

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE



Volume 24 - No. 9

May 3, 1975



A School of Sons and Daughters

No one will deny the great importance of schools or the considerable influence which teachers exercise on the lives of their pupils. Indeed, our being here tonight testifies of our interest and concern.¹ Teachers in a sense work with pliable clay, moulding the lives and ideas of their pupils or students.

In the Bible there is a term to describe teachers which we seldom use. Teachers are called "fathers" and the students are "sons" (and therefore also "daughters"). Students in school not only have parents at home, they also have a "father" or "mother" at school. Let us take a look at the terminology as we see it in Scripture and then touch on some implications for the education of our children and so introduce this subject.

FATHERS

The term "father" is used in the Scriptures as a term of honour (e.g. 1 Sam. 24:11; 2 Kings 6:21), and therefore it is not surprising that teachers be given that title. When Elijah was taken up into heaven by a whirlwind, then Elisha cried: "Mr father! my father! the chariots of Israel and its horsemen!" (2 Kings 2:12). The meaning of the term "father" as used here certainly includes the meaning of teacher, especially when one considers that Elisha was a student of Elijah and that the students of the prophetic schools were called the "sons of the prophets" (cf. 2 Kings 2:3, 5). The teacher was therefore the "father". We find a reference to this usage of terms when David wants to give instruction and sets himself up as father. "Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (Ps. 34:9). These "sons" are not his natural offspring, but are the saints (cf. v. 9). (In view of the heading of this Psalm, the Bible gives no indication that David had any sons at this time.) We find a similar usage in the book of Proverbs. Proverbs is often the voice of a teacher to his pupils. "Hear my son, your father's instruction."

Similar terminology is found in the ancient Near East. From the so-called Sumerian "school texts" dating from about 2,000 B.C. it is clear that a school teacher was among other things called a "school father" and a student was called a "school son".

In the New Testament we see that the Lord Jesus calls students of the Pharisees who perform exorcisms "sons of the Pharisees" (cf. Matt. 12:27). Paul, a student of Gamaliel, a Pharisee, calls himself "a son of the Pharisees" (Acts 23:6).

The Bible emphasizes that the parents have the first responsibility to teach the children. Indeed, the school terminology of "fathers" and "sons" in a sense underlines this. The other teachers in Israel were the prophets and priests. Especially the priests had to educate Israel in the Law and their obligations (Deut. 31:9-13; 2 Chron. 17:7-9). Today, besides the parents, we have the office-bearers in the church and the school teachers who instruct our children. Indeed, the school teacher in the Christian School (for that is our centre of attention tonight) has an important office.

PURPOSE OF EDUCATION

If one were to believe everything which one hears, then Israel's education was very primitive, consisting only of learning about "spiritual things". The practical or cultural skills were relatively unknown because there was religious instruction only. However, such prejudiced thinking is shattered as soon as one reads the Old Testament. A normal family knew how to read and write. For example, Gideon could ask a young man from Succoth who had been captured to write down for him seventy-seven names (Judges 8:14). Literacy was widespread, for Israel's education was very practical. Think only of the Proverbs! Indeed, would a father not want his son to be well-established? As an old Hebrew proverb has it: "a man who did not teach his son the Law and a trade, the ability to work, reared him to be a fool and a thief."

Israel's education was geared so that boys could earn bread and butter and girls could be prepared for their future task, *but*: this does not mean it is not religious. The Bible makes no split between the practical and the spiritual. There is no gap between this life and the life to come, for as we confess in our Catechism, we start eternal life here (QA 103, 58). The great duty of the father and the mother was to see to it that their sons and daughters could live! Yes, live; that is, to make a living before God in obedience to him and so to receive the covenant blessing of a long, yea eternal life! For there is no distinction between the practical and the spiritual. The two are one. Just as fathers and mothers are God's instruments to impart physical life, so also they are instruments to impart eternal life!

If we see this as the root meaning of what it means to be a father, also when speaking of education, then the implications of what it means that a teacher is called a father are quite staggering. Israel and later the Jews saw that clearly, especially when "professional" teachers more and more took over. In view of the awesome life-giving function of father, one can understand how an ancient Jewish exposition even dares to place the relationship of the student to the teacher as father, higher than his relationship to his physical father, "for his father has brought him into the world, but his teacher, who has taught him wisdom, brings him into the future world."² Teachers were held in very great respect.

In ancient Israel *the* education was to be given in the home; later schools developed more and more. Today, *the* education is to be given in the home, but much time is spent in our children's going to school to prepare for life. This has put strains on the education which the home is to provide, for the school has much to say. It has also given our children two earthly fathers.

AUTHORITY

Because the purpose of education is to make life possible on earth in all its aspects, before God, even to eternity, the methodology that is revealed in the Old Testament is very instructive for the "fathers" and

“mothers” of our children in school. The subject matter can be important for the method. The Old Testament makes it clear that the subject matter is the “torah”. “Torah” means “law”, but it also means “direction” and even “instruction”. The subject matter is instruction which gives direction, for then the life before God and for God is seen. It is authoritative direction, for it is the way God has shown in His Word. Today we would say: the Bible must be taught. That underlies all the subjects. Because God’s will is ultimately being taught in all the subjects, therefore the teachers must present it with authority.

God’s Word is handled in the school. Therefore there cannot be a seeking of the truth together as is often done in secular education. The teacher, “the father”, must present it with authority. He has a godly task. Because the world does not recognize the authority of the Word, therefore it has trouble with the concept of authority. It must of necessity be only utilitarian.

However, because the teacher as father has to impart to children the fear and wisdom of the Lord, that is, true life, therefore their authority must be life-producing. It must be fatherly, with love, encouraging the pupils in the Lord. One sometimes reads of overzealous teachers who make all kinds of rules which cannot be enforced. Then he is not a father but a police officer, and as the saying goes: “If you act like a warden, your students will behave like prisoners.” Something of the beauty of a family atmosphere must be present in the school, for the teacher is father and the teaching is for life instruction. After all, properly seen, the school is ideally nothing but an extension of the home.

All this of course does not mean a lack of discipline, as teachers know only too well, for our sons and daughters are sinful; to them the teaching for life here on earth and starting a life eternal does not come easy. But the discipline is never a conditioning as the world sees it, a making of something out of a blank slate. No, it is bringing the covenant children to true life in Christ. Therefore we read in Prov. 13:24: “He who spares the rod hates his son, but he who loves him is diligent to discipline him.” Prof. H.J. Schilder has shown in what a sly and humorous way the Proverbs often speak. Prov. 23:13f. according to his translation goes something like this: “Do not withhold discipline from a child; Give it to him with a stick. Don’t worry. It wouldn’t kill him! Just give him a spanking. You will save his life from death.”³

MEMORY WORK

It is clear from the Old Testament how the parents have to entrust the great deeds of God to the children. They have to be written on their hearts (cf. Deut. 6). Undoubtedly much was committed to memory. Nowadays memory work is looked down on. But it was and still should be a very important means by which the father can fulfill his task; therefore, also the “fathers” in the school. For with memory work great principles are at stake. Judging from the first part of Psalm 78 these principles include in the first place the transmitting and remembering of the great deeds of God in life, and, in the second place, so to learn from the sins of the parents and so to be encouraged in true obedience to God in order that they may live (Ps. 78:7, 8). Therefore it was important that the fathers told their children of the great deeds of the Lord, lest they would forget the Lord and so stray from His ways. So the fathers are repeatedly told to keep on telling everything to their children, continually, whether they were sitting, standing,

lying down and rising (Dt. 6). So it would be committed to memory. Sometimes the Lord aroused the curiosity of the children. For example, the stones were placed in the Jordan river so that the children would ask their parents concerning them (Josh. 4:4-9, 20-24).

