrick Fairbairn has so admirably pointed out, in the fact that *these disclosures of things to come are made known to men by One who has made man and knows his human frailty and how much knowledge of the future is for his good. Prophecy, in the words of Sir Isaac Newton, is*

*not given to make men prophets but as a witness of God when it is fulfilled.* Prophecy is a wonderful combination of the clear and the obscure. Enough of God's purpose is revealed to act powerfully upon the heart and the conscience of those to whom the heavenly message is sent, but not enough to make fatalists of them, to paralyze human effort, or to coerce the human will: enough to prove the message to have been a true word from Him to whom alone the unknown future is fully known, but not enough to enable man to foresee with certainty when and how that purpose is to be realized." I can hardly say how pleased I am with these words, so worthwhile to be quoted. Everyone who is to study the Messianic prophecies or eschatological passages in the O.T. should have them in mind continually.

Over against this exposition, Dispensationalists state that prophecy is intended to be plain and fully intelligible before its fulfilment. Allis quotes Darby (the well-known John Nelson Darby, predecessor of the Plymouth brethren or Darbists) who went so far as to say: "I do not want history to tell me Nineveh or Babylon is ruined or Jerusalem in the hands of the Gentiles". I know that this is sure to take place since the prophets foretold it so.

Another statement you hear in these circles is: "Prophecy is pre-written history. If prophecy is written as simply and plainly as history, it should be quite as intelligible as his-

tory; and we should have no more difficulty in understanding the prophecies of Isaiah than the history recorded in the Books of Kings."

Any minister in our Churches who has studied Prof. Greijdanus' *Schriftbeginselnen ter Schriftverklaring*, as well as any believing church member judging of things in sober reason, and that is how it should be, will agree that such statements run counter to the basic principles of hermeneutics and a sound exegesis, which prescribe that each type of material, prose and poetry, history and prophecy and wisdom literature should be dealt with according to its proper standards. Seemingly it does great honour to the Bible to insist that prophecy is clear as crystal, as plain as print, but in reality it derogates from the very character and beauty of the Word of God, since it pleased the LORD to speak to His people in many and various ways: by history, prophecy and psalms and other poetry; by means of the law and proverbs full of practical wisdom.

"Prophecy is pre-written history". With regard to that statement Allis makes another good point when he writes: "This literal view of prophecy also makes its appeal to those who wish to exchange faith for sight, who wish to be able to read the future with clearness and set up precise prophetic programs regarding things to come, programs which no one can conclusively disprove until the events of history have tested them". Here you have in few lines what a sectarian

mentality is really after; a mentality which is characteristic of pre-millennialists and other sects as often as they use the literal text of the Bible to back themselves up, e.g. in rejecting the Baptism of infants. "Where does it say so? Show me the text!" they are used to saying. But there is more behind it than meets the eye, namely, the will to safeguard their beloved, cherished viewpoints.

The conception of Premillennialism "cannot be made to square with the phenomena of prophecy as they lie before us in Scripture". "The use of figurative language - symbols, parables, etc. - is far more characteristic of prophecy than of historical narration." Several instances can be quoted here. Another point is that "not only the language of prophecy is often figurative and parabolic, it also differs from history in its frequent lack of precision and definiteness". Cf., for example, expressions like: "In that day", "in those days", or "in the latter days"; the word "time" in Daniel 7:25 and 12:7.

"From a practical standpoint, the clearest indication that prophecy is not 'prewritten history' consists in the fact that there is in many cases such a wide difference of opinion among commentators as to whether certain predictions have been fulfilled, and whether, if fulfilled, this fulfilment is to be regarded as complete and final or as only partial or 'germinant'."

For further particulars I may refer to the book of Dr. P.A. Verhoef, *Die Vraagstuk van die Onervulde Voorzegginge in verband met Jesaja 1-39*, a doctoral thesis at the Free University by a South African Theologian, who really goes into the matter and, as a disciple of the late Prof. G. Ch. Aalders, takes a good stand over against the ideas of modernism and pre-millennialism. Peculiar examples of a strictly literal interpretation of prophecy are also offered in Prof. Dr. K. Schilder, *Om Woord en Kerk*, vol. II, p. 132, in the article entitled "Het Zoeklicht", a magazine that was edited by Johan de Heer. The ideas current in this magazine are spotlighted by K.S. and compared with the results of a genuine Reformed exegesis.

On page 31 of his book, under the heading "conditional and Unconditional Elements in Prophecy", Prof. Allis turns to an argument insistently advanced by Dispensationalists in support of the complete intelligibility

and literal fulfilment of prophecy, namely, the claim that unconditional promises must be literally fulfilled. "In making this claim Dispensationalists have the Abrahamic covenant especially in view. They insist that this covenant was 'unconditional'; and they set it as such in sharp contrast and even direct antithesis to the Mosaic law. The covenant was unconditional and must be fulfilled to the letter. The law was conditioned by the words, 'if ye will obey my voice' (Ex. XIX. 5); this condition was broken immediately and repeatedly; consequently the promise attached to the keeping of this law need not be fulfilled. It is largely on this basis that it is claimed that Israel must return to the land of Canaan and possess the whole of it under the unconditional Abrahamic covenant, which we are told she has never yet done. The superior blessedness of this dispensation of promise, as viewed by Dispensationalists, is indicated by Scofield's words: "*The Dispensation of Promise ended when Israel rashly accepted the law [Ex. XIX. 8]*" (italics mine, H.M.O.). The word 'rashly' is startlingly significant. It implies either that Israel without due consideration *forsook a more favorable status* for a less favorable one, or that, in accepting the more favorable one, the people did not weigh sufficiently *the condition* attached to it, did not realize their utter inability to perform it."

"Since this question of the relation of man's obedience to the fulfilment of God's covenant is a matter of great importance," (and I presume my readers who remember the struggle in the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands in the early forties on this issue will wholeheartedly agree with Dr. Allis) "we shall consider it in three aspects".

