



Clarion

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Do Not Withhold

Do not withhold good from those who have a right to it, when it is in your power to do it.

Do not say to your neighbour, "Go, and come back another time; tomorrow I shall give it", when you have it with you.

Proverbs 3:27, 28

In the above texts obviously such a person is meant who is in need of something. When someone comes and asks for your help, for your support, he has a right to your help. He needs you and what you can give him in his need; when you are able to help him you are to do it and then you should not look for excuses left and right which would give you the "right" to deny the request for help.

When your neighbour comes and asks you for something, he does not do this just for the fun of it. And when one is in need of something, you should not send him away if you are in a position to help him. Then you are not allowed to tell him to come back another time because he comes at a moment which is not very convenient for you or because you are busy with other things or because you are just about to leave to go shopping. No, it should not be put off till the next day. "We must refuse nothing good (nothing either legally or morally good) to him who has a right to it, if we are in a condition to do him this good."

The above words from the book of Proverbs refer in the first place to the need of the neighbour and our obligation not to withhold from him in those conditions what he needs. Yet, we are to draw a lesson from this passage for our whole attitude in life as far as our financial obligations are concerned, our whole economic position and our way of dealing with others in every aspect of life.

No, I am no economist and do not claim that I understand much of the questions which come up in the field of economics. But what I do speak of are the moral aspects of several economic practices found in modern life.

It seems to have become the custom of governments at every level to work with huge deficits. More and more money has to be borrowed to fill the ever-increasing number of holes.

I know little of economic problems and manipulations; I know much about personal finances and I also know that I cannot go on forever with arranging my purchases so that I work every year with a large deficit. There comes a day when I have to face the consequences and when I have to pay my debts in one way or another. It cannot be but that every one will have to face the effects of his practices, whether he be an individual citizen or whether it involves a whole nation. Printing more "money" than the actual value of goods and services warrants leads only to inflation. And inflation - as I read with appreciation - is a *moral* issue!

It is the moral aspect of modern society and of the modern economy which affects us more than we may realize. We are taught that buying on credit - not just of such goods which form a realistic asset which is equivalent to the debt, but any goods or services - is the best way of enjoying the good things of life. We are encouraged to live off our future earnings by paying so much down and so

much per month on "very easy terms"! When you buy on credit you "stimulate the economy", you can enjoy your purchases right away and, besides, safeguard yourself against the effects of inflation: the cost of living goes up all the time and who knows what you will have to pay for this particular item by the time you have saved up enough to buy it! You'll save by buying now: you pay the lower price and, perhaps, you can pay it later with "cheaper" dollars than if you should pay right away.

There was a time when people who had a (frequently rather modest) capital gladly gave their money for mortgages. This assured them of a regular income and they were not in a hurry at all to get their money back: they wished to have a steady income from it. They were not even interested in seeing the principal sum being paid off: it was the interest they were looking for.

Times have changed. The *de*-valuation of the currency is one of the reasons why short-term loans have replaced many long-term investments. In many instances interest rates fluctuate and the one who has an "old-fashioned" mortgage at a fixed rate of interest is called "lucky". Why?

Here we touch upon the point which I wish to make: because he can pay back with "cheaper" dollars that which he borrowed many years ago in "expensive" dollars. For that reason he usually is not in a hurry to pay the mortgage off at a faster pace: the longer he waits, the less it will cost him in *actual* value to pay off his debt. And - we add - the less *actual* value will be received by the one who lent the money.

Many years ago, when the normal interest rate was an almost constant six percent, I heard of someone that he still had an old mortgage with an interest rate of 3½ percent. The payments which he had to make were very low and he had a good position. To my question why he did not pay off the rest of the mortgage and thus obtain clear title to the house, he replied, "Are you crazy? I can't get any cheaper money anywhere!"

Recently someone wrote me that he was going to have a new house built. Maybe he would not be able to pay all the costs involved, but certainly he would not suffer if he paid at least half of the total building costs. But what did he write? He wrote that he was going to take as large a mortgage as he could get. Reason? "Only those people fare well who borrow; people who save cannot keep up with inflation."

Here we find an attitude which appears to be contrary to what the Lord teaches us in the above-quoted texts. It is the same attitude as displayed by someone who postpones paying what he owes to the Church, because then he can use it to make more money; he will pay when it has served him for as long as he thought it necessary.

When you have it, pay it: do not withhold from your neighbour any good thing to which he has a right if you are in a condition to do him this good. Do not say, "Come back for it another day", while thinking at the same time, "Then I can pay with 'cheaper' dollars!"

The Greek translation of the Old Testament adds the

following words, "For you do not know what the next day will bring forth." How do you know whether you will be *able* to pay what your neighbour has a right to, if you live off your future earnings?

If capital goods cannot be paid for right away, there is at least a realistic value present to offset the debt. That cannot be said of consumer goods and services.

In the "good old days" - which were not so good after all - when the milkman and the butcher, the baker and the grocer still came to the door to sell and deliver their wares, it happened frequently that a housewife called from kitchen

or upstairs, "I'll pay you tomorrow for I am too busy now." That was in conflict with the above words from the Proverbs.

Pay it if you have it.

Your neighbour may need it; you don't have a right to it.

That is an attitude which is pleasing to the Lord.

It applies to everything in life.

Let us, also in this respect, prove that we are "of a different spirit".

vO

Israel - Its Past, Present, And Future

9. PROPHECY REGARDING ISRAEL'S FUTURE: ISAIAH

In this article we'll try to say something about the message of him who is known as "the king among the prophets": Isaiah. Since the matter of Israel's future is dealt with at great length by this prophet and because it is not my intention to make this series of articles too extensive, I'll just touch on the main points, and do so by following the summary presented by Dr. P.A. Verhoef in his doctoral dissertation (see the 6th article in this series, *Clarion*, Feb. 22). If anyone among the subscribers of our magazine is interested in some more details about a specific text and its exegesis, please let him write a letter and let me know so that either in this series or in another I can go further into the matter.

It was radical critics who since the beginning of the previous century drew the attention to the *discrepancies* existing between the actual fulfilment of a prophecy and the terms in which they were expressed. They arrived or rather jumped to the conclusion that the prophets had been mistaken in their predictions, because what had been predicted should have been fulfilled to the letter, for otherwise they were not fulfilled at all. To the well-known critical O.T. scholar Prof. Kuenen in Leiden, who wrote a book on the Prophets a century ago, in 1875, it was not so much predictions as exhortations that the prophets intended to give. The prophets had a restricted outlook and what happened in the future was beyond their ken. Their words were expressions of that which a certain prophet believed. That is why so many were

unfulfilled; and a fulfilment in successive stages, what we call a prophetic perspective, was completely out of the picture, according to those critics. And the New Testament authors were wrong in making references to the O.T. The factor of the INSPIRATION BY THE HOLY SPIRIT was of course left out of consideration.

Chilastic writers, though we may call them orthodox as far as they are willing to submit themselves to the Bible as *the infallible Word of GOD*, somehow or other struggle with that which is basically the same question, stressing the fact that so many predictions were not fulfilled (namely, not in a strictly literal sense, which, in their opinion, only deserves to be called fulfilment). They try to get out of the difficulty by positing after the present era a separate dispensation of a millennial kingdom. They project all predictions appertaining to the future of Israel and the Kingdom of God on the "screen" of this dispensation. They therefore regard the majority of predictions as unfulfilled yet. Prof. Walvoord's book gives ample evidence of it. I now point especially to pages 120 - 128. "According to Isaiah 2:1-4, Jerusalem will be the center of the millennial government," he writes. Is. 9:6, 7, the picture of Is. 11, Is. 16:5 and 24:23 are applied to the millennium, not to forget Is. 35.