This continual instruction and the memorization that went with it resulted in later generations’ being able to speak of the Exodus in detail that exceeded the written record so that the Lord could use details of the memorized accounts to be included in His Word at a later stage. So we for example can find in Psalm 77:18, 19 a reference to thunder during the crossing of the Red Sea which we do not read about in Exodus.⁴ The fathers therefore had an important task. Some of what they passed on later became part of God’s written Word. The fathers had an important task, for they had to keep alive in the lives of the people the reality and greatness of their God. There was an added urgency in that written copies of the Bible (as far as it was then written) were probably relatively scarce. Probably only the priests and the wealthy had a copy if the example of the middle ages before the advent of printing can be of any guide. It is possible therefore that for many the Scriptures were the memorized words of the Lord as they had been handed down by the priests and fathers. If this was the case, as it appears to be, then the memory aids which the Lord gave, such as the memorials of destroyed towns or piled stones take on added significance. The Word of God and the great covenant deeds had to be kept alive in the memory of the people.

THE LIVING WORD

Here perhaps is where the greatest challenge lies today. We do not have to worry about the Bible dying out, in view of the many printed copies available. If we do not commit it to memory we can always read it. So that is easy. But, then a major point is missed. Then the Bible is not integrated into life the way it was in Israel by the oral speaking all day long, by their being reminded of the Lord’s great doings in everything they did as they were commanded (Deut. 6). This is of course the beauty of a Christian school. Here it can be a great help to the home, for here in a controlled atmosphere we have fathers and mothers who feed the pupils subjects all day long in the light of God’s Word. In the school the great deeds of God can be transmitted in such a way that they meet the needs of every day and so that the Lord’s great deeds are not locked in the Book and bypassed and forgotten. In the school all facts, whether in science or mathematics, can be related to Him and to His plan for us and the world. Then teaching is “torah”, giving direction for life, for the full life in Jesus Christ on this earth, but which is at the same time the beginning of life eternal.

In view of all the subjects and circumstances one can meet in the classroom, this direction will be given concretely, for the wisdom of God is not an abstraction, but it always relates to life, real life. This is what gives the Proverbs power and which makes the abstract wisdom of the world weak. For the Word of God never speaks of things in abstraction, life the so-called “sex education” of modern times, for instance. No, it relates it to life’s issues and temptations so that one can learn from the sins of the previous generation and so be brought to the Lord in true and full life. The “fathers” in school therefore must bring the truth of the various subjects to bear concretely on the lives of the students, their “sons” and “daughters”! For the

school X crossing

TOO LATE OR JUST IN TIME?

These words form the title of an article written by one of the teachers of the school in Smithers, B.C. I was thinking of these words as I received the first News Bulletin of the Canadian Reformed School Society of NEERLANDIA, Alberta. After the arrival of Rev. C. VanDam a few years ago, a Saturday morning School was started, where the children of the congregation received instruction in

Bible History and Church History. That was already the beginning. On March 4, 1975, the consistory invited the congregation to a "congregational" meeting to listen to a speech "Why Reformed Education" and to discuss the need for a Reformed day school in this congregation. According to our new Yearbook, the congregation of Neerlandia consists of only 93 members. Is there any use to even discuss the possibility of a Re-

formed school in such a small congregation?

However, the need is just as great in a small congregation as in a large one. And it was a very encouraging thing that the younger parents with children in school and also the younger parents with no children in school yet, were very enthusiastic about establishing a school. Does it take great courage to start working for Reformed education when we are so small in number? I would say it takes a lot of courage NOT to do anything about it. In view of what we have publicly promised at baptism, it would take great courage indeed to deny this and actually say to the Lord: we can't, because we are too small in number. Numbers never come first with the Lord. And, as a young cate-

A SCHOOL OF SONS AND DAUGHTERS - continued

wisdom of the Word is concrete and practical because the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of true knowledge, is so practical and so relevant to this life here on earth, which must be the beginning of life eternal.

FATHERS AND THEIR SONS

The above has repercussions. We see again how great the power of teachers is. They are fathers, for they fill the lives of their "sons" and "daughters" in a very real way. Daily and systematically, with the authority and discipline which come with a school situation, the students are being worked at, at a time when they are most productive and attentive. When the real parents see them, they have already given their best. The potential impact of the "fathers" in school is therefore immense! We can never underestimate it! Life direction is given there! Yes, life - which must include eternal life.

Such is the impact that the successful teacher literally moulds his "children" in his image. Just as a father has children in his image. This can happen and does happen in the school room. Teachers are "fathers". They give life instruction and influence life outlook, yes, even the very image of their students.

One can sense that this raises problems. A teacher's influence is immense. *But* can it go that far!? Do we as parents not have the first right. Do the sons and daughters not belong to us? There's an Aramean story of a mother who took her child to school and entrusted him to the teacher with these words: "His flesh is yours, his bones are mine." That is, the teacher is given the authority to teach and discipline the child, while the child remained the parents'. The flesh is given to the teacher to be moulded or beaten, if necessary, but with the bones the basic structure remains with the parents. There is a healthy idea here, for the teacher is not to remake the child he receives; the child belongs not to the school but to the parents. We are reminded that the first five or six years are in the home and that the parents are after all the first father and mother. This is also of comfort if one happens to be living where Christian education is not possible. However, it

also reminds us that we cannot just leave our children in the care of the "parents" at school, no matter how good the school is, for the school is to be an extension of the home; that's where the real father and mother are. Therefore we as parents must be very much involved with our teachers. This does not mean interference. It means praying for them. It means using the channels available to show interest in their work and to find out how our children are doing. It also means equipping the teachers as well as possible so that they can do their work and calling with undivided attention. It means above all that our children clearly see that there is no competition between the father at home and the one at school but that in the unity of faith both "fathers" are steering the child in full obedience to the Lord in all areas of life.

Then we see the beauty of true Christian education. The "problem" of the teacher moulding students in his image is then in a sense always limited. For when our children are moulded in the image of the teacher, then it should not be a direct source of concern, for both the "father" in the school and the father at home have another Teacher to whom they both submit. He gives true wisdom, yes, He is true wisdom and gives and is life, even life eternal. He was not called "father" as a title of honour, as teacher, for His teaching ministry revealed the great Father in heaven, so that those who saw Him, the Lord Jesus, would see the Father, and those who obeyed Him would be the image of Father on earth! And is it not the image of that Father that we seek to impress on our sons and daughters also in school?

C. VANDAM

1 This article is a condensed version of a speech held for the fall membership meeting of the Burlington John Calvin School Society on November 1, 1974. It was also used for a meeting of the Canadian Reformed High School Association of Brampton on March 18, 1975.

2 Quoted by E. Lohse in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, VIII, 357.

3 See *Almond Branch*, 1, 2, p. 16.

4 W.H. Gispen, *Mondelinge Overlevering in het Oude Testament*, esp. p. 38.

chism student remarked in a larger congregation: should the bigger congregations not help the smaller ones to establish their own schools? If necessary, yes indeed. It is wonderful to note that the younger generation understands something of the Communion of Saints!

On that congregational meeting, a School Board was elected and went to work immediately. As they write in their Bulletin: the Board has not been sitting still . . . Three Board meetings have been held since and several letters were written and mailed out to other school societies, for information. Other school societies must have been very glad to help out, for several answers were received soon. The Board writes: we realize that we are still only in the beginning stages, but with God's help we hope to come to the realization of our own day school. A membership meeting was held on April 10 to adopt a Constitution and By-Laws and also to adopt the proposal of the Board to start paying \$800.00 a year. Whether this was accepted, I will not know till the next Bulletin arrives, but it shows that even in a small congregation with good,

scriptural enthusiasm in the unity of faith, it is never too late but still in time!