Allis now first of all looks more closely at the Abrahamic Covenant and Obedience, just as we did already in the first two articles, but also in the ones that followed, since according to us basically nothing has changed in the subsequent stages of the history of God's revelation. In principle it was the same stipulations over and over, in the period of the patriarchs, in the Mosaic era, in the days of the Davidic kingship. But let us listen to Allis: "First of all it is to be observed that a condition may be involved in a command or promise without its being specifically stated". He points to the

career of Jonah, who was to preach unconditional judgment, yet the unstated *condition* was presupposed in the very character of God as a God of mercy and compassion, in brief: a Covenant-God. *If Nineveh repents, the judgment is not going to be executed, much as it had been announced by the prophet.*

About the case of the Patriarchs, Allis writes: "It is true that, in the express terms of the covenant with Abraham, obedience is *not stated* as a condition. But that obedience (equals faith, H.M.O.) was *presupposed* is clearly indicated by two facts. The one is that obedience is the precondition of blessing under all circumstances . . . *This is the general principle of God's providential and also of His gracious dealings with His children.*" (Please realize that these very words were written by an American scholar when the struggle on this issue in the Dutch Reformed Churches was at its height, and the "concerned", such as Prof. K. Schilder, were under suspicion of remonstrantism because of conviction that in the Covenant of Grace God had made conditions, stipulations!) "The second fact", Allis says, "is that in the case of Abraham the duty of obedience is particularly stressed. In Gen. XVIII. 17f. it is plainly stated that, through His choice of Abraham, God proposed to bring into being, by pious nurture, a righteous seed which would 'keep the way of the LORD', in order that as a result and reward of such obedience 'the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him . . . When the covenant was renewed to Isaac, it concluded with what we may call the Old Testament obituary of Abraham, 'because Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes and my laws' (XXVI. 5). It was because of the obedience of Abraham that the promise was repeated to his son, who had himself learned on mount Moriah the extent of the obedience required of his father . . .

"That obedience was vitally connected with the Abrahamic covenant is shown with especial clearness by the fact that there was connected with it a sign, the right of circumcision, to the observance of which the utmost important was attached. Cutting off from the covenant people was the penalty for the failure to observe it."

"But the best part is yet to come.

Those who insist that the Abrahamic covenant was wholly unconditional, do not really so regard it, as is shown by the great importance which Dispensationalists attach to Israel's being 'in the land' as the precondition of blessing under the covenant. Scofield tells us: 'The descendants of Abraham had but to abide in their own land to inherit every blessing.' How important they hold this condition is illustrated by the attempt made by Scofield to distinguish between the 'directive' and the 'permissive' will of God regarding Jacob's going down to Egypt." Referring to Gen. 46:3, Allis can easily refute Dispensationalism and Scofield, since this narrative tells us with great plainness that this journey was of God. "What plainer intimation could Jacob have received that it was God's will for him to go down to Egypt? God would Himself go with him!". He also refers to Joseph, who very plainly saw the hand of God in his career.

A very good point is made by Allis on page 35, where he remarks: "That Dispensationalists do not regard the Abrahamic covenant as wholly unconditional is indicated also by the fact that we never hear them speak of the restoration of Esau to the land of Canaan and to full blessing under the Abrahamic covenant." Oh, you say, but Esau was immoral and unreligious (Hebr. 12:16). Sure, that is what you say, and I agree, but to a Dispensationalist it should not make any difference, since there are no conditions under the Abrahamic Covenant! I quote again: "This is due of course to the fact that Israel is the constant theme of Old Testament prophecy, while the burden of prophecy regarding Edom is almost wholly denunciatory. It is the New Testament which fills Amos' prediction of the subjugation of Edom (IX. 12) with the glory of that gospel invitation which is made to 'the residue of men . . . and all the Gentiles', Acts XV. 17. But if the Abrahamic covenant was unconditional, if obedience was not required until the words, 'if ye will obey my voice,' were uttered at Sinai, why is Esau excluded from the blessings of this covenant? He was a son of Isaac as much as Jacob was." He even was a child born out of a wonder, a child prayed for insistently (Gen. 25:21), which prayer was granted by the LORD. If I were a Dispensationalist, I would add another section to those which are to be found in their books.

I now think of the book of Prof. John F. Walvoord, A.M., Th. D., D.D., President of Dallas Theological Seminary. *Israel in Prophecy* is the title. According to him, the eschatological program of God may be considered in four major divisions: (1) The program for angels. (2) The program of God for Gentiles. Included in God's program for the Gentiles is provision for the salvation of those who turn to God in true faith. (3) The divine program for Israel is unfolded in the Abrahamic, Palestinian, Davidic and new covenants. It begins in Genesis 12. It includes all of God's dealings with Israel in the past and predicts a consummation in the future, when a time of great tribulation will befall the nation, which time will be followed by Israel's regathering, restoration and glory in the millennial kingdom. (4) The divine program for the church. It falls into two broad areas: (a) the professing church, i.e. Christendom, destined to become a world religion of apostate character; (b) the calling out of the true church, the body of Christ, within the professing church, composed of Jew and Gentile alike on equal basis (p. 28).

It is he, among others, who has taken up his pen to refute Allis. Well, you wonder, does he answer his questions in a satisfactory way? Read what he writes on page 41. I quote: "It is true that in some cases in the Bible, promises are given in a conditional way. For instance, the Mosaic covenant contains many conditional promises, i.e., blessing for obedience, cursing or divine judgment for disobedience. However, it is not true that in Scripture obedience is always the condition of blessing. Allis, who is Calvinist, has forgotten his doctrine of unconditional election. He has also forgotten the principle of divine grace in which God blesses those who are unworthy. The fact is that many of God's blessings fall upon those who are the least worthy of them. In such a doctrine as the security of the believer, which Allis would be the first to support, there is recognition of the principle that God makes promises which depend on Himself and His grace and not on human faithfulness. It certainly is not true that God's promises or that prophecy as a whole is conditioned upon human action. The major premise of Allis therefore that obedience is always the condition of blessing, is a fallacy. God is able to make promises and keep them regard-

less of what men may do" (italics mine, H.M.O.). I was struck by such a way of argumentation; however, not so as to be convinced. On the contrary. It is because Prof. Walvoord takes recourse to exactly the same way of reasoning as found in the synodical decrees of 1942 - 1946 and in what was written in explanation of it, namely, the reasoning that in a Reformed Church and in Reformed Doctrine one cannot speak of conditions of the covenant.

H.M. OHMANN

#### OUR COVER

"The Swallownest" - the organ in the Guelph church building. The position of this organ may well be unique in Canada. This photo was taken by Leo Lodder, as were the other photos of the Guelph church building and of the dedication evening. [For further details, see the News Medley of January 25.]



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CLARION

P.O. Box 54, Fergus  
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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:

Editor: W.W.J. VanOene  
Co-Editors: W. Helder, D. VanderBoom

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# Ideas and Ideologies (5)

Evolutionism as a world view came to the fore, as we suggested last time, during the eighteenth century. And the "discovery" was made not by scientists, but by philosophers. It was only after these had been philosophizing about it for a long time, and had come to believe in it, that the scientists got to work, provided the "empirical evidence", and so gave it the stamp of scientific respectability.

How and why did the Enlightenment philosophers turn to the idea of evolutionism?