Our point of view, Dr. Verhoef says, not only excludes the possibility of error on the part of the prophets, but also implies that the predictions of the O.T. are to be interpreted in the light of the truth of Scripture *as a whole*. Furthermore: WHEN is a prediction fulfilled? Can the fulfilment take place, is it to come about, just

once, or can it extend *over consecutive events*? We cannot make a general rule here. Each prediction must separately be investigated on its own merits.

There are in the book of Isaiah a number of special predictions, the majority of which have been obviously fulfilled (ch. 7:14-16; 8:1-4; 10:12, 25; 17:14; 28:4; 37:7), whereas the fulfilment of others cannot be determined with certainty because of uncertain factors like dates (ch. 16:14; 21:16; 23:15; 32:10) or because of the scant knowledge we have of the historical facts to which the predictions relate (like ch. 7:8b; 21:16). We freely admit our ignorance. So we come across the question of the "unfulfilledness" of all such predictions. Our respect for the authority of God's Word forbids us to decide *arbitrarily* in the last case on the "unfulfilledness" of such prediction. To *our* knowledge they have not been fulfilled. And again what do we mean by "fulfilled"? Fulfilled to the letter in the very time the prophet and his hearers lived? Or in a more figurative way since the prophecy had a wider scope?

Several predictions were expressed by Isaiah as the result of and with regard to the historical situation of his time. I think of prophecies against the heathen nations, first and foremost Assyria. The historical situation in the time of Isaiah was mainly determined by the renewed activity of the Assyrians in the west. Prophecy, being topical and concrete, does not avoid the concrete situation; on the contrary, it is put into the forefront. Critical scholars used to distinguish between prophecies in which Isaiah was sympathetic with Assyria and

others, of later date, in which he took another stand. But this is not putting the question in the right way. It is not the prophet's sympathy which is decisive, but the message he was given from the LORD GOD. For God's sake he had to announce Assyria as the rod of punishment of the LORD, namely as often as Israel had clearly deserved to be punished. On the other hand, and not necessarily at a later time, there were prophecies in which the judgment of the LORD was pronounced over this world power, over the power of Assyria that had been a tool, an instrument, in His hands before.

The salvation predicted to Israel was to come true quite soon. An example is given in the Syro-Ephraimite war, in the prophecy of ch. 7 of the young woman that was to conceive and bear a son and call his name Immanuel. That sign of salvation was to take place that very time; otherwise it did not make sense to the unbelieving king Ahaz who was to be rebuked and admonished by it. That this prophecy has *an unmistakable plus* with regard to the complete fulfilment

we learn from Matthew 1:23. We'll discuss that later on. So beside the forecast of imminent *danger* there is the prophecy of the God who comes to the *rescue*; the God who calls Assyria to a halt. Ch. 10:32; or vs. 17, "The light of Israel will become a fire and his Holy One a flame; and it will burn and devour his thorns and briers in one day." In the same vein is spoken in ch. 29, where Jerusalem is represented as Ariel, that is: the hearth of God, where the altar-fire was kept burning to maintain the covenant relationship between God and the people; which didn't take away that in case of disobedience the city itself might be set ablaze and burnt, whereas on the other hand the enemy, by whom the LORD had His city burnt or besieged, could be burnt by the first coming out of Jerusalem. So the prophet can speak of salvation in view of his own time and we know of many such prophecies that have come true.

However, there are also prophecies of punishment and doom, e.g. Is. 32:9-14, regarding which we may wonder whether and, if so, when those have been fulfilled. I pointed already at the view that in various periods the prophet held radically altered views on the Assyrian world power. During the first period of his activity, he is then thought to have hailed Assyria as a friend, but later the true character of this world power, which was inimical to God, supposedly penetrated the consciousness of the prophet with the result that he pronounced judgment on Assyria from that moment on. Not Isaiah's mood or view was decisive, but the LORD's counsel. However when salvation was granted in his own time, why didn't the prophecy of judgment come true that very time in exactly the same way? Why was not Jerusalem destroyed by the Assyrian as foretold in Ch. 32?

To understand this we should take into consideration the conditional character of the announcement of judgment, through which the judgment after penitence and conversion could be raised. The possibility of repentance is left open to the people: When they call upon the LORD He certainly will hear, and forgive their trespasses. There is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. A Holy God can burn and purify. As in the previous articles we see how important a factor the conditions of the

covenant are. As soon as we think them away, we go astray. Isaiah clearly points out that THE CONDITION par excellence is: FAITH. Ch. 7:9; 30:15.

On the other hand, the complete fulfilment - in so far as it represented a *basic* feature in the threat of the judgment - did, in accordance with the perspective character of the predictions, nevertheless eventually come about. The suspension of the sentence of judgment is actually complete in and with regard to the concrete situation. But this does not exclude the possibility that the judgment - in connection with the continued threat - may again become relevant and eventually find its full realization.

Not that all the "problems" are solved now. Dr. Verhoef points at e.g. ch. 7:18, but we have a trustworthy guideline to go by now. In the predictions concerning other heathen nations serious problems are posed. They have never been fulfilled in a strictly literal sense. And the nations do not exist anymore!! But that does not induce us to try to find a way out by supposing a millennial kingdom in which Moab and Ammon and all the others are to be called into existence again.

For what I remarked about the strictly literal fulfilment is not sufficient ground for regarding the predictions as therefore unfulfilled. We should not forget that the prophecies against the heathen nations *were primarily meant for the nation of the covenant* and therefore find their essential fulfilment as soon as the purpose with the latter has been accomplished. Seemingly this is an easy way out. I freely admit that formerly I myself took such a sceptical view of it. Yet we have here a solution worthy of the name. The prophecy oftentimes does not come true in one single occurrence in a strictly literal way, *but in more events in various stages*. Nay more, a strictly literal fulfilment is in most cases impossible (ch. 13:19f.; 14:9ff.). The predictions found their realization *in consecutive happenings*; then the heathen nations *symbolize* forces antagonistic to God, so that these predictions also show features which typically point to the end of time. So you can find the judgment on Babel, Moab and Edom in so many words placed in connection with the Last Judgment! In so far they contain elements which have not

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event.

yet been fulfilled. Take also into account the style of the hyperbole or prophetic exaggeration. As I said, a literal fulfilment in that case is impossible.

The predictions in which certain heathen nations were included in God's bestowal of mercy, e.g. Egypt in ch. 19:18 - 25 and Tyre in ch. 23:15 - 18, in the first place concern the salvation under the New Covenant, but they also have a direct meaning in certain facts which can be regarded even under the Old Covenant as partial fulfilment.

Returning to the theme of the predictions of judgment and their fulfilment, we have to pay special attention to how they can go together with the promises of a (final) restoration. Do the predictions of judgment reach necessarily further than the time Isaiah aimed at? I can say: they do, and point at the fact that the danger imminent in the days of king Hezekiah was graciously averted by the LORD, in that the then enemy Assyria was struck a heavy blow. But it was not averted anymore when a century later the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar laid siege to Jerusalem and captured the city and destroyed it. Moreover, we see the Day of the LORD at the close of the ages come into the picture in the Book of Isaiah, as with other prophets. So, the prophecy has a wide scope.

The LORD first promised to protect Jerusalem. And He did so for the time being. Yet when the people continues its sinful and idolatrous course, the LORD regrets, or repents - and we should take the word in full earnest - and He has the disaster come, because the people does not repent (anyway, the bulk of the people). It is led into captivity. But now it is the prophecy concerning *the remnant*, the rest that will return, that becomes significant. They were symbolized in Isaiah's little son She'ar Jashub. And its existence was witnessed in the act of that young woman who became pregnant and dared call her son: Immanuel. The promise of restoration is the reverse of the prediction of judgment. The LORD will make his promises made of old come true to the remnant, representing the whole. A remnant will return after the exile. And what is more: a remnant shall return to the LORD. On the one hand we think: Alas, but a remnant. On the other hand we are happy: Yet a remnant! The future looks promising.