In EDMONTON a meeting was held too to discuss the need for Reformed Education. About half a dozen new members have joined the School Society in the recent past, which boosted the membership to 33. In the meantime the work at the Saturday school is continuing. May the Lord bless this work. Do we who have already received a day school out of the hand of the Lord, sometimes forget the struggle in other congregations where efforts are made to establish such a school? Let us in our personal and family prayers remember the work in other congregations and not isolate ourselves from our brotherhood. We must all be contending for the faith.

PARENTS BORED STIFF?

In HAMILTON the School Society held an annual meeting where the former author of "School X Crossing", br. Kuntz, spoke on the above topic. At least that is what it sounded like when I first heard it. And it did not really surprise me too much. Sometimes we as parents have to be aroused from our boredom with education. We can get so used to hearing it all the time that we indeed get bored stiff. However, in this case it was different. Upon further inquiry, it became clear that the topic read: Parents-Board-Staff and their Relationship. Well, that sounds much better. That shows us that in Hamilton the parents are not bored stiff but are very much alive to education and therefore also want to study what relationship there is and how it should function between the parents of the children and also the teachers. We should be very much alive to these questions. After all, our schools are parent-controlled schools and for that reason we cannot shove everything on the Board. A good understanding and a well-functioning relationship between all three will prevent boredom.

FOREIGN LANGUAGES?

As mentioned, br. W. den Hollander of Smithers wrote an article under the heading "Too late or just in time?" His article dealt with the value of teaching Dutch in our schools. Smithers is teaching also German, French, and Latin. Should we burden the children with another language? The author points out that there is a

general interest in our churches for the Dutch language. Indeed, it is a fact, that, even though many fathers and mothers after coming to Canada, tried to throw overboard their native tongue as soon as possible, today a younger generation is rising up that wants to know more about our ethnic past. Several young people have travelled to the Netherlands and came back with some knowledge of the Dutch language and a desire to learn it even better. This is a thing we should encourage. The books of Meyer on Church History have, according to the author, also helped to increase the interest in the history of the Canadian Reformed Churches and make our people more aware of the historical relationship between us and our sister churches in Europe.


It is then pointed out to us that this is not something new. The well-known Rev. VanRaalte in the U.S.A. stated already: "I am not so much concerned about our children speaking English, than with the risk for them to lose their Dutch." From another American book we are given the following quotation: "It is a fact, that the whole Reformed Church in 1850, Scotsmen and Huguenots included, could understand and read Dutch, and scholars as Chalmers and Prof. Demarest read Dutch easily." "It was remarkable how they all tried to keep the Dutch language."

There is more in this article, which I would like to pass on next time. How about asking ourselves the question till then: how much does the Dutch language mean to us? And why?
M.C. WERKMAN

OUR COVER
Rehoboth Church, Burlington.
Photo by Rev. G. VanRongen.

Puzzle No. 8





THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE
Published biweekly by Premier Printing Ltd. Winnipeg, Manitoba.
Second class mail registration number 1025.
ADDRESS FOR ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS: (subscriptions, advertisements, etc.):
CLARION, Premier Printing Ltd.
1249 Plessis Road, Winnipeg
Manitoba, Canada R2C 3L9
Phone (204) 222-5218
ADDRESS FOR EDITORIAL MATTERS:
CLARION
P.O. Box 54, Fergus
Ontario, Canada N1M 2W7
EDITORIAL COMMITTEE:
Editor: W.W.J. VanOene
Co-Editors: W. Helder, D. VanderBoom
REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS:
J.M. Boersema, J. Faber, J. Geertsema,
E. Gosker, W. Huizinga, P. Kingma,
H.J. Ludwig, H.M. Ohmann,
A.H. Oosterhoff, F.G. Oosterhoff,
A.B. Roukema, C. Tenhage, C. VanDam,
G. VanDooren, H.C. VanDooren,
C. Van Spronsen, J. Visscher,
M.C. Werkman.
SUBSCRIPTIONS:
\$15.00 per year (to be paid in advance).
ADVERTISEMENTS:
\$4.00 per column inch (width of column: one-third of page). Contract rates upon request.
Advertising copy for coming Weddings, Anniversaries, Meetings, etc. must be in our office three to four weeks prior to event.

The Care Of The Needy In The Old Testament

In Proverbs 22:2 it reads: "The rich and the poor meet together; the LORD is the maker of them all." This is the translation of both A.V. and R.S.V. In the N.A.S.B. it reads a little different: "The rich and the poor have a common bond." Taking this verse as point of departure of my speech I would like to draw your attention to the latter translation, since that which is the idea of the text is brought out into fuller relief here; I mean the idea of reciprocity, which is undoubtedly to be recognized in the form of the Hebrew verb.

On the one hand the meeting together of the two is nothing out of the ordinary. It is an everyday happening. The "tense" of the Hebrew verb, the so-called perfect, indicates: So it was in the past and, consequently, so it is today. Also for a subject like ours, practical as it may be, the study of the parent languages and their grammar is very significant. By this "tense" facts are expressed which have formerly taken place and are still of common occurrence and hence are matters of common experience.

On the other hand: What about their meeting? Do they really meet one another; do they see each other? This should be answered in the affirmative. For it is to be gathered from another particular feature of the Hebrew verb, its so-called "stem-form." More is implied here than that they should pass by each other to go each his own way. No, the one should be conscious of the presence of the other, being alive to his responsibilities with respect to him. Both of them are there with a view to each other. Society cannot do without either of the two. However, not this is the deepest ground, but what it says in the second half of the verse: THE LORD IS THE MAKER OF BOTH OF THEM. On His account the meeting of the two need not be a clash. For His sake the poor is not going to envy or curse the rich, nor is the rich going to despise the poor. Rather, he is alive to the fact that he has got his riches "that he may have to give to him that needs."

In the same vein is spoken in Prov. 29:13: "The poor man and the oppressor meet together; the LORD gives light to the eyes of both". In the R.S.V. it says "oppressor"; in the A.V., "deceitful man." Yet, to be honest, you do not read of the oppression of the oppressor in this verse. It is possible, but not for certain. The rich man is featured as a man who easily runs the risk of becoming an oppressor, because of the lead he has over the poor. What matters most is that both are referred to the LORD who makes their eyes shine. Looking each other in the eyes - the mirrors of the soul, reflecting the wonder of man's psychic life - they should recognize the wondrous work of their common Maker.

Our text does not say that they have to have their dealings on a human basis; that they have to associate with each other just because they are human, on the footing of common humanity. It is because they are the work of God's hands; since both got their proper place from the LORD. They associate with each other, looking each other in the eyes before the eyes of their Creator.

Creator, I say and I realize what I am saying now. I realize that another difficult point now comes up. Taking the above-mentioned texts as my point of departure, I made a start in a world in which relations have been

dislocated and disrupted since the coming of sin into that world. In that very world, with its disrupted society, we were reminded of the Creator. But you may wonder: What is the sense of it? In our Catechism, Lord's Day 4, question 6 asks: "Did God, then, create man so wicked and perverse?" The answer, of course, is in the negative. Right! We cannot blame the LORD for sin and wickedness. However, doesn't our text blame Him for something that sin, only sin, can bring in its train? First of all poverty, which is misery, but also riches; I mean riches as it is usually seen here on earth; riches as sinful people are used to having and enjoying it.