One important factor was, of course, their optimistic view of the future. This will become clearer when we look at the fate of earlier evolutionist ideas. For evolutionism is not really a modern phenomenon. Theories similar to those developed in recent centuries had already been suggested in the ancient world, and again during the time of the Italian Renaissance in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

These theories, however, had not become influential. They could hardly have had a widespread effect, for they contradicted the philosophy of history prevalent at their time. By the term "philosophy of history" I refer to the beliefs one holds about the meaning and goal of history, and about the nature of the historical process.

Evolutionism, if it is to thrive, requires a developmental philosophy of history, a belief that there is an uninterrupted process from less perfect to more perfect forms. And such a belief was dominant neither in the classical world, nor during the Renaissance. Generally speaking, both periods tended to view history as essentially regressive. The golden age, in whatever shape or form, was located in the past, rather than in the future.

It was not thereby denied that progress was impossible, but it was implied that whatever progress did occur was necessarily discontinuous. Particularly in the ancient world (but, in a somewhat modified form, also during the Renaissance) the belief was strong that history consisted of an endlessly repeating cycle of ups and downs. Civilizations were born, flourished, declined, and died, and nothing could stop their ultimate decay.

By discarding this cyclical-regressive philosophy of history and replacing it with a linear-progressive one, the Enlightenment removed one very important obstacle to the *acceptance* of an evolutionist world view.

Having done so, it was carried - by its own momentum, one might almost say - to the *construction* of that world view as well. This did not happen all at once. At the beginning of the Enlightenment the philosophers combined a moderately optimistic faith in progress with a very strong belief in special creation, and thus in the unchanging nature of all that existed. During the earlier decades no special tensions seem to have developed between these two views.

But in the course of the century the situation began to change. Not surprisingly so, in view of the fact that the Enlightenment philosophy of history did not remain "moderately" optimistic. As we have seen, the idea of progress developed from a limited concept, one that admitted the mere possibility of continuous advance, to a virtually unlimited one, which postulated its practical inevitability. And once you assume that the golden age will be reached,

come what may, because progress is merely the daughter of time - then you are close to the basic premise of evolutionism.

All the Enlightenment had to do was to take this evolutionist view of society and apply it to other aspects of reality. And this was indeed done, by various thinkers, and for various reasons. We can not trace the process in all its details, since that would involve us into too many philosophical intricacies. For our purpose it will be sufficient to concentrate on what I believe was the central issue, and the most immediate stimulus. This was the Enlightenment's difficulty in reconciling its faith in progress with the fact of evil.

The problem of evil was a baffling one. The Enlightenment prophets had rejected the reality of sin, and based their philosophy of progress on the assumption that man was essentially good. And what applied to man applied to all of creation, to nature as a whole. Nature was considered to be so perfect that it became the example for man and society.

But these theories were hardly in agreement with the actual situation. It was all too evident that mankind had strayed from whatever rectitude it had originally possessed, and so created his evil society. And it was all very well to blame the social evils on the social institutions, but that did not really solve the difficulty. After all, it was man himself who had made those institutions. There must be a spark of evil in the human species.

The faith in man's essential goodness became even harder to maintain when the philosophers, after their initial enthusiasm, looked seriously at the world around them and began to test their theories. One of the events which forced them to do that was the outbreak of the Seven Years' War in 1756. It was a war that may have originated in the ambitions of princes, but it was also one that gave a clear indication of the evil residing in their subjects. The atrocities committed by the armies that swarmed over large parts of Europe provided convincing evidence of man's inhumanity to his fellow-man, of the actuality of human evil.

And what about nature? Was it really as harmonious, as rational, as moral as the philosophers had first proclaimed? Here also, one only had to open one's eyes to see that the contrary was true. Nature, as a later poet was to express it, was not at all peaceful and harmonious, but "red in tooth and claw". Big fishes ate little fishes; continuous warfare and destruction went on in the animal world. Even inorganic nature was far less benevolent than the theory had suggested. Of that also the Enlightenment was reminded in the 1750's, when the disastrous Lisbon earthquake showed nature's destructiveness.

These and similar events led to a decline in the naive optimism of the early Enlightenment. They forced the eighteenth-century philosophers to reconsider the premises upon which their faith in progress had been built.

This did not lead to a general repudiation of the humanistic faith in perfectibility. That faith had established itself too strongly, even in so-called Christian circles. Many eighteenth-century theologians were in the front ranks of



the prophets of reason and progress. True, there was also a counter-current. The eighteenth century saw no general church reformation, but it did witness various revivalist movements, all of them a reaction against the arid rationalism that had conquered the official churches. The rise of Methodism is only one among several examples.

But influential as these religious movements were, they did little to change the Enlightenment climate of opinion. The philosophers continued to proclaim their rationalistic gospel and tried to solve their dilemma by philosophical means.

Different solutions were offered. One school clung to the faith in the unchanging nature of reality - the faith with which the Enlightenment had started. It was based on an old tradition which had been influential throughout the history of western thought, and which can be traced back all the way to the Greek philosopher Plato and his followers. Since it played an important role in the intellectual changes with which we are concerned, we must say something about this Platonic view.

Briefly, what Plato and his successors had taught was that the world and all that existed emanated from a Supreme Cause which, for lack of a better term, we will call the Platonic God. This God was all-wise, all-powerful, wholly good and wholly rational. Because these were his attributes, his creation also was necessarily perfect. To assume that, in order to make the world better, anything could be added to it, or subtracted from it, or changed within it, was to detract from the goodness and wisdom and omnipotence of its origin.

Because the universe was good, it was also orderly. According to the Platonists, all that existed was arranged, in a hierarchical manner, in a Great Chain of Being. At the top of the chain was the Platonic God himself. Next came the spiritual hierarchies, and then man. Man, a being who was partly spiritual, partly corporal, was at the centre of the chain. Following him were the various species of animals, the plants, and finally, at the bottom, inorganic nature. This Great Chain was eternally perfect and eternally complete. There were no missing links - at least in theory there were none - and there never had been any changes, nor would change ever occur. Each being had its form and its place, and both were fixed for all times. No mutations could take place, and no movement upward or downward was possible.\*

This view of the world was of course diametrically opposed to an evolutionist one. It was also incompatible with any notion of progress. Initially the Enlightenment had nevertheless found it quite acceptable. It tied in with the philosophers' optimistic view that the present world, all appearances to the contrary notwithstanding, was essentially a rational world. It bolstered their confidence in the intrinsic morality of man and nature. Most importantly, it provided an alternative to the Christian doctrine regarding man's fall in sin and his need for redemption. For the Enlightenment it was a very satisfactory alternative, and this no doubt explains why so many philosophers tried to retain the Platonic view, in spite of the difficulties it raised with respect to their concept of progress.