And among the remnant even the ten tribes or the northern kingdom was represented (Is. 28:5). It has come true (Ezra 6:17; Luke 2:36). The predicted salvation apparently had been meant for those who escaped (Joel 2:32; Is. 4:2-4). The promises of return clearly relate to the return from the Assyrian-Babylonian exile. And they reach further. It is not the return to their homeland that matters first of all, but their spiritual return to the LORD. The promises of an inward renewal was directly fulfilled in corresponding facts within the framework of the Old Testament, facts which relate especially to the various reform movements before and after the exile, but so much the more in the renewal which arose through Christ's expiatory sacrifice.

For, although I do not go further into the matter right now, we should not forget the predictions which in a narrower or broader sense relate to the work of the Messiah.

What again strikes us is that in all the messianic predictions the promise

is strongly connected with Israel and that the portrayal exhibits an unmistakable Old Testament colouring. This fact is also of importance for the history of fulfilment. The various aspects of the Messianic prophecy should first of all have a real meaning for the national life of Israel. Never overlook: What did the Messiah mean to Israel in those times? The people of Israel, the first hearers, were the first ones concerned. And then you see those wonderful prophecies of Is. 7, 9, and 11 and others reach beyond the boundaries of the Old Covenant and relate intrinsically to the facts of the New Covenant. And for the MESSIAH's sake the working of the Holy Spirit comes into the picture. The great variety of features in the portrayal of the Messiah and His kingdom are by the New Testament concentrated on the focal point of Christ's person and work.

Isn't that the crowning piece on the work of Isaiah, this blessed one among the prophets?

H.M. OHMANN

Dedication of Eben-ezer Church., Chatham

Brothers and Sisters, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The dedication of a new church building is always a happy occasion. For years we met as a congregation in our old church building on St. Clair Street, that for a long time already was too small for us every Sunday again. And not only was it too small, it would also have been dangerous in case of fire. Before we purchased our first church building, the congregation met in the Grand West Hall, where - I have been told - it was unbearably hot in the summer time. Before that time, the congregation was so small that it even met in someone's garage (a picture of that you will see when you take a look in the consistory room tonight).

About 25 years ago our congregation was instituted (March 23, 1950) and now, when we look back upon these 25 years, THANKFULNESS fills our hearts tonight that we can be here on this happy and historic occasion of

the official dedication of our new church building, a building which we all hope will last us and our children several times 25 years to come.

We have been looking forward to this event for a long time. In February 1974 we abandoned our old building and found temporary accommodation in the McNaughton Avenue Public School, just across the street. Meeting in that school was also a privilege, since every Sunday we were able to walk over and see the progress of the building of our new church. I don't think there is any church that has had as many unpaid building inspectors' as our congregation had (and that on Sundays!). But it was good and a pleasure for us as a congregation to be involved that way too. And it made the desire all the greater to have our own church building finished as soon as possible. For even though we appreciated the use of the public school across the street, it was not ideal for our church



services on Sundays. It was usually too warm and the acoustics were not very good either. Singing was rather difficult there, especially without the help of our organ. In addition, there were no babysitting facilities there, neither could we have our regular catechism classes there and Bible study meetings during the week.

We are all thankful to our Eben-ezer School Society for granting us their facilities for babysitting Sunday mornings and for the families that could stay over there between the services and also for the catechism classes that were held on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday and Wednesday evenings. The Eben-ezer School Society provided all this without any charge!, although on some evenings we must have really boosted their heat bill. On behalf of the Consistory and Congregation we want to say: Thank You!

And now - all of a sudden - these problems and inconveniences are over! And nobody regrets it. Already in December we began to use our church building and we really enjoyed it. We can sing better again and even the organ sounds much better here than ever before.

After 25 years we now have a beautiful building that is very practical for all the work to be done on Sundays and during the week.

Indeed, the official dedication of our Eben-ezer Church building is a happy and festive occasion. It reminds us of another dedication! One of which we read in the Bible, in the Old

Testament, in 1 Kings 8 and 2 Chron. 5, namely the official opening of the Temple of the LORD built by Solomon.

I would like to point out a few aspects of the dedication of the Temple in Jerusalem that are also relevant for us today.

It was a great event for Israel to officially dedicate that beautiful temple of Solomon. For centuries Israel had only the tabernacle which was moved from place to place till finally King David brought the tabernacle to Jerusalem. Although David wanted to build a permanent house for the Lord, it was his son Solomon who was allowed to build that temple.

We feel already happy about the opening of this building and we can imagine how happy the people of Israel must have felt and how excited when they were ready to dedicate their beautiful temple.

But then something strange happened. The priests carried the Ark of the Covenant (which contained the two tables of stone with the Covenant Law of Israel's Covenant God) into the temple and when the priests came out of the Holy Place, then the Cloud of the LORD filled the temple so that as a result the priests could not stand to minister because of the Cloud, for the GLORY of the LORD had filled the house of the Lord.

Imagine: at the moment when the priests are ready to commence their work in the temple, for which moment Israel had waited for so many years, at *that* long expected moment,

they are **DRIVEN OUT** of the temple by the Cloud of the Glory of the Lord. The Lord Himself, who had appointed the priests, is the one who now makes it quite impossible for his office bearers to do their priestly work. At *that* moment, when nobody expects it, the Lord Himself pushes his people out of his temple. The Lord Himself eliminates them all. The priests are now even able to stand to minister!

The priests, who are all ready for *action*, have now become *in-active*, unable to minister. And that at the moment when they really want to start! Is that not strange? Is that not disappointing? Is that what we would expect the Lord to do? Is the Lord then not happy to see the priests ready for their service? No, this is the way it should be! For what happens really? As soon as the priests come out of the Holy Place, the LORD HIMSELF TAKES POSSESSION of the Temple before the priests can start their work! Before anyone can officially dedicate the temple, the Lord Himself takes possession of it. Before Israel can 'hand over' the temple building, the Lord comes and takes possession of it by the Cloud of his Glory. The Lord does that all by Himself. He shows and teaches the people: I am really and truly going to dwell in this temple as *My House*. I am going to live here. I approve of this building and accept it as *My residence* on earth. And I do not need anyone for that. God shows that He is independent. He does not depend on man, not on the service of the priests either. Therefore He *eliminates* the priests and drives them out! And this is not something new! For this happened also (Exodus 40:34, 35) when Moses had finished building the tabernacle; then a *cloud* covered the tent of the congregation and the *glory* of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of the congregation because the Cloud abode on it and because the Glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

God had taken possession of the tabernacle also in the same way; before anyone could dedicate it to Him. God even eliminated His servant Moses. Israel cannot offer the tabernacle or the temple to the Lord. The Lord accepts it and takes possession of it as His own work. The Lord takes all the honour for Himself! When God comes down with His glory to dwell in His House, no man can stand before

Him. Even the office bearers cannot minister before the Lord.

By whom will the temple be dedicated? Not by the people and not by the service of the priests, but by the gracious presence of the Lord Himself. He is the one who consecrates His house to Himself and for His service. The people and their priests are excluded by the Lord. They have nothing to add or contribute. The Lord is the first one to act here. With all the service of the priests, the temple is nothing but an empty house if the Lord Himself does not dwell in it. And therefore the Lord occupies that house in the same visible way He took possession of the tabernacle. God's people must before anything else learn: *we cannot offer God a house to live in. We have nothing to offer. We are never the first one in the work of reconciliation. We cannot work our own salvation and the priests cannot do it for us. It is the LORD who does it! He is the first one - we are eliminated. But only in order that we should be all involved again in all the work in God's House, in all our work of THANKFULNESS. Our service to God is a service of GRATITUDE for God's dwelling with us.*

Now we are dedicating our church building tonight. But only *after* we have learned from the dedication of the temple. This church building is not a temple itself. We cannot say: God dwells in this church building the same way as He did in the tabernacle and the temple. No, it is much greater than that. For God has come to dwell among us in His Son Jesus Christ, Who is our Immanuel, our 'God with us'. The Lord has made his *congregation* his house, his holy temple. He now dwells in the midst of his congregation in the Holy Spirit whom



Rev. M.C. Werkman and Mrs. R. VanAndel in front of the new church building. The date stone was unveiled by Mrs. VanAndel.