Alluding to the word of the LORD JESUS, Matthew 19:8, I must say: "But from the beginning it was not so." Although the LORD is the Maker of both the rich and the poor, He did not, for one thing, create poverty. What He did make was: man. Some would like to speak here of the greatest common divisor, the average man. However, this way we should not speak of man. Then we go astray for certain in this subtle matter of riches and poverty, abundance and lack and of what man is allowed to have. God did not create poverty nor did He create something like riches, of which each and everyone should have an equal share. No, God created man after His image. And Adam in turn became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image. And every man God endowed with his particular gifts and talents, and in accordance with those gifts and talents the LORD provided him with the things he really was in need of. That is how God created man. And taking this into consideration I can say: He who made them at the beginning made them rich, wealthy; rich in the true sense of the word.

For there is a difference between rich and "rich". Let us not lose sight of that. There is all the difference in the world between riches or wealth as a blessing which the LORD bestows upon man's life and riches or luxury as man scrapes it together by his own arm and power and cunning.

It is no use dealing with riches and poverty in an abstract way. In the medieval period Roman Catholic ascetics have sung the praises of poverty. I just mention the well-known Francis of Assisi, an exponent of the poverty-movement, which in the 14th and 15th century spread far and wide. Scripture never recommends such a what I would call voluntary mutilation with regard to the eighth commandment, not anymore than with regard to the seventh commandment. Our GOD likes to see man unfolding his talents, according to the measure in which they were given to him, and in accordance with the plan He our Creator has with each of us.

Since from the beginning it has been so, we, choosing the days of paradise as point of departure, see this line extended after the fall on the understanding that it is the blessing of the LORD that makes rich and our labour doesn't add anything to it. As gift of the LORD, riches are to be valued positively, according to Scriptures. Man, as he was created by God, *after His image*, capable of occupying the seat of viceroy, has to have the riches, the wealth, of creation at his disposal, we may say, in order that he might bring to light the talents he has been endowed with. It is

with man in general just as with a craftsman. He cannot do anything without tools, instruments, material. Man cannot get anywhere without having the treasures of creation at his disposal. That is what makes the history of paradise significant. The LORD surrounded man with the things he was in need of to become a good agriculturalist and cattle breeder; and not to spend it in his passions and lusts. Oftentimes man takes a wrong view of paradise and its wealth. As if it were a sort of Land of Cockaigne (luilekkerland). We better consider it to be an experimental farm and field, where man was put to the test by His LORD and GOD in every respect, where man could serve His Divine Instructor and Teacher. To work in such a way was a real pleasure. And man can only work so in being totally dependent upon the Giver of all these goods, in true faith.

This line is extended after the fall, I said already. In God's promise to Abraham material prosperity is included. In the Book of Job the fear of the LORD and wealth are linked up or tied together again. 1 Kings 3:13 it is named a gift of the LORD. And Eccles. 5:18 speaks in the same vein. So, we do not owe the riches we have to our own endeavours. Deut. 8:17, 18: "Beware lest you say in your heart: 'My power and the might of my hand has gotten me this wealth'. You shall remember the LORD, your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth; that He may confirm His covenant which He swore to your fathers as at this day." I can also point to Prov. 22:4: "The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches, honour and life." A wonderful illustration of this truth we are given in Psalm 112: "Blessed is the man who fears the LORD." vs. 3: "Wealth and riches are in his house and his righteousness endures for ever" (vs. 3). "He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures for ever" (vs. 9).

In the last verse another aspect of God's bestowing wealth upon man comes into the picture. Being rich he can afford to give to the poor. Which aspect is to be given emphasis since I started off by quoting and referring to the text: "The rich and the poor meet together". Psalm 112 tells us how they can and should meet and what the use of it is. It has been arranged this way by the LORD in order that the former may have the opportunity to give and the latter to receive.

In a sinful world this truth, this mutual relationship of people is hardly understood since it is indeed hard to understand. It is against man's innermost sinful nature, prone to hate God and his fellow man; not inclined to give nor to beseech or ask. To man, what matters most and comes first is to have or not to have, to belong to the have-nots; either to exploit or to envy one's fellow man. This definitely is not what pleases the LORD. It is a basic misunderstanding of what his gifts are meant for. On the contrary, the LORD is pleased in seeing a relation of giving, helping and of receiving, being helped, function among man in the proper way. Not so as to make the one haughty and the other embittered, but to constitute bonds, ties. Then rich and poor really meet together in the sense of Prov. 22:2. And in answer to questions to this effect that were raised during the discussion of the speech* I said that our God is the creator or cause neither of poverty nor of somebody's being poor, as if He were pleased with it; nonetheless He is the God who tells His people in advance "that the poor will never cease out of the land" (Deut. 15:11). Cp. also Matth. 26:11. In this circumstance we clearly discover the hand of Him who wills his people to be

put to the test whether they are merciful and free-handed or not. In this sense He can be called "Maker of the poor."

This however does not mean that - I speak of world and mankind after the fall into sin - that we should praise the LORD for poverty or shut our eyes to the sad and miserable aspects of poverty as it obtains on earth. There are a great many shadows, if not only drawbacks, which come to light. Something, or rather everything, should be done to relieve it. That is what the LORD aims at and intends to be done. That is to say: to be done by men who meet one another in the relation of rich and poor, in which they are given the opportunity to give and to receive. Which really is an opportunity. Bad as poverty may be, without the poor, life would have been deprived of something worthwhile. I mean the care of the needy; the work of deaconry, the love shown in it. It is just as with sin. Without the fall into sin we wouldn't have known the Son of God as our gracious Redeemer.

We do not gloss over the shadows. It is Scripture itself that bears testimony to it. Man goes astray as soon as he sees riches as something in the abstract. In that case we hear Scripture warn us, e.g. Prov. 23:4: "Do not toil to acquire wealth; be wise enough to desist." The Bible points out the mentality in which it is often gathered: "A miserly man hastens after wealth and does not know that want will come upon him." Or Prov. 28:8: "He who augments his wealth by interest and increase, gathers it for him who is kind to the poor", and "he who hastens to be rich will not go unpunished", Prov. 28:20b, since it is "a faithful man who will abound with blessings". Not only because it is perishable, as we are accustomed to say, considering it the culminating point of piety. In that case it would be riches itself that were to be blamed. No, it is the spirit in which it is accumulated. And besides, the way in which the rich man *has* his riches. Being a rich man, the Book of Proverbs says, you run the risk of becoming "self-conceited, rough, perverse" (28:11; 18:23; 28:6).

Riches always ought to be considered in connection with its possessor: As far as that goes, I can go along with a well-known Old Testament scholar when he writes: "There is a particular intimate association between the man and his property, which is penetrated by and absorbed into his soul. To the easterner wealth means more than material gain and so also for the Israelite. It fills and uplifts the soul and makes it grow in value; blessing acts in it and honour swells. This intimate relation between soul and property is the decisive factor in the Law of inheritance. The property is connected with the family to whose soul it has been made familiar. The relation between man and property is a mutual one. Property is imbued with the essence of the owner, and on him it reflects honour and shame." (Johs. Pedersen, *Israel, Its Life and Culture*.) For some expressions I leave the author responsible, but what he points out is worth a thought: The intimate connection between man and his property. It is his property, something special or dear to him, be he rich or poor. There are poor people who are richer with the little things they have than a millionaire with his bank-account.