Eventually it proved untenable, however. Those philosophers who attempted to solve the problem of evil within the context of the Platonic world view failed. All they managed to do was to "prove", by lengthy and learned discourses, that evil was somehow good - for otherwise the divine Origin would not have included it in his perfect

world. Whatever existed must, on their premise, necessarily be right, and whatever occurred - including wars and earthquakes and suffering - must necessarily be "for the best in the best of all possible worlds", to quote a favourite eighteenth-century slogan. Logically it could not be otherwise.

But if such a logical solution satisfied the ivory tower philosophers, it failed, in the end, to commend itself to the more militant reformers among the enlightened ones. They insisted upon an answer that provided greater hope for the future than the one offered by the Platonists, with their static view of reality.

They finally found their answer. There is no space left to show how they arrived at it. We will have to return to the topic later, and mention some of the contributions made by individual philosophers. All we will do now is to indicate the direction in which the solution was sought.

Interestingly enough, the search did not lead to the rejection of the Platonic view in its entirety. The idea of a Great Chain was retained, also by these progressive philosophers. It continued to be a vital concept, which would play a role, for example, in the subsequent scientific search for "missing links". The eighteenth-century philosophers further retained the idea of perfection that had been associated with the Platonic Chain. Only - and this was their great innovation - they decided that this perfection was not yet *actual*, but only *potential*. That what existed was still in a process of *striving toward* that final goal. This was true of every link in the Great Chain; of man, of the animals, of nature - *and* of the spiritual hierarchy, not even excluding the God of the philosophers. The static Great Chain of Being was transformed into a dynamic Great Chain of Becoming.

All-inclusive, radical evolutionism, then, was the eighteenth-century philosophers' answer. It was a revolutionary concept. But it was also an extremely satisfying one, since it made allowance for the reality of present evil without sacrificing the idea of the possibility of progress. To the contrary, it made progress wholly inevitable.

It is no wonder that scientists became more than anxious to establish the validity of this concept and began their frantic search for factual evidence. Neither is it any wonder that their contemporaries, who for decades had been indoctrinated by the progressivist and evolutionist ideologies, greeted the contributions of the nineteenth-century geologists and biologists with such unbounded enthusiasm. The evidence that was supplied might be shaky and inconclusive, but it *was* scientific evidence. The hypotheses "saved the appearances" - in any event, they saved a good many of them. The question whether another hypothesis, let us say a devolutionary one, might not save the appearances just as well, was no longer a relevant one. The world desperately *wanted* science to come up with an evolutionist explanation of reality, and hence that evolutionist explanation, once it was provided, simply *had* to be the only true, the only possible one.

F.G. OOSTERHOFF

\* On this point, and on much of what follows in this and the next article, see Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being: A Study of the History of an Idea* (Harvard University Press, 1936), chapters V - XI. I strongly recommend the reading of this very important work (which is also available in a Harper Torch edition) to anyone who is interested in the relationship between, i.a., philosophy and science.

# news medley

Reading bulletins, under whatever name they may appear, is interesting work. Sometimes, however, it is tiresome, especially when one sees the very same things in press releases issued by Consistories. Oftentimes it is stated that the meeting was adjourned at a very late hour, or that the business could not be finished. I should like to offer a few suggestions which might speed it up a little and, perhaps, even result in getting rid of a few meetings per year which may become superfluous.

Most of our Consistories have taken out a subscription to the Sermon Series **Preach the Word**. When you subscribe to something, it is only logical that you receive copies of the magazine or periodical from time to time. But it is beyond me why in quite a few press releases it is mentioned under incoming mail: "A few sermons in the series **Preach the Word**." Is that really so important that it has to be mentioned at the meeting, recorded in the minutes, and revealed to the Congregation via the bulletin? Here, I am convinced, a few minutes could be saved. That applies to quite a few other communications, too.

Faithfully, the press releases mention that a letter was received from the second Clerk of the 1974 Synod requesting statistical information. They also duly record for posterity that a request for statistical information was received from the Publisher of the Yearbook. Everyone has to know that a similar request was received from the Netherlands. It has to be entered into the minutes and the press release that the treasurer of Classis and Regional Synod approached the Consistory for payment of their part in the costs of the Church Federation. When the organ tuner sends a bill for services rendered, this has to be revealed, as has the fact that it was decided to pass the bill on to the treasurer.

See, when I read all those things I think, "Brethren, could you not make it somewhat easier on yourselves and could things not be done in a much simpler way?" When a request for statistical information reaches the clerk of the Consistory, is it then really necessary to wait till there is a meeting of the Consistory, where the stack of incoming mail is already very impressive, whereas in the meantime the one who requested the information is trying to keep a few bad words out of his mind and anyway out of his mouth because it takes so long before a simple letter is answered?? In most instances the clerk has all the information at his fingertips; why not fill the form out and send it back by return mail? It would save quite a bit of time and would improve the mood of everyone tremendously. Even the wives of the office-bearers would enjoy the fruits in that their husbands come home a little earlier and have fewer meetings per year!

And when a manilla envelope arrives with a booklet containing some written sermons, what is there against it to take the sermons along on Sunday morning and ask, "Who has to read next? Here are a few sermons if you haven't got one yet." We all have so much to do already that a few hints as to how to save time and energy **might** be welcome. Think about it.

We had better turn to the news.

Oftentimes the wind comes from the West in this time of the year, and therefore we begin where it enters Canada. The Valley. In Chilliwack a service had to be cancelled for the first time in the five-year history of that Church: on January 12 the surprised inhabitants of the banana belt awoke to see no less than 19 inches of snow covering the ground. And, since the snow-removal equipment which they have out West cannot stand a comparison with the equipment that is found here in Ontario, it is still surprising that a service could be held in the afternoon.

Via Abbotsford and Aldergrove, we reach Langley and Cloverdale. There the desirability of having a fence between the Church and the school property was stressed. Yes, I agree: however closely these two may be related, they should always be kept separate. But I do not think that there was any principal reason behind the stress put on the desirability of such a fence; my impression is more this, that young hands and feet and games have something to do with it.

Cloverdale was also in the market for a new sign indicating the name of the Church, since the board that displayed name and times of services "seems to be stolen". Of all things!

New Westminster tells us that the building plans have been approved by the various committees of the Municipal Council. Now all that remains to be overcome is a public hearing, but it is not expected that this will present insurmountable difficulties.