Christ has poured out upon his Church on the day of Pentecost. And that is greater and more wonderful, that God dwells in us in Jesus Christ and in his Holy Spirit. But that makes it also more serious for us. For He is still the same LORD, the same HOLY God, great in GLORY. And He teaches us today: that He does not need us in his work of salvation. We have nothing to offer God. Nothing? Not even this beautiful church building tonight? We have worked so hard for it all year. Are we now going to end on a negative note?

Yes, we may dedicate this building, but only *after* we have learnt that God first *eliminates, excludes* His people in order to make them all involved, all included in all the work to be done in this church building on Sundays and during the week.

We do not dedicate this church building as a temple, for we ourselves as a congregation, as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, are a HOUSE OF

God, a TEMPLE of the LORD. And not only on Sundays but every day of the week! And so we dedicate this building out of great THANKFULNESS that the Lord has taken possession of US ourselves, as a congregation. Therefore we dedicate this building to the Lord, who dwells by his Holy Spirit in us, as living stones in the temple of our God.

And in dedicating this church building to the Lord, we now offer OURSELVES, dedicate OURSELVES to God, out of gratitude for the indwelling of Jesus Christ and His Holy Spirit in us. And when we so dedicate ourselves to the Lord, we will use this building the right way: as a WORKSHOP; working hard on Sundays with the preaching of the Word, in the catechism classes and the Bible study societies.

Why? In order to show ourselves thankful to God!

We take thankful possession of this building in the knowledge that God has taken possession of *us* in Jesus Christ and in the knowledge that our Covenant God now claims our *whole life as temple service* to our Holy and Glorious LORD. May all the work that we by the grace of the Lord and that our future generations will do in this building, be to the GLORY of the LORD our God, till the day that Christ will come again and God will be all in all!

M.C. WERKMAN

Note: *The dedication ceremony took place on Jan. 24, 1975. Rev. Werkman's address was recently submitted along with the pictures that appear in this issue. They are the work of John Holsappel, Chatham.*



Esteemed Young People

[An address to the visitors of the 1973 "Schooldag" in Kampen, The Netherlands.]

Esteemed brothers and sisters, the title of my speech might very well serve as an address to all of you. One who is still young enough to make the trip to the "Schooldag", deserves, along with all other visitors, to hear the bright address, "Esteemed young people".

Yet, the title is not meant that way. Today I would like to speak to this Schooldag's older and younger people *about* youth. It will then be about the juveniles that are respected, young people that deserve to be held in esteem.

My use of those three words may seem somewhat superfluous nowadays. Aren't all young people respected, regardless? And aren't all juveniles held in high esteem, regardless?

We live in a time that yields to youth. Youth councils are asked for advice. Highschool and university students are being stimulated to have a say in matters, to participate. Long-haired juveniles are deferentially invited by the cabinet minister to discuss things.

At the bottom of it is an outlook on life. Young people are not politically involved yet. They are still free and not entangled in society's structures. That's exactly why they must speak up. They can speak redeeming words which break the power of the past and open up a future. A generation that is wilting because of unbelief, has set its hope on the dew of youth. Thus young people are, in advance, esteemed.

One who is familiar with the Bible, knows that at that time things were different. In former times first of all the older people were respected. One had to listen to them and their wisdom showed ways to the future. In the Bible it is even considered a disaster when the young have to set the fashion, "Woe to you, O land, when your king is a child" (Ecclesiastes 10:16). The elders are listened to in Israel.

Against this background we understand, too, that it must have been considered strange that our Saviour dared to speak with such severity, whereas He was only young yet: a good thirty years old. At one point the Jews in fact say: "You are not yet fifty years old, and have you seen Abraham?" (John 8:57). In this remark a certain disdain for all people under fifty is apparent: youth is held in contempt!

If we keep this in mind, it seems very modern and revolutionary when Paul writes to Timothy, "Let no one despise your youth" (I Timothy 4:12). For a moment we get the impression that Paul does away with the preference for the older ones and preaches the absolute equality of young and old. That impression is conveyed very strongly in the more modern translation, "Let no one slight you because you are young".

Doesn't age matter in the church? Is Paul giving young people the freedom to act as if they are the elders? In our time especially, this word of the apostle may be used easily as an argument in favour of the current respect for the word of youth.

However, before we apply this brief statement to the present time, it is necessary to read it in context. It is striking that Paul does not address himself to the elders or to the whole congregation with this statement. He does not write, "Congregation, older brothers and sisters, you ought

not to hold Timothy in contempt because of his age". On the contrary, Paul addresses Timothy himself. Let no one despise *your* youth. Timothy must take care of that. The young man must make sure himself that he will not be despised. Youth is not respected by Paul, regardless. But he urges young people to indeed make sure that they *can* be esteemed.

This becomes even clearer when we read what follows, ". . . but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity". Do not bring disdain on yourself, *but* set an example. By putting it this way, it is evident that young people who do not set the believers an example, are not worthy of respect either. Not the one who is of age has a say in matters, but the mature believer may put in a word.

Paul clearly shows that a youthful age in church *may* be a reason for lower esteem, and that one's youth, in the church too, can tell against him. Christianity is not a children's crusade. Children, therefore, must show that they are young knights, before they can be seriously reckoned with when it comes to battle.

The man whom Paul is addressing, must be between 20 and 35 years old. An age that is hardly considered young nowadays. But in the Bible a clear distinction is made between the generation that stands at the front lines, the older people, and the generation which is still hiding behind them, the youngsters and the juveniles. Timothy may not be a teenager, he is still young. The Bible does not make people old as fast as the world does! But by the same token it means that the Bible wants us to know our proper place. A young person ought not to desire to be an elder. But he may and must acquire esteem by his behaviour and conduct in the church.

Timothy was one of Paul's helpers. When the apostle departed from Ephesus, he left Timothy behind there. He had the task to refute, on behalf of the apostle, men who would come with deviating teachings. Timothy must fight heresy and the lie by advocating strongly the truth of the gospel. He must remonstrate with the brothers that everything God made in this world is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving and consecrated by prayer and an obedient walk. Paul had just explained this in the part which precedes the text about Timothy's youth.

In I Timothy 4:11 Paul then states, "Command and teach these things". He has in mind what we just referred to. But now he stresses that *commanding*. Timothy is not called upon to discuss or to talk people into the gospel by means of personal testimonies or words of recommendation. The gospel is not something that must be sold. The gospel has too much dignity for that. The gospel has to be preached as a command to believe. Indeed, the Bible never speaks of willingness to believe, but it does speak of obedience of faith. Faith is going to obey the gospel, knows that we must believe. That is why the gospel must be brought with the command of faith and repentance. That is the key in which these words are presented to Timothy: "Command and teach these things".

Timothy may be young, but the word he brings, originates with the eternal God. Therefore Timothy may not allow himself youthful non-commitment or seemingly amia-

“Do Not Lend Your Tongue to the Devil”

Recently I picked up an old Dutch commentary on the epistles of Paul to Timothy.

Since this happened at Calvin Library it is most likely that the book used to be the property of a minister who could read Dutch.

I have been told that many a minister-emeritus donates his Dutch books to the library of Calvin Seminary, and that when this institution has already a copy of a certain book the other one is sold - and I can assure our readers: It is true what another visitor told me; he was at the same time looking at the shelves and must have noticed that I was interested in Dutch books; for he said to me: “Het-is niet-duur-hier”. (things are not expensive here).

When I was browsing through the book a piece of paper fell out from among the pages.

It contained some notes made by the previous owner of the book.