Poverty is abnormal. When God created man, He made him rich. Therefore poverty is something to be abolished and the poor someone to be lifted out of his misery. Whatever the reason. There is poverty that man himself is to blame for, he being a sluggard (Prov. 6:6; 24:30) or self-conceited (Prov. 13:18) or licentious (Prov. 21:17; 23:21;

continued on page 12

news medley

Ontario had its Office-bearers' Conference again. Ontario? No, just a small part of it. Of the some 150 office-bearers in the Ontario Churches (according to the Year-book) not even one-third were present. Alright, do not count Grand Rapids and Ottawa, for the brethren from there need three days for such an event and, since it is always held on Saturdays, this renders it practically impossible for them to attend. That leaves still 140 office-bearers. Let us say that there are forty who, for various reasons such as snowstorms and snowdrifts, illness or very pressing business are absolutely prevented from coming. That leaves still about one-third of the brethren. From whichever angle you look at it, it is a poor performance. More than once we paid attention to the necessity of the training for (and of) office-bearers. Here is an opportunity, but it seems that part of the office-bearers do not need it since they know it all already nor deem it necessary, if they know it all, to serve the brethren with their knowledge, experience and advice. That is apparently reserved for the "common Christians". From some Churches you very seldom see anyone; some ministers always seem to be too busy to lend their support and to join in the struggle for finding the best ways and means to perform the duties of the offices and for receiving an answer to many questions. Sometimes you get the impression as if some live and work by the adage, "You in your small corner and I in mine". Could we have a better performance next time?

In the morning we had a very interesting and instructive introduction by Prof. Ohmann on "The Care of the Needy among Israel". How did many parts of Scripture become clear through this introduction! Judge yourselves, when the speech is published. And in the afternoon we spoke on the Congregational involvement in disciplinary cases, a very practical topic with which every Consistory has to deal almost all the time. No, we did not succeed in answering all questions in both these "fields", but we did gain a better insight in what is the will of the Lord. Now we have to work it out in daily life and in the daily practice in the midst of the Congregations.

When I asked Prof. Ohmann for his speech, he said, "But I write so much already!" Yes, that is true, and we are thankful for it. In this manner also the membership in other parts of the country can receive some of the fruits of what the brethren do at our College in Hamilton. The Ontario membership does have a great advantage: they can hear the professors and also invite them to speak, something which is being done, don't worry. For instance, the Hamilton Men's Society had Prof. Faber speak for them on the AACCS and its evaluation. That is possible here in Ontario. But when the professors write, then the whole membership reaps the fruits of their labours. The series of articles by Prof. Ohmann which is currently being published may be a bit long in the opinion of some, when one takes the time and trouble to study them, they provide a wealth of information and are very much up to date. A minister in the Netherlands wrote me that he found these articles very good and **timely**. However, I should not try to

evaluate a current series. Yet, I am glad that I had the opportunity to say this. The area in which Canadian Reformed Churches are found is larger than Ontario! We here do our best to bear that in mind. But do brethren in other parts of the country also bear in mind that the area is larger than the small strip of land in which **they** live? Are you aware of it, brethren out West, that approximately 5½% of the contents of **Clarion** over the last two years came from outside Ontario and 94½% came from people in Ontario? I mean now contributions in the form of articles and so on, not press releases of major assemblies. And then there are members in the West who complain that they are being left out in the cold. By whom??

Alright, let's hit the West. Or hit for the West; that may express better what I mean now, otherwise I hardly dare to appear there this summer.

You will recall that some time ago the Chilliwack Consistory published that the Chilliwack municipal council was of the opinion that there were enough churchbuildings in town and that they were not willing to rezone any area for this purpose. I then expressed my conviction that such a stand would be **ultra vires**, that means, beyond the legitimate authority and power of the council and that I would be willing to fight it. Now I received a letter from a brother there who sent me two newspaper clippings dealing with an application by the so-called Jehovah Witnesses. The Municipality of Surrey had refused to grant them a building permit for an 1,800-seat assembly hall. The sect appealed to the B.C. Supreme Court, and Mr. Justice J.G. Ruttan ruled that the Surrey bylaw that could prohibit the building of churches on residential or other property is illegal. Surrey was ordered to issue a building permit. At first, the Municipality decided to comply with the order, but then changed its mind and obtained a court order allowing it to withhold such permit. The sect now has appealed this court order and we shall wait for the outcome. The reason why Surrey decided to appeal the first decision was that the Supreme Court ruling carried implications which could upset zoning procedures throughout the province. It is for that reason that I pass it on. I would not promote the idea of going to court right away; I would first exhaust all avenues of personal approach. But if there is any difficulty anywhere, it might be good to bear the above case in mind.

Some other news about Chilliwack: The Classis Pacific which was held recently granted Chilliwack's request for support with a view to calling a minister. We can expect some activity in this respect in the foreseeable future, we hope. Anyway, congratulations. Rehoboth Burlington will see their vacancy filled after almost five years, when the Rev. Cl. Stam comes over from the Netherlands. On the other hand, Lincoln will become vacant, since Rev. Dekker is going to leave us again for "down under". And: the developments in Cloverdale also point into the direction of an upcoming vacancy.

Another time we already mentioned that Cloverdale was contemplating to divide the Congregation into two parts and to arrange for four services per Sunday, because the auditorium cannot contain the multitude any longer. One brother wrote me, "They should have built a larger one so many years ago." I say, "What a blessing that they didn't!" And what a blessing that it is "virtually impossible to solve the 'problem' " by enlarging the present building. Starting out on that road would have been the beginning of much patchwork which would not have brought any real

solution. Now Rev. J. Mulder explains in the **Church News** the final decision: "to have as per April 6th double services". Only the farmers are free to choose to which services they will go; the rest are expected to follow the rules: Cloverdale-East the one month 9:00 and 2:30 and Cloverdale-West 10:45 and 4:30, and the other month the other way around. The Halls Prairie Road is the dividing line and the membership is surprisingly equal: 237 over against 240, give or take a few.

The most difficult part, Rev. Mulder wrote, was the solving of the difficulty of preaching arrangements. Now the minister will conduct three services per Sunday, alternately twice in the morning, once in the afternoon, and once in the morning, twice in the afternoon. I know by experience that this breaks up your Sundays and that it is not conducive to family life. It is, therefore, to be something temporary. And further: an exchange of once a month would be a tremendous help!! Rev. Mulder closes his explanation with the wish, "May the decisions taken serve the upbuilding of His Church, the diligent attendance of the worship services by all the members and . . . the institution of a Church also in the city of Langley."

Let us move on to New Westminster. The long-awaited Congregational Meeting will have been held by now, but still the plans for the new Churchbuilding were not yet ready. They must be doing their work thoroughly there and not take any chances that it takes so long. We shall, of course, not ascribe the delays to the inability to reach a decision, although officials oftentimes seem to hesitate which rule has to be applied.

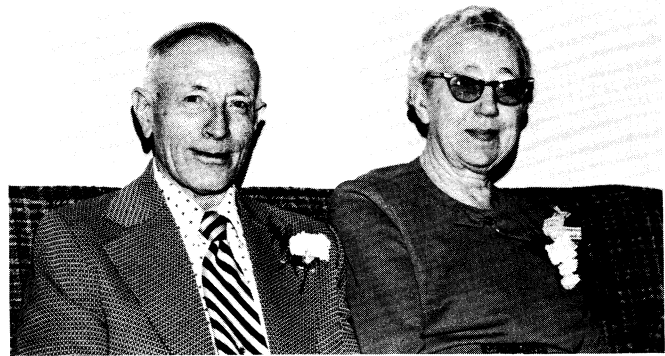
The New Westminster Consistory also mentions that it received a "Letter from a brother about the reading of sermons during the absence of our minister. It is decided that once a year, when new Elders are appointed, the Consistory also discuss and decide which Elders will be conducting reading services." That is a courageous decision; an even more courageous decision awaits them: the decision who will read and who will not! Of course, you do not wish to offend anyone, and it is not easy to find oneself in a position that one has to tell an Elder: "Dear brother, it will be better that you do not conduct a reading service, for your voice is not strong enough", or "for the young people almost burst out laughing because of the way in which you pronounce the words". You could do it, of course, by secret ballot, but that does not seem fair. Sterkte!