Something is cooking in Smithers. The Ladies Auxiliary urged everyone to bring their favourite recipes, so that "we can make up our book!!" If you contribute faithfully to such undertakings, you can in the long run buy your own recipes in bookform. If they are good, it is worthwhile. Much success!

Something which I have never seen before was done in Smithers: There the Organ Committee met and the topic "of discussion was how to improve the singing in church." Usually Organ Committees need all their time for trying to get the funds together needed for the purchase of another organ. Here they do some other things too. As for the question "how to collect money for our organ-fund", "we have already ten dollars (!) but need some more!" Some statement! And, "of course everybody at this meeting spoke in favour of a pipe organ." Congratulations.

This year it will be twenty-five years ago that the Church at Coaldale was instituted. Who would have expected that the Church there would let this event pass by unnoticed? No one, of course. Coaldale appointed a committee to prepare this celebration, and they report regularly to the Consistory.

As in more Churches, so in Coaldale it was decided "to prohibit smoking in the church-building because of all the damage done to the carpeting." Is it not a shame that such a decision has to be made for **that** reason?

The point of services in the Dutch language came up again. The Consistory discussed the opinions of the older members of the Congregation and now came to a proposal to have a service in Dutch on the first and the third Sundays of the month at 3:00 p.m. The Consistory decided first to ask who would attend such services, before making a definite decision.

There is something for old and young in Church life.

Grand Rapids will again have the sessions with children after the morning service "in which we sing some of the Psalm verses they learn at home." It is the intention



that children between the ages of 5 and 12 attend these sessions. However, "volunteers under and over this age are also welcome." This, as I understand it, is more or less a "private" undertaking.

In Coaldale, however, the deacons have taken up some new and unusual duties, which makes me frown. No objection if the brethren form a committee and as a committee organize evenings. Now it appears very strange that the "Deacons have the church basement open on January 31 at 7:30 p.m. for all the older members of the Congregation for an evening of relaxation and fun." They hope that all old age pensioners will come. There will be coffee, games, and singing. If all like it, similar evenings will be organized every month for the winter. I am happy that something like that is done. In more congregations the elderly come together to have a "gezellige" afternoon or evening. But I am a little wary of such things being organized by the deacons as such. It is not an ecclesiastical matter as such.

The same has to be said about a report which, as the **Family Post** tells us, was made by the Rev. Kingma at the Consistory. The Consistory had granted Rev. Kingma permission to go to Grand Rapids to attend a meeting of The Christian Reformed Laymen Association. On the Consistory meeting of Jan. 21, Rev. Kingma "gives a short resume of the meeting in Grand Rapids of the Christian Reformed Laymen Association." Here, too, I must say that it is not an ecclesiastical matter and that we should not introduce this sort of thing.

In 1944, I did the same at the Consistory meeting: there I 'reported' on my attending the well-known meeting of the Concerned in The Hague on August 11, 1944. It was understandable in such a situation as the one in which we found ourselves in those days; yet I did the wrong thing. I mention this so as to take away any impression as if I myself always did everything correctly. That is not the case, unfortunately so.

We continue with Smithville. The Consistory discussed the point of "the overcrowded church auditorium". The Building Committee was strengthened by the addition of three more members and will have to come up with a solution. Speaking from experience, I think that the solution will be the institution of another Church. Building additions to the existing auditorium, bringing in a balcony, and all these things remain patchwork which provide no lasting solution.

The **Family Post** also informs us that the High School Association may be able to rent or lease part of the Old Central Secondary High School in Hamilton, which has been used only partly for some time. I only pass this on for information, otherwise I get trouble with my brother Werkman. Think of that fence in Cloverdale.

Some time ago we mentioned a Walkathon held in Lincoln for support to Korea. Now the definite amount is known: \$958.25.

The Consistory of Lincoln decided from now on to include the voluntary contributions for the mission and for the Theological College in the budget.

Ebenezer Burlington decided to keep the collection at the Holy Supper table and Rev. Van Dooren gave the reasons which prompted the Consistory to make that decision. These arguments have not convinced me in the least, but that is of no concern to you all, I presume.

Rehoboth Burlington had their "budget-meeting" and at this meeting it was learned that it will be possible to



*The Counsellor, Rev. W. VanOene, presents the Chairman with a gavel.*



*Mrs. H. VanVeen presents the chairman of the Guelph Consistory, Mr. G. Lodder, with a Communion Set, a gift from the Fergus Congregation.*

meet the goal. At this meeting they also had a visit from a member of the Halton Police Department, who 'told us to be careful when entering the highway. TAKE YOUR TIME AND WATCH OUT.' It appeared to me that this a word to keep in mind also in Church life in general.

The promised piano appears to have arrived, for "we sang a few psalms accompanied by the piano donated by the Young People societies. Beautiful."

Hamilton's Consistory discussed the question what our stand is regarding the secular unions. "It is pointed out that not only among the labour force, but also on the professional level there are organizations to which a Reformed Christian should not belong." The matter will be kept in mind during the family visits, but the point mentioned above has been forgotten too often.

From the Neerlandia bulletin we learn a few things regarding the Savings Action; you know, the one of the sisters in the Church for the support of our College. There are proposals to use part of the money to finance (maybe partly) the publication of papers to be sent to other institutions, to make our College better known; to have stainless steel spoons made and sold, to increase the funds available for the College, etc. Our sisters are still most active. It keeps the love for the College alive.

And thus we have reached home again, via Neerlandia and Hamilton.

Greetings,

vO

# press review

## GOVERNMENT-REARED CHILDREN?

We can read and it is a well-known fact that in Communist countries the education of the children is a state-business. Private Christian Schools are not allowed at all. We must be very thankful to our God that He still grants us the gift of our own parental schools, overagainst the schools of the "state". However, also in our world the idea is gaining ground that education of children is not the responsibility and business of the parents but of the "state". In an article in *The Standard Bearer* of Dec. 1, 1974, Prof. H. Hanko writes about what is happening in the United States. We read:

Just today a sample copy of the magazine FAITH came to my home. This magazine contained an article entitled: "Coming soon: Government-reared Children" . . . In this article the author points out the fact that social activists who advocate government training of children have already made considerable progress. There are a number of men who are convinced that, if the training of children is left to parents, the world will never succeed in solving her many social problems . . . Dr. Reginald Lourie, president of the Joint Commission on Mental Health of Children, is quoted as saying: "There is a serious thinking among some of the future-oriented child development research people that maybe we can't trust the family alone to prepare young children for this kind of world which is emerging." This statement was made to a congressional sub-committee. He is quoted further as saying: "There is an increasing evidence that we must intervene in the earliest years if we are to truly deal with the roots of many of the problems facing this country . . . Child development offers an opportunity to have access to children in need of help to avoid distorted development in these early years." Dr. Milton Akers,

Executive Director of the National Association for Education of Young Children, looks on such programs as necessary in our world: "It may well be that means by which wars, social conflict, and human injustice are eliminated."