Apparently he had to apply Paul's teachings in I Timothy 5:19 to a certain situation in which he as a minister was involved.

His notes may be useful for our own days.

Therefore I quote them without any further comment.

Here they are:

Timothy should not take into account any accusation w.o. [without] 2 or 3 witnesses.

He should [to be read: see; or: consider?] the office in the office bearers.

An elder or leader is exposed to accusation.

Even tho they be irreproachable and are exemplary in every way, the jealousy tries to estrange the congregation thru suspicion.

Many demand perfection in an office bearer, and if they do not find this, they are apt to seek sinful motives behind these weaknesses.

Evil is apt to be believed.

The devil cooperates: for if he has deprived man of his honor, he also deprived him of his authority.

The devil likes to make the church what he is himself, accuser of the brethren.

Do not lend you tongue to the devil.

G. VANRONGEN
(Pro Ecclesia, Grand Rapids)

Church News

Declined:

REV. M. NAP

at Eindhoven, The Netherlands declined the call extended to him by the Church of Neerlandia in combination with the Church of Barrhead.

Called and Accepted:

REV. CL. STAM

of Langeslag, The Netherlands accepted the call extended to him by Rehoboth Church, Burlington, Ont.

Accepted:

REV. A.H. DEKKER

of Lincoln has accepted the call extended to him by the Free Reformed Church of Launceston, Tasmania, Australia.

OUR COVER

Eben-Ezer Church, Chatham, Ont. Photo by John Holsappel.

ble modesty. When bringing the gospel, he must deferentially pass on a *command* of God.

This characterization of Timothy's work is of importance for our time. There still is much *talk* about and in connection with the Bible. Much preaching and evangelization is still carried on. But we are in danger of getting used to it that this all is being done *without* the gravity of the *command* to believe and *without* the serious call to repentance.

In the church of the Lord it must be different. When young people want to give themselves to the work of home mission, they must be careful that they, in youthful caution, do not make the gospel a topic of discussion, they themselves acting as a lawyer pleading in its behalf. No matter how the congregation spreads the gospel, it always must be done with an urgent appeal and demand to repent and believe.

When young people apply to become, through study and training, a servant of the LORD, they must realize that they will be able to help people but that this "helping of people" can only be exercised rightly in a way which often is not agreeable to people: by admonition and urgent exhortation. Also within the church the danger is threatening that the office of preacher degenerates to one of the forms of human relief work, and that it is desired for that reason. One who wishes to become a minister must be well aware of the fact that his work may not always come across as the "helping of people". For people by nature want the floor themselves and they want to be listened to

endlessly. If it really comes down to it, people do not want to be silenced and to be compelled to listen to God's commands.

Not the expectation pattern of the world around us or of the people in the church may determine the performance of the minister's duties. Only God's Word is conclusive in that regard. He says to young people like Timothy who are allowed to propagate the gospel, "*Command* and teach these things".

That's the way we must work.

And exactly for that reason age may enter the picture. People love to carry on discussions about the church and about the Bible with unbiased young people. Members of the congregation like to have a chat with that young minister some evening. But as soon as it becomes clear that these young people do not walk into the trap of a discussion, but simply and without beating about the bush, on behalf of the LORD, summon unto faith and repentance, then all of a sudden their youth is experienced as something unfavourable: What gives you the nerve to act as if you know everything? And when that young minister exercises his office by pointing out sins that are hidden as skeletons in the closet, then it is all of a sudden: What does he think he is, the young whipper-snapper?

J. VAN BRUGGEN

(To be continued.)

Translated from the September 29, 1973, issue of De Reformatie, by Ewoud Gosker. Dr. Van Bruggen is on the faculty of the "Theologische Hogeschool" in Kampen.

news medley

Yes, our new Yearbook is here! Everyone who wishes to have the latest information about the Churches can find it now. Can he?? Surprisingly, there are three Churches whose membership is **exactly** the same as last year. Do you believe in miracles? I do, too, but not in this case. I would rather assume that the correct number simply has still to be figured out and that the publisher of the yearbook did not receive the latest information in this respect. And again there are Churches that have to pay for those things which require a "per communicant member" contribution according to their present membership which they dutifully reported for the Yearbook, whereas there are other Churches who just pay the same as last year even though their membership may have gone up. That is not fair. It also gives a wrong picture of the total membership and the eventual growth or decline. We did grow but not much percentage wise, about 2¼ percent. In reality it may be more. I hope sincerely that the next Yearbook will receive the cooperation of everyone and that it can come with **reliable** figures, not just a repetition of last year's or a rounded-off number which is based on guesswork. Further, I do not understand it, no really, I don't, why the postal codes have not been added by those who filled out the papers for this new edition of our Yearbook. Many members have had their postal code now for several years, but in many cases I have to look it up in the Directory for the Ontario Postal Code - I do not have one for the other parts of the country - and this could have been prevented if everyone had taken the (little) trouble of writing his postal code down when asked by the Clerk of the Consistory or the Minister to give name and address for the information requested for the Yearbook. Could we improve on this next year?

There is more, and happier, news, fortunately. Although I am amazed at the decision of Classis Alberta/Manitoba to appoint a committee to study the question whether the Classis has a task in the training of local office-bearers. I am not only amazed, I am flabbergasted that a committee had to be appointed for that: Article 30 of the Church Order seems to be no longer there, or it is not clear any longer. The proposal should have been wiped off the table right away!

Now don't think that I am becoming a cranky old man. I see here grave dangers for the Churches if things go into this direction. That's why I raise my voice. Let us watch out for our lives' sakes that the Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ be not led on the way towards a hierarchical development; let us remain Reformed!

Now the happier news.

We are living in the days of "celebrations". We mentioned Lethbridge or Coaldale the other time already; now we learn that Chatham had a get-together on April 14 to commemorate the institution of Chatham as a Protestant Reformed Church on March 23, 1950. The Rev. M.C. Werkman writes very appropriately: "There may be some difference of opinion as to whether it was right to join the Protestant Reformed Churches in 1950, while we knew that they were teaching and preaching certain views on the

Covenant that we had been liberated from in the 1940's. However, with all sorts of accusations of being narrow-minded, etc., as Reformed churches, we may be thankful that as Reformed people we tried at least to unite with others until the true unity was broken up by binding decisions from a synod of the Protestant Reformed Churches, when they issued the 'Declaration of Principles'. As Reformed churches we want to be one with all those who indeed subscribe to the Three Forms of Unity and we do not want to bind each other to private opinions or personal views."

Another Church that is preparing for a twenty-fifth "anniversary" is the one at Edmonton. There a Committee has been formed that tries to form a fund for . . . yes, for what? That is their problem. Some suggest to purchase a new Revised Standard Version pulpit Bible, which will cost the tidy sum of \$150.00; others think of a stainless steel sign "Canadian Reformed Church". It is a pity that the "yard" of the Edmonton Church does not lend itself for a sign such as Hamilton has, for that would be a nice "birthday present". However, I am certain that the brethren and sisters in Edmonton will find something suitable.

They have their problems there, though! You will recall the joy with which they received their organ. After having enjoyed it for some time they are back to their previous instrument. Reason? Approximately eighty pipes were out of commission, the organists could at times press several keys down without getting a sound, whereas in other cases they got lots of sound without even touching any key. That is caused by the drying out of the wood and other parts. Before being installed, the organ had been stored for four to six months to become acclimatized, so to speak: the climate is different on the prairies from what it is in British Columbia, where the organ came from. Everything was fine until the furnaces started to make themselves felt. Then the trouble started. Southern British Columbia has a more moderate climate than Edmonton: you don't need a humidifier in winter or a dehumidifier in summer; it does not have the extremes which cause wood to shrink so that leakage occurs. (Some people make the nasty and incorrect statement that it rains so much in B.C.! You should see the snow piled up on the Churtyard here in Fergus on Thursday, April 3rd, 1975!!) Now various measures have been suggested which in all likelihood will cure the ills of Edmonton's organ for good. We'll keep you informed.