One last item from The Valley: both Rev. and Mrs. Mulder and Rev. and Mrs. VanBeveren were invited to come to Coaldale on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the institution of the Church there; and both received permission from their Consistories to accept the invitation and to go.

There we mentioned Coaldale. As in many other Churches, in Coaldale, too, a "refresher course" is planned, a course for members who have made profession of faith but who feel that they should continue their "education". Sometimes I tell the young people when they come before the Consistory to be examined with a view to the public profession of faith, that their being admitted to this profession does not mean that they know everything but, on the contrary, that they have learned how to read, and now should put this knowledge to good use. The only sorry thing is that there are only so few evenings in one week.

Coaldale's bulletin tells us that "The Dutch worship

50th Wedding Anniversary



Mr. and Mrs. Pieter Kok will celebrate their 50th Wedding Anniversary on May 14, 1975. Following their marriage in 1925 in Friesland, they lived in Groningen until 1949 when with 6 of their 7 children they immigrated to the Lethbridge area. After the then usual beet labour tenure, Mr. Kok was employed by the Federal Research Station at Lethbridge until 1968 when he retired. They have 24 living grandchildren and 3 great-grandchildren. Mr. and Mrs. Kok are in good health, both enjoying their retirement.

services which had been proposed were discussed. Due to almost total lack of response to the Council's proposal, it was decided not to go through with it." Remember what that proposal was? To have a Dutch service on the first and third Sundays of the month at 3:00 p.m. Now apparently it is off.

The same Consistory received a strange request or suggestion. "The Council decided not to go along with the suggestion that in the future the proposed budget would first be submitted to the congregation and then to the Council. Such a course of action would lead us into a congregationalist direction and would lead to a great deal of confusion." I hope that the one who suggested that will attend the "refresher course", for he needs it.

Partially cryptic, yet clear enough to raise my eyebrows is the following information: "An instruction is added to the credentials dealing with the brevity of the Form for the Excommunication of baptized members and then especially the fact that it contains only one admonition." The expression "baptized members" is not taken from the Form; **all** members are baptized members. It is meant, of course, to be a characterization of those who have not yet made profession of faith. That is quite a mouthful. Why then not speak of "non-communicant members"? But that is a minor thing. I would like to be taught about the question how it is possible that a matter which concerns the Churches in general (a synodically adopted form) can be brought to a Classis and then, in the second place, not by way of a proposal or overture but by way of an instruction, about which the Churches have not been able to form an opinion beforehand. However, I still have to learn much in this strange world.

Up to Barrhead! On a housevisit it was suggested to have carpeting in the auditorium. Also to have some plants beside the pulpit. "It was decided to plant some flowering shrubs beside the entrance to the churchbuilding and to look for plants for the inside." That will be nice. I love

plants and flowers and I also love to see them in Church. Hopefully, the heat will not fail in winter, for that is disastrous. In Abbotsford they had a very nice philodendron, which was presented to the Church when the (now) old Churchbuilding was dedicated; one night the power failed, the temperature dropped to 20 degrees Fahrenheit, and the result can be guessed. I am sure that Barrhead will make something nice of it.

In Neerlandia the schoolboard decided to purchase twenty copies of the New American Standard Version. "It was decided to purchase the cheaper Bible, so that when a translation appears that can be recommended to the churches as 'good', then we will not have invested that great an amount in this respect." I can predict that this decision will be regretted, for by that time they may have worn out two or three copies of this cheaper edition. If I see how many catechism students treat their Book of Praise and when I see in how bad a shape these books oftentimes are (I must agree that they are not bound very well and sturdily) then I do not have high expectations of the shape a cheaper edition of any book will be in after what I expect to be quite a few years. We'll see.

It is about time that we see what happened in Ontario and in Grand Rapids. Yes, from the Grand Rapids magazine I learned that brother and sister H. Bouman were married for no less than fifty-five years. That is a long time and, although much too late, we wish to add our heartfelt congratulations to the very many which they already have received. May the Lord our God give you His light in the further time of life, that even when it is evening, it may be light all over. And if we can as yet honour you by publishing a picture of the two of you or of people congratulating you, we shall do so with great pleasure.

From Grand Rapids we travel to Chatham. "By way of the Home Visits the consistory received complaints in regard to: the way in which some of our sisters attend Church and also go to Holy Supper (PANTSUITS AND SHORT DRESSES). The consistory also deplores this fact. When we attend Church we meet Christ the Lord, 'King of kings'. Let us also dress to meet our King."

I agree, of course, that we meet the Lord. I would say that rather than that we meet Christ; we come to worship **God**. Our manner of dressing should correspond with that.

But here I see another typical example of a consistory falling into a trap laid for it by well-meaning but disobedient members of the Congregation. Oftentimes it happens that a report of a family visit contains the following sentence: "And the brother asked us to bring the following to the attention of the Consistory . . ." When the chairman asks whether any of the brethren wishes to say anything about this report, there is a big chance that one of the elders says, "Yes, praeses, I also oftentimes have thought about that point. I therefore propose that the Consistory . . .," and there you go. Wrong! If any member of the Congregation is of the opinion that another member "behaves unseemly" it is NOT his duty to bring this to the attention of the visiting elders with the request to bring it to the attention of the Consistory with the request to bring it to the attention of the Congregation. Then it is his duty to go and speak with that member himself! If anyone is of the opinion that one should not come to Church in a pantsuit (and I agree) then he should go and talk to that sister and tell her so (not: tell her off); but then one should not complain about it to the visiting elders and then sit back and wonder "when the Consistory is going to

do something about it"! Consistories have enough to do besides doing jobs which the members should have done. Don't go for it!

From Chatham we move up to Hamilton. The Committee of Administration came with a proposal to install a Humidification System. "This will help, (1) to eliminate most of the organ problems, and, (2) also the furniture in the Church". The Consistory adopted the proposal. Hopefully, their expectations will not prove to have been too high. If they succeed in eliminating the organ problems, I suggest that they pass the information on to Edmonton.

The Consistory also informed the Congregation that "A young couple has requested to receive catechism instruction in order that they become members of our church." Here we find, for once, the good order: first ask for instruction. It is the first time that I have read such a thing; I wished it happened more often that way.

Another item in Hamilton's bulletin made me think, "Nou mot 'et niet gekker worden" (Now it should not become any sillier). I shall first give you the quote. "In discussing the letter of the board of Timothy School, the Consistory agrees with the contents in general in regards to Canadian Reformed School Education, but the Consistory is of the opinion that there is a distinction between school boundary lines and congregational boundary lines. Clarification on the borderline question is asked for." Am I right in concluding from this passage that there is a desire to draw a borderline somewhere and that this is to be the one between two Churches and that parents on the one side should send their children to this school and parents on the other side should send their children to that school? If I am right in this, I call that outright silly. Sorry, but I can't see it any differently. What all can you come to!