It is then pointed out that these promoters of such Child Development programs base their views on the fact that according to them many homes in the States "are not providing even the minimum training for their children". The homes are said to be responsible for the many problems of the world. The article continues:

Hence these men argue: "It is not the parent, it is not the child, it is society that has the responsibility." "Society has the ultimate responsibility for the well-being and optimum development of all children." And so a program is being pushed which is called "Comprehensive Child Development". It assumes almost all the responsibility for rearing children from the age of six months to at least six years - and longer if necessary. It seeks a program which will place the responsibility for all the care of the child - educational, nutritional, and emotional - upon society as a whole; by which is meant, the responsibility will be placed upon behavioristic educators, psychologists and sociologists who operate government-financed programs.

How far is the program advanced? There are already many books on the market advocating this type of program. Popular magazines and television programs have taken up the cause. But more ominously, already bills to set up such a program have been before the Congress. In 1971 Representative John Brademas (Democrat-Indiana) and Senator Walter Mondale (Democrat - Minnesota) introduced separate but similar legis-

lation in the House and Senate to finance such a program . . . This bill passed both House and Senate, but was vetoed by President Nixon in December of 1971. A revised version was introduced in the Senate in 1972, and died in the House. But supporters of the movement have vowed to continue the fight until their measures are adopted.

So far, the bills which have been introduced have made the program voluntary. But the article notes that this is done only to attempt to quiet conservative opposition. There are already some who are promoting compulsory attendance and participation in such a program.

Professor Hanko concludes with some remarks of which I quote the following:

. . . while the program is ostensibly directed towards those homes where child-rearing is not done, the whole point is nonetheless, that the government is determined that her citizenry shall be so trained and educated that all the citizens are so many faithful followers of the men in power. And this is surely Anti-christ. It is not difficult to imagine that the time will come when the government will consider genuine Reformed, covenantal education also a threat to her well-being. The government need not go much further in the direction in which it is now going to take the position that Christians are a threat to the state, and that the education these Christians provide for their children produces people who are similar threats. The government will insist on the right to train our children.

Now one could think that Prof. Hanko sees the future too dark and that it is not all that bad. But when one remembers that Scripture reading and prayer in the public schools is not only objected against but also officially rejected and no longer permitted; when one remembers that serious objections of parents against text books for the students because of the lawlessness and revolutionary language and ideas expressed in them are mocked at; when one can notice that in general people turn away from the commandments of the Lord, which at the real Christian school are

taught as being still in force; and when one further knows what Gen. 3:15 says about the enmity, and also knows that history of that enmity from the Bible and the history of the church, then one must conclude that the remark of Prof. Hanko is not pessimistic but realistic.

The article was about the situation in the United States. In Canada the situation is not much better, actually. Some time ago I read the following in the daily newspaper:

Free, community-controlled child care centres open 24 hours a day for children of all ages are advocated in a policy statement issued by the federal council of the New Democratic Party.

This information is followed immediately by this:

The statement, decrying slow and inadequate action on woman's rights by both federal and provincial governments, says NDP provincial governments should take the lead in raising the social and economic status of women.

Is it a big jump from the Child Development Program advocated in the United States because of inadequate training, as it is said, to the Child Care Centres mentioned in connection with the fact that mothers must be able to maintain a job outside the home? It can seem that way. But it is not. For behind both is the idea that the State (community) has the responsibility and must take care. People want an easy life of "bread and games", money and pleasures, and no responsibility.

Indeed, there is irresponsibility. There are parents who do not give any training to their children. But that does not mean that *the* fault is in *the* home and that the State can do a better job (the anti-christian State). Indeed, there are so many who swear by the modern (and old) revolutionary idea of equality of the sexes, while at the same time full of greed for money and entertainment. And it is true that the politicians use this for their own purposes as long as they can benefit from it: increasing the power of the State. And so the western countries are growing towards the socialist State. People are asking for it.

But let us be aware and say that the fault is not in the home but in the sinful heart that has turned away from the living God and His Christ. The



*The Guelph Churchbuilding in the evening stillness.*

root is that the wisdom of God ('s Word) is traded in for the wisdom (= foolishness) of modern socialistic humanism. God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is being replaced by the State, the government. And where people want it this way, they will get it this way: being given over to their own idol. But idols always deceive.

In a separate article in the same issue of *The Standard Bearer* Prof. Hanko tells the readers, mostly the members of the Protestant Reformed Churches, that "the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that states have no constitutional duty to provide free bus transportation for students of private schools." And although not unhappy with such a decision himself, because he sees government aid ultimately leading to government control, he nevertheless points at the decision as a sign of

the tack our enemies are taking: deprive Christian schools of all aid of any kind in the hope that they will collapse because of inability to support them.

And he continues:

This tack is working well in some areas.

There are many parochial and private schools which are losing students because those who have previously supported them, no longer want to bear the burden of their support. The students of these schools are gradually drifting into the public

school system. Even where unbelievers are starting private schools because they are thoroughly disgusted with conditions in the existing public schools, (and there are many places where this is happening), one wonders how long people will be willing to pay the high costs, especially in times of economic decline.

I conclude this review with the following words of Prof. Hanko:

The one sure guarantee of continuing private schools is deep, spiritual conviction. Those parents who solemnly believe that Christian schools are necessary for the fulfillment of their covenant obligations will be willing to support these schools no matter what the cost. They will never abdicate their responsibility to train their children in the fear of the Lord, and turn over this responsibility to the godless state. No matter what the economic pressures, they will continue to maintain their schools.

May the readers of *The Standard Bearer* in the Protestant Reformed Churches, as well as the readers of *Clarion* in the Canadian Reformed Churches and everyone who agrees, be strengthened by words such as the ones just quoted and continue to support Reformed School education for God's covenant children.

J. GEERTSEMA

# 1975 - A Year of Realization, D.V.

At the last Regional Board meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association of Ontario it was decided after a long and serious discussion, that "we must go ahead and plan to start this coming September with the grades IX and X." Br. W. Horsman writes in his secretarial report, "If the committees had their work cut out for them before, the real crunch is coming now. Plans must be made for an immediate drive action. The Finance Committee must come up with a new schedule of fees. Transportation problems must be considered. Since our building will certainly not be ready by September, other alternatives must be studied. The Education Committee has the task of finding a principal and teachers as well as selecting a programme of studies to be offered at our school."