From Edmonton to Calgary is not so far. Let's mention from Calgary that a Young People's Society has been formed and that they approached several brothers whether they would become advisers. I have not heard something like that before, but it seems like an excellent thing to me. More than once I have heard our societies being criticized for their lack of good leaders. It appears to be very wise what the Calgary young people did: ask some of the older ones to advise them on a regular basis.

We stay in the West for some time.

Chilliwack decided to approach the next Classis to receive support with a view to the calling of a minister. That is a gratifying development and we express the wish that they may be able to fulfil their plans.

Abbotsford discussed the question whether they should continue having one Dutch service per month or change it all to English. It was decided for the time being to leave it as is.

The decision by the United States to have Daylight

Saving Time begin earlier than is the case in Canada creates problems for the Abbotsford Church. In order to divide the burdens equally, they advanced the starting times of the services and of catechism classes one half hour until Canada, too, is on Daylight Saving Time; then it will become normal again.

Cloverdale struggles with the problem of overpopulation. Now, understand me well: this refers to the number of seats available in the auditorium over against the total membership of the Cloverdale Church. Since January 1, 1968, the membership increased by some 200. The number of those attending the services or able to attend the services is about 415; but they have only a seating capacity 327!! Thus they have been pondering the question whether having four services per Sunday and thus splitting the Congregation in half would be a solution. No decision has been made as yet. It would, of course, be a solution; but the experience is that the two halves of the Congregation more or less become separate Churches; and that's what it will be in the long run (or the short run, who knows?).

New Westminster decided to some changes in liturgy. The Congregation is requested to remain standing till after the first song during the morning services. In the afternoon services the Congregation will remain standing for a longer time: after the benediction and the first song the minister will first read part of the Scriptures; the Congregation then professes their faith by singing Hymn 45. They are seated after that. Something different.

As for general "Valley news", the Deacons had a conference where Mr. J. DeHaas introduced the topic "Is the Office of a Deacon Obsolete Today?" The Ladies Auxiliary "Orange Aid" planned a Chicken/Ham dinner and also was to have a stand in Guildford Shopping Center, as they had before. The Senior Citizens Home Inc. was told that the Board had been very busy visiting all sorts of institutions in this field, conferring with officials, and discussing the question whether they should propose a "big" or a "small" complex, whether it should be single-

multi-storied, whether it should contain separate suites, etcetera. Further, whether they should let other people in too or not. Generally speaking, the bigger the cheaper percentage-wise, as I understand it. If it were possible to leave part unfinished, I would be in favour of erecting the shell right away. But perhaps I wrote about this before; I cannot recall all my good remarks (Some conceit!). Just this week I read a remark made by President Ford that after some time the one half of the population will support the other half. Sometimes I wonder whether it is not so already right now! However, let me be careful; I just mailed my Tax return and expect to receive a healthy tip back.

With this we leave the Valley and magically find ourselves in Ontario.

In the Rehoboth bulletin (Burlington) I found an invitation to those interested in starting a Camera Club to contact the one who published that note. I pass this on, because there may be some in other parts of the country who would like to do the same thing or who would like to benefit from the Burlington experience. As soon as something definite is published, I will let you know.

Ebenezer Church published a little pamphlet to distribute to neighbours and others with whom the members might come into contact. This little folder informs the reader about some particulars of the Canadian Reformed Churches in general and about the activities in Ebenezer Church specifically. A letter was added to it. The bulletin contained this warning: "Never hand over some printed material with a close-lipped mouth!" The intention is clear: written material may be a good starting point, but it can never replace the personal approach. It may be the door through which one gains entry into the home of a stranger: it must be the person himself who enters via that door.

I hope that also in this medley you have seen me enter your door. Thus we close with a personal greeting.

Yours, vO

press review

DR. ARNTZEN APPEALS TO HIS FORMER CONGREGATION TO FOLLOW HIM

In January of this year Rev. Dr. M.J. Arntzen decided to end his ministry in the Reformed Church (outside-the-federation) of Breukelen, The Netherlands, and to join the Reformed Churches (within-the-federation). In an article in NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD of January 28 the following motives were stated:

Dr. Arntzen has declared he could not agree with the method, the pace and the effectuation in which the Reformed churches

(outside-the-federation) have to come to an orderly ecclesiastical living together and to an appearing in unity of confessing and of maintaining the Reformed confession in the confederation of the-federation). The minister especially objects to the missing of a binding advice to the prospective ministers (students) of the Reformed churches (outside-the-federation) to study at a Reformed theological seminary. He also objects to granting preaching consent to a number of theological candidates who do not

accept the confessions unequivocally.

Moreover, Rev. Arntzen is troubled by the slow pace in which his consistory's decision of September 1973 to strive for a merger of the two congregations, together with the consistory of the congregation (within-the-federation), is put into effect.

As the reader may know, Dr. Arntzen first had been a minister in the synodical Reformed churches, from 1944 to 1971. He fought against the liberal course in which these churches went, until he experienced that it was impossible to be a Reformed minister in their midst. He then, in 1971, joined the churches outside-the-federation. In NEDERLANDS DAGBLAD of February 22 we are informed that Dr. Arntzen wrote an appeal to his former congregation in Breukelen to follow him. This

appeal was, at the same time, the rendering of an account of his step, because "there were misunderstandings about it and a lack of understanding with respect to his deepest motives." We read:

The minister of Breukelen writes that he, compelled by necessity, could not continue his ministry anymore. Minister and consistory have to look to it that no wrong doctrine is introduced in the congregation - according to him - and also for Breukelen this danger is not imaginary. "Gladly we acknowledge that the consistory of Breukelen is fully reformed in doctrine. Nevertheless, the question is whether this council shows it sufficiently in its deeds." The consistory has to take measures - says Dr. Arntzen - that no unscriptural doctrine is introduced in the congregation. "And in this respect I missed the support of the consistory. That is why things went wrong. Not because your minister held the office in low esteem and so in irritation ended his service because of some disagreement or other. That is said and though too easily. It was precisely the highness and holiness of the office that I stood up for. And therefore the consistory compelled me to go."

Dr. Arntzen next gives an ample description of the situation of the Reformed churches (outside-the-federation), from which it is clear, according to him, that he could not act otherwise than he did. The minister is of the opinion that with respect to these churches one can not speak of "fully Reformed churches". Also, not all the office bearers take the Reformed confessions seriously.

To give some insight into the precarious situation, he mentions some recent incidents. Among other things: "A theological student, who received consent to preach in these churches, delivered a very horizontalistic sermon at his examination before the delegates of the churches in the province of Utrecht; and he declared that he would abide in the way of what is confessed in the Three Forms of Unity. That is totally different from straightforwardly and without any reservation placing himself behind the

Reformed confessions. Nonetheless the regional meeting was satisfied with this declaration."

Ample attention is also given by Dr. Arntzen to the, according to him, wrong development with respect to the theological education in the churches outside-the-federation. In this connection he points at the dangers of studying at the Free University and the 'Rijks' - university in Utrecht and at the negation of the so-called Apeldoorn - advice.

This advice was that theological students should go to the Theological Seminary of the Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken at Apeldoorn.

He has not many good words for the "study guidance" from within the churches outside-the-federation for theological students studying at neutral universities. "In this way it will go wrong with the churches. Also those churches which, at this moment, still more or less plainly stand for the Reformed confession, will later on be turned around with relatively little trouble. By going along, they will not be able to resist in the long run. There is resistance with words, but not with the deed, against the chaotic conditions in the churches. If God does not prevent it, also Breukelen will not be able to resist.