In Ebenezer Burlington's bulletin Rev. VanDooren answers various questions which have come up now and then and there is one among them which seems worthy of being passed on. It is this question: Is an election not held too early when the names of the candidates have been announced for only one week? Rev. VanDooren points out that it is not necessary to announce them in advance at all: an election can be held right after the service in which the Congregation is informed that an election will be held between the following candidates . . .

Here we find an answer to a common misunderstanding. As Rev. VanDooren correctly points out, before the **ordination** can take place the names of the appointed brethren must be announced at least twice; but it is not necessary at all to announce the names of the candidates even one week before an **election** will be held. Consistories oftentimes do announce the names of the candidates for the office one week in advance, but there is no obligation to do so, let alone that it has to be done twice. I pass this on because we frequently hear of objections brought in against an (allegedly) too early election.

In Ebenezer Church the question was also asked, What can we do for Vietnam and Cambodia? They had a meeting about it but came to the conclusion that there was not much that they could do in the given circumstances. They did, however, send a substantial amount for the work of the Wycliffe Bible Translators (not the official name) and received letters from two couples who were working on this task: the one in South America and the other in West New Guinea, as we are told.

Many of the Brampton children attend school in Burlington. Since Rev. VanDooren teaches catechism

there, the Brampton Consistory discussed the question how to discharge their own responsibility towards those children. Their own pastor should know the lambs of the flock, they argued, and therefore all children should attend catechism classes in Brampton, where also the Consistory can supervise the teaching. (It will be clear that Brampton's Consistory has no authority to visit the school in Burlington!) The solution they found is: the children will have double instruction: by Rev. VanDam in Brampton and by Rev. VanDooren in the John Calvin School, although in the latter case they will be excused from memory work. You see, dear reader, that an abundance of blessings also brings its problems with it.

We close with a celebration. Among the Churches that celebrate in these days we find Orangeville, too. The Consistory there appointed a committee to organize a special day, to be held in August. It does not say which day in August. The date of institution was August 13, 1950, as you recall, and I presume that it will be somewhere in that neighbourhood (I mean: of August 13) that the feast will be held.

And now, my dear friends, critics, supporters, and readers, I have come to the end of my present medley. Too bad, some will say. About time, others may sigh. It is good that I hear the reaction only later. Then the worst is over.
Sincerely yours, vO

Esteemed Young People (2)

Isn't youth a hindrance to those who must bring the gospel authoritatively?

Is it indeed so desirable that especially young people come to the Theological College to study? By and by the average minister will be young. There are few older ones and the younger ones are on the increase. Maybe the problem never occurs to us because we live in an age in which youth is considered an advantage. But the Bible makes us aware that youth may be a hindrance. Therefore it is good, in a time in which young people participate more in home mission and in which ministers are young, to remind each other of the rule which Paul sets for this situation.

Paul is not afraid to have young people in church. But he is afraid indeed of juveniles who do not set an example and do not deserve esteem.

Timothy as a young man must acquire esteem by setting the believers an example. It deserves our attention that Paul says, ". . . the believers . . ." *Within* the church Timothy must have good standing and repute. It is all very well if one is popular with non-believers or members of other churches. It may come in nicely if one makes contacts easily and is accepted readily by other people. But he who wants to serve the gospel, needs, first of all and foremost, something else: that he sets the *believers* an example. He who does not set an example in the Young People Society of his own congregation, is unsuitable for the work of home mission. He who doesn't set an example in his home congregation or in the congregation where he is studying, is unsuitable for the work of a minister. To the church it is of paramount importance that she does not degenerate to shallowness. The church must see to it that those who labour and have begun to labour in the gospel set *the believers* an example. Such young people and such young office-bearers are esteemed. But if this is lacking, then their youth can not compensate for what they lack in conduct. It is not without reason that, upon enrolment at our seminary, a special attestation is required. A spiritual preparatory course is required that no one can do without and on which we all together must keep an eye.

Paul makes clear in what respect young people must win esteem for themselves by setting an example.

An example "IN LOVE". Juveniles by nature offer resistance to older people. He who recognizes this immaturity in himself must overcome it by love. Love is not

boastful and is not puffed up. Love does not separate young from old, but teaches young people to love the older ones. Love covers a multitude of generation conflicts.

An example Timothy may set "IN FAITH". He should not do his work with the tensivity of the youth who "will fix things in a minute". He must know himself to be borne by the Lord in his work and he must earnestly commit to the Lord his labour in the gospel. Faith does away with much presumptuousness.

An example! That's what Timothy may and must be "IN SPEECH". Enthusiasm for the office of minister or for the work of home mission is quickly quenched, if it is not exercised in the Word. One who stumbles over his Catechism and can only poorly put into words the doctrine of the church, will not get far in the gospel. Only through knowledge of God's Word and the ability to pass it on, is able to refine youthful zeal and turn it into a lasting inspiration. Therefore there is still much studying to be done at the Theological College before one can enter the parsonage. And that does not hold only for those who as minister may serve in an office in the church.

Paul mentions still one other point: "CONDUCT". Speech and conduct must be *one*. One who wishes to teach others, must follow a steady course himself. Paul is concerned with the whole of life. Young people may sometimes get all excited about one or two causes, but are guilty of default when it comes to other matters. However, one who may serve the gospel at an early age must also,

The Faculty of the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches invites students who obtain their B.A. degree or its equivalent this spring or who are eligible for admission via the admission examination to contact the Registrar with a view to the requirements for application.

Students who graduate from Highschool and are considering to study theology after completion of an undergraduate-program are also requested to contact the Registrar to be advised as to the B.A. program which forms the best preparation for their future study at the College.

The Registrar, L. Selles
374 Queen Street S., Hamilton, Ont. L8P 3T8

while young, accustom himself to a *complete* Christian conduct. One who wishes to spread the Bible, should not feed himself at the same time with modern literature of dubious character. One who may give catechism lessons, must not be addicted to the weekly hockey-game at the same time. One who is allowed to meditate on psalms, must lock out the beat-music from his life. One who wants to defend Genesis, must not at the same time advocate student-marriage without children. From our childhood on we must learn not to go through the commandments with the hop-step-and-jump: something here and something there. We must learn to *walk* in all the commandments. As consistent people! Then it shows to better advantage also that we set examples "IN PURITY". Paul mentions that point last of all. But in our unclean time it is not the least or the simplest. Yet this is the thing that matters. While the older generation of today urges the young people, "Go ahead and be unclean; do whatever you like," Paul says that young people in the church shall be pure and that young ministers and office-bearers must be examples in that respect also.

Esteemed young people: that's what you become in the church by committing yourselves to all this. Whether you will be popular young people, we do not know. But it is a fact that in this manner you will be taking away the obstacle to the gospel. For the word cannot be commanded to others unless we ourselves have submitted ourselves to that command. Juveniles who learn to live that way, deserve esteem.

Then indeed it holds good in the church that no one is allowed to disdain boys and girls who evangelize, just because they are young. Then it holds good in the church

that no one is allowed to disdain the young minister who administers the admonitions in the congregation and in the homes. For through those admonitions grace is imparted to us. And for that, God wants to use young people also.

The latter is actually a miracle. Who is less suitable for bringing God's message to the people than a younger person? But the Lord Himself watches over His Word and that is why He can use and make capable, young people as well as older people. Nevertheless, there must be much prayer for esteemed young people in the church and at the Theological College. For the gospel is no child's play. It is the imperative and redemptive appeal of which a poet once wrote:

"Say to my people, "Heavy storms at hand!"

- But, Lord, there have been heavy storms before -

Yet: heavier storms are threatening the land!

- But, Lord, they don't believe it anymore.

The only thing these people understand
Is bread and gambling, as it was of yore.
No matter how I put Thy great command,
They laugh and dance . . . and stupidly ignore.