As will be clear from these words, the decision was not taken because all committees were ready for it and all possible obstacles were removed, but it was felt that the membership as a whole expected a Canadian Reformed High school in September 1975 if at all possible: a simple start with the grades IX and X would be more beneficial to the young people of the church and to the Canadian Reformed community than a grand opening after years of waiting and saving. Although the establishing and opening of a high school involves very much organization and preparation, it may not be regarded as a mere business: a praying people, willing to sacrifice, stands behind the effort. The treasurer does not have an awesome amount of money in cash, but the members have generally met their obligations and the expected amount is in. We trust that the members will bring together the expected amount of money also when far greater sums are needed.

A few weeks from now a drive will start and we hope it will be a gigantic drive, involving *all* brothers and sisters in Ontario. The high school to be opened in September D.V. will not be a blessing for those only who attend the school or for those who

have children enrolled; students that go through this school may be expected to move all over the province and maybe all over the country and so affect all our churches. There may be future ministers among them or (so very badly needed) teachers; young men and women who have been taught to think Reformed about the issues of life in school also. We can not see very far into the future; it may be only a glimpse, but once we get that vision of the near future - the young people of today are the fathers and the mothers, the deacons and the elders, the missionaries and the mission-aids, the church-people of tomorrow - once we see the nation-wide consequence of establishing this Canadian Reformed high school, we understand the better why the Board took this important step to start NOW, in 1975.

Credit must be given to the Building Committee for all the work done during the last months; they have been very busy indeed. At the Oct. 25 General Membership meeting they were charged to proceed with the property on English Church Rd., south of Hamilton. They have done so. Conservation authorities have been contacted and the Council of Glanbrook was visited; a final decision depends on the view of Planistics Inc. In the meantime attention has been given to the possibility of renting an existing school building. On February 24 a fully detailed report on the progress with regards to the English Church Rd.

property and on at least two alternatives will be presented by br. A. Vanegmond, Chairman of the Committee. We hope that at the forthcoming General Membership meeting of March 21 a more or less definite proposal of the Board concerning the location of the school can be presented to all members.

The Education Committee is anxiously waiting for the response to their invitation to apply for a teaching position. May our LORD make many teachers eager to apply for these 'brandnew' positions. It is not easy to 'break the trail' and 'do the groundwork', but this Kingdom work should be both challenging and rewarding. If you, reader, in your environment know of a teacher who would be of great benefit to 'Guido de Bres', give him then that little encouraging push that he/she needs in order to apply.

Contacts in the Netherlands were made and there a committee was formed in the beginning of February. Prof. Douma and the brothers Jongeling, Kerpel, Nieboer, VanderKolk and Zietsma are members; br. Bakker of Hardenberg is the convener. The coming months should see many actions and activities to have 'Guido de Bres' established by coming September. We cannot but agree with our second secretary when he finishes his report with the following statement, "It should be obvious to all that it will take a supreme effort by everyone concerned and even then we will be dependent on the blessing of the LORD. We will need the support of all our members whether it be financial, moral, or otherwise."

You are a member, aren't you?

E. GOSKER

The address of the Association is:  
Box 6247, Station 'F',  
Hamilton, Ontario L9C 5S3



## FROM RECENT REPORTS:

*Youth Club:* This activity is running very well. The members come regularly and are interested. The only complaint we heard was that it is not held every week (once in two weeks). As extra-curricular activities we have

done some painting, drawing, colouring and group games, which they all enjoy. Thanks to a generous gift from the Dufferin Christian School (Carmen) we were able to purchase extra material such as paint-boxes, etc., without burdening the mission budget. We also intend to give instructive

booklets as rewards for regular attendance and install a large blackboard, which all can be done from the same gift.

*Luiz Andrade:* As you may have learned from previous reports, we have made several efforts to make a personal contribution to the great problem of abandoned and neglected youth. It is for this reason that we have taken in our home an orphan boy, Luiz Andrade (born January 22, 1967). This was arranged through Dr. Israel Gueiros, founder of a Presbyterian Orphanage in Recife, where Luiz was brought up so far. Nothing is known of his past history or relatives since his mother left him in the maternity ward after he was born, while nothing was on record.

He has spent a month with us now and feels perfectly at home, never even mentioning the orphanage anymore. He is a cute, dark, little fellow, small for his age, with Indian features. Of course it takes some adjusting from all sides but we think it will work out very well. He needs a home and love, and, of course, discipline, just like any other 7-year old boy. We hope to bring him up in the fear of the Lord and that this will be a blessing for him.

The group of *Young People* is also doing very well: they are the most faithful yet. November 9th we had a wiener roast with them in our backyard which was enjoyed by us all. At the end we got the hymnals from the church building and sang all their favourites.

They seem to be sincere as well and have resolved to become members although there is some hesitation yet. Teresa told me that she feels that she is growing toward it but now and then is a bit hesitant yet to give up the life-style of all her friends. She is the best student and often comes with excellent questions proving that she is making the material her own.

The Sunday-group is coming along slowly, with one or two exceptions. Some of them definitely will never get much further than the very basics of the Christian religion with a minimal knowledge. Yet, if they are faithful and sincere in their hearts, would the Lord not accept them? After all, the principal teacher is the Holy Spirit and we may be amazed yet how much they learn from Him through constantly hearing the Word of God.

C. VAN SPRONSEN

## Church Order and Preaching

These two separate topics were the centre of discussion at the Ministers' Workshop Day which was held in the Theological College on January 6, 1975.

The Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, who was a member of the committee on the revision of the Church Order which submitted a report to the last synod, made some introductory remarks on the topic "Principles and Problems of Revising the Church Order." He pointed out that the following guidelines for the proposed revision had been adopted: "1. If there is no urgent need to change the set-up of the Church Order, this set-up should remain the same. We have found no urgent need to change it. 2. With the revision we seek to go in the line of the practice as it has grown among us, taking into account relevant synodical decisions. Thus we eliminate such practices from the Church Order which are no longer found with us. If in the original formulation a principle was expressed, we endeavour to formulate it in other words." Why was there a hesitancy to change the set up? The speaker noted that the church order had been used for 400 years and it had proved its worth. History shows that the introduction of other documents often means the introduction of other practices. Furthermore one must keep an eye for the very character of the Church Order. It is not a constitution, and not a collection of regulations, but a collection of promises whereby the churches have bound themselves. We must therefore prevent it from becoming a system of laws, which danger is there with a logical, efficient set-up. Therefore as little as possible was changed. The speaker illustrated the above with some examples from the articles, mentioning some of the difficulties the committee faced. As little as possible was changed, also because the revision of the Church Order and the revision of Church Polity should be kept separate and the latter was not the duty of the committee.