Regarding the binding to the confession in the Reformed churches (outside-the-federation) Dr. Arntzen remarks among other things: "At the general meeting in November 1974 they bound themselves to the so-called preamble. Not without cause was the old formulation as established by the synod of Dort, 1618/19, changed and weakened in this preamble. The synod of Dort demanded the declaration that the Three Forms of Unity are in agreement with the Word of God in all things. But in the preamble they declare that in the confession of the truth of the Holy Scripture as expressed in the Three Forms of Unity they find their unity and their basis of fellowship. It is obvious that here it is not at all acknowledged that the confession is in agreement with the Word of God in everything. The Bible is expressed in the confession. How? Defective-

ly? With faults? In old-fashioned language and with obsolete concepts with which we cannot do much anymore today? All these possibilities are left open.

In the churches outside-the-federation it is defended that doctrinal discipline is only allowed when the substance of the gospel is touched, when the most vital parts ('de alleronderste delen') of the gospel are denied". You will understand that in practice it then becomes totally impossible ever to exercise doctrinal discipline."

Dr. Arntzen points out further that many "calmly read TROUW, vote for the ARP or the CDA, without scruples of conscience read revolutionary papers, which preferably give the floor to neo-modern theologians". "If only they were very concerned in that party. But we have the strong impression that the "concerned" people of the Anti-Revolutionary Party are not found in the circles of the churches outside-the-federation".

The minister of Breukelen further declares that also already in 1971, when he joined the churches outside-the-federation, he saw wrong tendencies, "but that it was that bad, I did not know". "It became more and more clear to me that in their thinking it was not a matter of reaction here but that, as a well-considered stand, it was a matter of having reservations with regard to the confession of the church".

The reproach was made that he was called to be shepherd of the local church at Breukelen and that he stressed too much what happened in other churches. To this, Dr. Arntzen replies that Breukelen also is susceptible to bad influences. "That also in the congregation at Breukelen there is the awareness that we do not live on a 'safe island', appears also from the fact that I was asked many times by members of the consistory or by others: "What about the congregation when you are no longer here, because of retirement or otherwise?". Is it not an unhealthy situation when the confessional position of the congregation has to depend on the minister who

happens to be there? It ought to be known of every one of the ministers who can be asked to conduct the services, who can be called, that he completely takes his stand behind the confession. And, alas, of many we do not know this."

In the "account" he gives of his actions, Dr. Arntzen includes the entire letter which he wrote to the consistory on January 1 of this year and in which the proposal was contained "to uphold communion only with those churches and office bearers who, with us, want to accept the Holy Scriptures as God's infallible Word, and who want to maintain without abridgement the binding to the confession." The consistory, so writes Dr. Arntzen now, did not want to go into the matter. They wanted to continue in their line.

According to Dr. Arntzen, the merger talks with the consistory within-the-federation also played a big role in the conflict between him and the consistory. These talks had led to the decision of September 1973, made by both consistories, that they would strive after merger of the two congregations. "Everyone present at that meeting knew that in effect this meant that we as consistory outside-the-federation would join the churches within-the-federation."

When the congregation was informed about this, there was strong opposition, mostly of an emotional or personal character, according to Dr. Arntzen. The enthusiasm of the consistory seemed to be considerably cooled off after this: "The brethren who before were so diligently advocating the merger talks and so clearly made known their desire for reunion, were more and more reserved when deeds were required and eventually took one line with those who fiercely opposed a reunion from the beginning."

Finally, Dr. Arntzen appeals to his former congregation to follow him on his way of joining the Reformed Churches within-the-federation. "It is there that also your place is, congregation. It is there that also the office bearers belong. It is there that the

sheep are nourished in the green pastures of the Word of God. It is there that one does not have to spend endless hours of precious time at consistory meetings on all sorts of questions concerning the confession and its authority. The confession is there to be confessed in the churches. And not to be discussed. Basically it is an act of obedience that is the point at issue: where does the Lord gather a congregation which

responds to the norms as they are mentioned in art. 29 of the Belgic Confession", according to Dr. Arntzen.

It is our sincere hope that many may follow him. And that his "act of obedience" will open the eyes of many. That possible obstacles on the way back may be done away with, and so the unity of brethren in faith may be served.

J. GEERTSEMA

Letters-to-the-Editor

Dear Sir,

May I call a subject to the attention of the brethren and sisters in Ontario and in the State of Michigan? More and more of the Church members take a trip to Florida for a short or long break. How and where is the Lord's Day spent out there? From some I hear that they attend the services of "another denomination". This way the "oecumene" slips back in by the backdoor; often it was sent out through the frontdoor. It can even crawl back in under the window-screens if we are not careful! Who can forecast how big a percentage of the new generation is going to the "Sunny South" for holidays in the future? The establishing (and publishing) of a permanent contact address over there should be sought, so that worship services can be arranged.

"Where two or three are gathered in My name . . ."

W.H. DEVRIES
Fergus, Ontario

Dear Mr. Editor

I will make a remark about the matter of appointing delegates to the major assemblies. I would not do that before Synod commenced, because I wanted to avoid the impression of stirring up some agitation.

I could hardly believe my own eyes when I read the acts of the Regional Synod of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Western Canada, held on May 8 and 9, 1974, at New Westminster.

I refer to Art. 25, paragraph g, of the acts: delegates to the General Synod 1974 to be held in Toronto. It appears from this that all the eight delegates were members of the Regional Synod.

Well, formally it is all right; neither Scripture nor Church Order forbids it, but whether it is acting wisely is quite another matter.

A council avoids as much as possible the nomination for the office of elder or deacon of those who are too closely related for instance,

father and son, or two brothers. Although it is not forbidden by any church rule, is it always a matter of consideration to see whether there are very close relationships.

Brothers delegated to major assemblies in matters of appeal are asked to be judges in the matters brought up by appellants. At the Regional Synod at New Westminster there were appeals from members of the Churches of Edmonton and New Westminster. It could be expected that out of the mentioned Churches letters of appeal about the same matters would be forwarded to the General Synod at Toronto (and so it happened). But at General Synod, the eight delegates from Western Canada who had to be judges in the appeals forwarded to General Synod, had been judges in the Regional Synod West already.

This phenomenon is unknown in secular justice. When an appeal is granted, no judge of the lower court is also judge in the higher court.

But someone may say that ecclesiastical justice is quite a different thing from secular justice. Well, I don't agree with the Dutch professor who said: Ecclesiastical justice! much church (ecclesia) but little justice (Kerkrecht! veel kerk maar weinig recht). Ecclesiastical justice has to be *justice* also. I had not any doubt about the integrity of the delegated brothers, but is there not the danger of being prejudiced?

For ministers to be delegated, well, the choice is not very abundant. However; in my opinion it was not very wise to delegate the minister of a church involved in the forwarded appeals; it was possible to delegate another minister for the sake of avoiding the appearance of all evil. As for the elders, it was possible to delegate four other elders than the four members of the Regional Synod.

I hope that in the future a more selective way of voting for delegates may be practised.

H. VANBOSTELEN Smithers, B.C.

PRESS RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE of the Classical Meeting of the Canadian Reformed Churches in Alberta and Manitoba, held on March 11 and 12, 1975, at Calgary, in the building of the Christian Reformed Church, 36 Ave. S.E.

ART. 1
Opening. On behalf of the convening church at Calgary the Rev. R.F. Boersema opens the meeting. He welcomes delegates and visitors.

ART. 2
Examination of Credentials. The delegates of the church at Barrhead report that the credentials are in good order. The churches at Coaldale and Edmonton have an instruction.

ART. 3
Constitution. Classis is constituted. As officers serve: the Rev. R.F. Boersema, chairman; the Rev. D. DeJong, clerk; the Rev. J. Geertsema, vice-chairman.