There are still faithful ones, I guess, in places,
But, ah, so few of them! They just won't do;
They're little ones and women, in most cases.

Prophet, arise! Not meekly speak, but lordly!
Before My time to come as Judge is due,
My people must completely turn toward Me.*

J. VAN BRUGGEN

(Trans. Ewoud Gosker)

* "De boodschap", poem by
Andries Dongera.

THE CARE OF THE NEEDY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

continued from page 7

29:36). However there are as many instances in which the victim is not to be blamed: the poverty which drought, plant disease, plague of locusts, acts of war or the burden of taxation brings in its train. Read ch. 4 and 5 of Amos. We hear this prophet address himself over and over to the rich landlords, the notorious oppressors of his time. We gather from the book of Amos that in those times there must have been a real shift in Israelite society, due to landlordism. The large landowners lived in Samaria. To them landownership was a sort of investment. Formerly independent peasants could not bear the taxload. Step by step they became more or less predial slaves, farmers who really became labourers on their own property. It was especially the small farmers who were in danger of falling victim. But let us not go too far into details here. Amos does not pass criticism on the social and economical development of his time as such, though this may have had its impact on the way and the mood in which religion was practised. For we should not explain the complaints of the prophets in the humanitarian way, making of them a kind of social reformers, but from a true religious angle. That is to say, not from the angle of Canaanite religion or Baalism, but from the angle of the religion in which the LORD YAHWEH is worshipped and the title He has on all landed property in Israel is acknowledged. Since the earth is the LORD's and the fulness thereof. It was He who once allotted Palestinian soil to His people Israel, its tribes, just as later on it was He who

had their families cast the lots. Each family. That is how it was in the time after the entry into the land.

That landed property belongs to a certain Israelite and his family; it is inalienable as such. It is not a social class, that of the poor which might feel insulted and wronged, but the LORD Himself, the real Landowner, who felt insulted and offended when one of his beloved, whom He had made rich by apportioning to him that very piece of land, was deprived of something special and dear to him. Not only since it was his subsistence and he wouldn't have the wherewithal to live. Often we people take a too materialistic view of the matter. There is a spiritual bond between man and his property, created by his God.

In this respect I must remark that Scripture doesn't know anything about a class-struggle. That is completely out of the picture. It is not just the poor peasants or small farmers, but also widows, orphans, sojourners or resident aliens, who were in danger of being deprived of their elementary rights, granted to all his people by a Merciful God. Moreover, it was not just in the time of the prophets - Amos, Hosea and Micah - that the LORD was going to take action. No, being a good and provident God, He was ahead of his people in making provisions in the Law. To deal with our subject in the proper way we should pay heed to those provisions. Let us consider some of them.

[To be continued]

H.M. OHMANN

* This article is a version of an address delivered at the Ontario Office-Bearers' Conference, held on April 5, 1975, in Rehoboth Church, Burlington.

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Yes, I really will keep my promise and announce FIRST OF ALL who the WINNER is of our Finish-the-story Contest! You know, I really had a time deciding WHO should have that prize! There were so many stories! And good ones too! But, at last I could come to no other conclusion: Busy Beaver *Jo-anna Flach* really deserves that prize.

Congratulations, Jo-anna! And a thank-you to everyone who entered the contest. I enjoyed every one of your stories! I hope we will be able to share more of them another time, but today let's have the winning story. Here it is!

One Saturday

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

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

"John, wake up it's Saturday!"

The night before the boys had bought two brand new fishing rods and before going to bed they caught enough worms to supply them for a day. Remembering this they tumbled out of bed and slipped into their clothes. Then they hurried downstairs for breakfast. They gulped down their food and quickly did their chores. Now they were free!

"Imagine, we might catch some fish for dinner!" said John excitedly.

After Mother packed a hearty lunch they were on their way. It was a beautiful day. The sun was shining brightly and they felt good all over. They thought they would go through the forest before starting their fishing. They saw bluebirds singing in the treetops, butterflies landing gracefully in the buttercups, and squirrels hurrying and scurrying. They also saw some luscious blueberries. They looked so tempting that the boys just had to stop and pick some. It was nice to hear the brook gurgling in the background. Though they were eager to try their new fishing rods, they were in no hurry, but enjoyed everything thoroughly. Finally they came to a splendid spot to fish, with beautiful scenery. The brook was at its deepest. They took their sandals off and swished their toes in the brook. It was late June and the water was cool but refreshing. Both boys put some bait on their hooks. John threw the line over his shoulder and it got caught in a tuft of grass. By the time he got the line untangled he had lost his bait. Paul didn't have as much trouble, as he had gone fishing before with his friend. Of course Paul got the first fish. The only thing John got was some seaweed and a piece of paper thrown in the water by a passer-by. John felt a pang of hunger so they had lunch. Their mother had packed them some delicious salmon and egg salad sandwiches. For dessert she packed a generous slice of chocolate cake for each of them. She also packed them an apple and a few candies. After lunch they started again. John had not given up. He watched the bright red bobber. Suddenly it bobbed up and down.

"I've got a fish" yelled John.

"Shhh!" whispered Paul. "You're going to frighten the fish away yelling like that."

Cautiously they pulled the line. Out came a fish about two inches long and half an inch wide. At the end of the day Paul had caught two fish while John had only caught one. The fish Paul caught were a little bit bigger than John's, but they too were small. The brook, they found out, didn't hold very big fish. It was getting late so the boys hurried home. Father and Mother agreed that they weren't very big fish but they were nice. Mother fried the fish and everyone got a little piece just for the taste. Though they were small, they tasted good.

In bed that night Paul and John thought over the beautiful day they had. The fish they caught weren't very big, but the walk in the forest was enjoyable. Yes, they both agreed, this Saturday had been well spent. And with this thought they both fell asleep dreaming about the adventures they'd have next Saturday.

* * * * *

Why do you think we celebrate Mother's Day? Here is a little story by Busy Beaver *Jenette Knol*. (Thanks, Jenette! I've been saving this for a little while.)

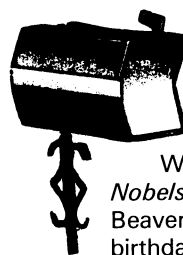
About Mother

My mother brings me to bed all the time at night. And she makes us work for her like dishes, the table, the floor, and help with the baking. Sometimes she buys something like candies and a chocolate bar. Sometimes she punishes us.

I do love my mother for being so kind to me, to do all these things.

Have you planned something nice for Mother's Day? I hope you and your family have a happy day together!

* * * * *



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Carol Nobels*. We hope you will really enjoy all our Busy Beaver activities. I hope you have a very nice birthday. Write again soon, Carol.

Hello *Irene VanOene*. Thank you for your "note" and for the contribution to the Birthday Fund! The answer to your question is "Yes", but you'll hear more about that later, all right? "Write again soon, Irene.

I'm glad you got your card, *Heather Bergsma*. And you did very well on the quizzes. Keep up the good work!

Hello *Tammy Alkema*. Did you get the jewelry box you wanted for your birthday? And did you have a nice holiday? Keep up the good work on the quizzes, Tammy!

Thank you for your story and the picture, too, *Billy Doekes*. I'm saving it! And I'm glad you had so much fun in your holidays.

You really had a good time during your holidays, didn't you, *Charles Doekes*? I'm sure glad you didn't hurt yourself when that swing broke! Write again soon, Charles.

Hello *Rose Barendregt*. You're a really good quizzer too. Keep up the good work! Does it look more like spring to you now, Rose?

How do you like living in your new house, *Cathy*