In the discussion, especially the matter of "What is a revision?" was raised. Does this committee go far enough when you consider that the mandate given by the 1971 Synod

appears to go further than the committee does? Are the guidelines given not too piecemeal and too short sighted? Should not a more thorough going revision take place which boldly sets forth the Reformed principles which we confess? For example: what about the mission calling of the Church. Is sufficient room given to the office of the believer and the place of the congregation in our present Church Order? Should the institution of the school in relation to that of the church not be brought out more in the revised Art. 21? It was a good and beneficial discussion. It was clear that the revision of the Church Order would take years, requiring much study and wisdom.

After an excellent lunch prepared by Mrs. Faber and Mrs. Ohmann, the Rev. G. Van Dooren provided more food for thought with his introduction on some aspects of preaching. As a student of Hoekstra, some things caught his attention on the North American continent. The speaker noted how important it is to see preaching as bold proclamation by which faith is worked. One can also see a liturgical aspect in preaching. There is in preaching a certain back and forth movement between God and His people (cf. Malachi's dialogues). The careful selection and reading of Scripture passages is also an important element in worship. Finally Rev. Van Dooren pointed out how important intensive preparation is for preaching. Preparing the sermon keeps a minister busy all week. By Sunday it is then ripe for delivery, and the delivery will have a certain spontaneity and freedom about it, to the advantage of the congregation. An edifying discussion followed.

For the benefit of our Western colleagues almost everything had been put on tape and will by now have been sent to the West. The next Ministers' Workshop will be held on May 27. Prof. H.M. Ohmann will present an introduction on "The Reformed Pastor and Form Criticism". The Rev. G. Van Rongen will be asked to present an introduction on "The Biblical Data concerning Divorce". The meeting was closed in the customary fashion. It had been a very good day.

C. VAN DAM

# our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Don't you think it's time we have another contest? We always enjoy a competition. So let's have a Mid-winter Story Contest! A finish-the-story contest! With a prize for the best story!

Got your thinking caps on? Here's the start. Now you finish the story!

### One Saturday

Paul woke up and sat straight up in his bed! He had such a special feeling crowding inside him. He thought he'd pop open with excitement!

"John!" he called down to the bottom bunk.

"John, wake up! It's Saturday!" . . . . .

\*\*\*\*\*

Send your story as soon as you can to: Aunt Betty, c/o Box 54, Fergus, Ontario N1M 2W7.

\*\*\*\*\*

Busy Beaver *Grace Bosscher* has a very important poem to share with you. "You can find it in Matthew 7:13, 14." she wrote.

### The Wide and Narrow Gates

There are two roads,  
The narrow and the wide.  
The narrow is hard to walk in,  
It leads to the kingdom of heaven.  
The wide is easy to walk in,  
It leads to hell.  
Which will you take?  
The narrow or the wide?  
At the end of the narrow road,  
You will enter in the door of heaven.

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It's time for BIRTHDAY WISHES!

May the dear Lord bless you, Love and care for you, too.  
May you have a nice birthday. Praise the Lord and be gay.

(You can sing this as a second verse to "Happy Birthday to You".)

Joanne De Groot	March 2	Margaret Tenhage	Mar. 17
Lorraine Heres	2	Arlene Schulenberg	18
Stephanie Louwerse	2	Margaret Van Wijk	18
Janet Veenendaal	2	Clarence Bouwman	20
Brian Hendricks	3	Lorraine Linde	20
Lyndon Kok	4	Pat Kamstra	20
Joyce Jagersma	5	Debbie Aikema	23
Simone Datema	8	Lizzie De Boer	25
Nancy Koster	8	George Schuurman	25
Jo-Anne Vander Ploeg	9	Cor Bultena	27
Angela Wiersema	9	John Vander Woerd	27
Hilda Jongsma	11	Celia Van Woudenberg	28
Marsha Oosterhoff	12	Carolyn Irene Hoeksema	29
Frieda Boersema	13	Marlene Meyer	29
Jacqueline Riemersma	13	Mary Van Woudenberg	31
Jane Kobes	14	Jane Wiegiers	31
Michael Bosch	17		

## BOOK NOOK

And here is a BOOK LOOK for you from Busy Beaver *Gerald Van Woudenberg*. Gerald just gave us the title of the book and not the name of the author. But the librarian can help you find it if you want to borrow it from the library.

### A Farm for Andy

Andy lives on a farm with his mother and father. He has a dog named Rowdy and a cow and a speckled hen and sixty-two chicks. Then one day they move to a city. He can't even take his animals along. He is very sad, until one day his father gives him a rabbit, two ducks and nine rabbits. Now he is happy. He plays with his animals every day.

by Busy Beaver, *Gerald Van Woudenberg*



## From The Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Joanne Kuipers*. We hope you'll really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. You did very well on the quiz, Joanne. Keep up the good work! And will you please write and tell me your birthday, Joanne?

Hello *Jackie Hordyk*. I'm glad you had such a nice time in Holland. And you did very well on the quizzes too. Keep up the good work!

Thank you for your poems, *Grace Bosscher*. It was nice to hear from you again. Keep up the good work, Grace!

Hello *Evelyn Geusebroek*. Thank you for a poem with some good advice! Write again soon, Evelyn.

Thank you for a nice chatty letter, *Jenny Bosscher*. You really did have lots of exciting times, didn't you? You asked a hard question, Jenny, but maybe it will help if you remember that we should never be ashamed of being Christians, but neither should we make a big show of being pious. Does that help you?

You did very well on the "Rivers" quiz, *Yvonne Bijker*. And you had the squares puzzle right too! Good for you! I'm glad you had such a nice birthday. And don't worry about your quiz paper, Yvonne.

Thank you for your letter, *Jeanette Eelhart*. It was nice to hear from you again. But will you please write and tell me your birthday? Otherwise we won't be able to wish you happy birthday!

Was the feather from your new dove, *Henry Jans*? If it was it must be a really pretty bird! I think you must have had a lot of fun riding your crazy carpet over the snow!

Did you like your party, *Tammy Alkema*? And did you like the quizzes we had after you wrote your letter? How did you do on them, Tammy? I'd like to hear!

Thank you for a nice letter, *Kenneth Wendt*. It was nice to hear from you again. How did you like the books you got? Or were you too busy playing in the snow to read them?

Where is the play-house where you and your brother have so much fun, *Sylvia Jans*? I'm glad you like the quizzes, Sylvia. Be sure to try today's! Bye for now.

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## QUIZ TIME

Here is the answer to the "square" puzzle from the time before last. Did you get it?