The chairman now reads 2 Tim. 3 and leads in prayer. He requests the meeting to sing Psalm 138:1 and 2. An official word of welcome is spoken. He voices the thankfulness to the Lord that no calamities struck one of the churches. He mentions the fact that the church at Winnipeg called the Rev. P. Schelling of Middelburg, who declined; and that the church at Neerlandia called the Rev. K.J. Kapteyn of Spakenburg and, after he declined the call, the Rev. M. Nap of Eindhoven. He expresses the wish that the Lord may guide the latter in taking a decision and that the churches may see their vacancies filled. Attention is given to the fact that the world is in need of the gospel and the hope is voiced that this classis meeting may serve the goal that the churches serve the Lord in this world.

ART. 4
Adoption of the Agenda. After some additions the agenda is adopted.

ART. 5
Reports. At the table is the report of the Committee on the Classical Regulations. Proposals of the church at Winnipeg regarding this report are dealt with at the same time. After thorough discussions and the adoption of some emendations Classis adopted a revised set of Classical Regulations.

ART. 6
Reports, continued. The report of the Treasurer of Classis over the year 1974 is read. The total income was \$2104.36; the total of the expenses \$1719.73; the balance at January 1, 1975, was \$384.63.

ART. 7
Reports, continued. A report of

the Church on the Inspection of the Archives is read and dealt with.

ART. 8
Reports, continued. Reports of Church visitations brought to the Churches at Coaldale, Winnipeg, and Carman are read. The chairman expresses thankfulness to the Lord that He preserved the churches so that good reports could be given.

ART. 9
Reports, continued. Report of the Committee for Needy Churches. It is decided to support the church at Calgary for the next two three-month periods on the same basis as at present and to request the Committee to come with their report at the next Classis.

ART. 10
Proposals. The proposal of the Church at Calgary re Training of Officebearers is read. A motion "to appoint a committee to advise the forthcoming Classis whether the Classis has responsibilities for the training of officebearers and to make recommendations regarding this matter" is adopted.

ART. 11
Proposals, continued. A proposal of the Churches at Neerlandia and Barrhead "that the preaching arrangements be continued and made as follows: March 23 - Rev. R.F. Boersema; April 20 - Rev. D. DeJong; May 18 - Rev. J. Visscher; June 15 - Rev. R.F. Boersema; July 13 - Rev. D. DeJong; August 10 - Rev. J. Visscher; September 7 - Rev. R.F. Boersema; October 5 - Rev. D. DeJong; November 2 - Rev. J. Visscher; November 30 - Rev. R.F. Boersema" is adopted.

ART. 12
Question Period ad Art. 41 C.O. An instruction of the Church at Coaldale is read asking advice regarding the procedure of discipline concerning baptized members. After discussion an advice is given.

ART. 13
Question Period ad Art. 41 C.O., continued. The church at Edmonton asks advice in a matter of discipline. In closed session advice is given.

ART. 14
Question Period ad Art. 41 C.O., continued. The Church at Coaldale requests information about the matter of incorporation of churches in Alberta.

ART. 15
Voicing of Gratitude. To the ladies of the church of Calgary it is made known, by word of the chairman, how much their care was appreciated and how good it was.

ART. 16
Appointments. In the Committee to look into the responsibilities of Classis for the Training of Office-

bearers are appointed: the Rev. R.F. Boersema, the Rev. D. DeJong, and br. T. VandenBrink.

ART. 17
Appointment of Convening Church, time and place for the next Classis. Carman's church will be the convening church; the place will be Edmonton; the time: Wednesday, November 5, 1975, at 9 a.m. Officers will be D.V. the Rev. J. Visscher - chairman; the Rev. R.F. Boersema - clerk; the Rev. D. DeJong - vice-chairman.

ART. 18
Personal Question Period. The delegates of the Church at Barrhead stress the fact that there is a real need for reading sermons, also catechism sermons.

ART. 19
Censure ad Art. 43 C.O. Censure is held.

ART. 20
Adoption of the Acts and of the Press Release. The Acts are read and adopted. And so is the Press Release.

ART. 21
Closing. The vice-chairman requests the meeting to sing Psalm 146:1 and 3; and leads in thanksgiving and prayer, with which the meeting is adjourned.

On behalf of Classis,
J. GEERTSEMA,
vice-chairman

BOOKS

Myrna Grant, Vanya, Creation House, Carol Stream Ill., 1974, 222 pp., \$4.95.

Ivan Moiseyev, a Moldavian Baptist youth, died a martyr for the christian faith while joining the Red army for his time of service.

Being a witness to God's love, not considering its consequences, had brought him into dispute with the army officials. The story deals with a miraculous healing and a miracle to protect Ivan from an accident as actions of God to protect His witnesses. It deals also with tortures and with the strength, received from above, to endure them.

The authenticity of the story is enhanced by the many documents in Part 2, with the Russian proverb as subtitle: "Truth is like the sun; you can't hide it with your hand".

Because this work reveals the unlimited hatred of Satan, apparent in his servants, it ought to be ready by everyone.

MRS. C. MELIEFSTE

Two Income Tax Returns For All?

As if we don't have enough trouble each year in filling out our annual personal income tax return for the federal government, it looks as if we all may have to follow the example of Quebec residents and fill out a tax return for our provincial government as well. At least this is the impression created by a recent article in the *Financial Post*.

At the moment, the federal government collects the personal income tax for both itself and all the provinces except Quebec. Under the agreement that makes this possible, the provinces may, within limits, change their tax rates but not their tax base. That is, for both federal and provincial tax, taxable income is calculated the same way. You are entitled to deduct the same amounts for personal exemptions i.e. for yourself and your children. Furthermore, the same definitions apply as to what is taxable revenue and what expenses are deductible for tax purposes.

However things may be changing. Ontario has, during the last few years, pioneered the concept of tax credits. That is, in an attempt to provide relief to certain specific classes of taxpayers these people are allowed to deduct an amount from the actual amount of tax payable. For instance, taxpayers below specified income limits are allowed to deduct a portion of their real estate taxes paid or an equivalent portion of their rent. At the moment the necessary forms to claim this credit are mailed out with the federal tax return and the credit is obtained by deducting it from the amount of tax otherwise payable. The province, presumably, reimburses the federal government for these credits as a simple deduction from the total tax otherwise payable to the province. Manitoba and Alberta now also allow similar tax credits and it is expected that more provinces will follow suit.

A change is now in sight, however. On January 1, 1976, i.e. next year, Ontario will, according to the *Financial Post*, take over the direct administration and processing of the tax credit forms - some four million of them. Next year, then, Ontario residents will have to fill out and mail to Ottawa their federal income tax return and fill out and mail to Toronto their

tax credit forms to obtain a provincial cheque.

There appear to be very few advantages to Ontario taxpayers in this change. The only possibility might be that, by taking this field over itself, the province may be able to distribute benefits which the federal government might not agree to. For the provincial government it will, however, have the political advantage that the cheques will now come directly from Toronto so that the taxpayer will be certain to be grateful to the provincial Tories rather than the federal Liberals. It remains to be seen whether the voter will think this offsets the difficulty and cost of completing two forms.

The cost to the government, and ultimately the tax payer, of this step must also not be lost sight of. A complete new provincial organization will have to be set up to duplicate the work of the federal taxation department. Moreover, control will be much more difficult. At present, if a tax credit is allowable only to a taxpayer below a certain income level, the amounts appear on the same return and the computer can quickly check whether this condition is met. Next year, if this decision is implemented, it will be impossible for an Ontario employee to check whether a person is entitled to a credit unless he checks with Ottawa - a costly procedure at best. In most cases, it probably will not be done. We can thus look forward to a significant increase in the amount of fraudulent payments.

The worst part of the proposed step, however, is, that it is seen as a first step toward collection by the province, possibly as early as 1978, of its own income taxes. Once the machinery has been set up to process the tax credits, the same organization can collect taxes.

At various times the provinces have been dissatisfied with their share of the tax pie and have threatened to collect their own. One of Ontario's beefs at the moment appears to be the federal government's indexing of the tax brackets to offset the effect of inflation. Indexing was introduced to prevent an individual from being bumped into a higher tax bracket merely due to inflation. That is, if an

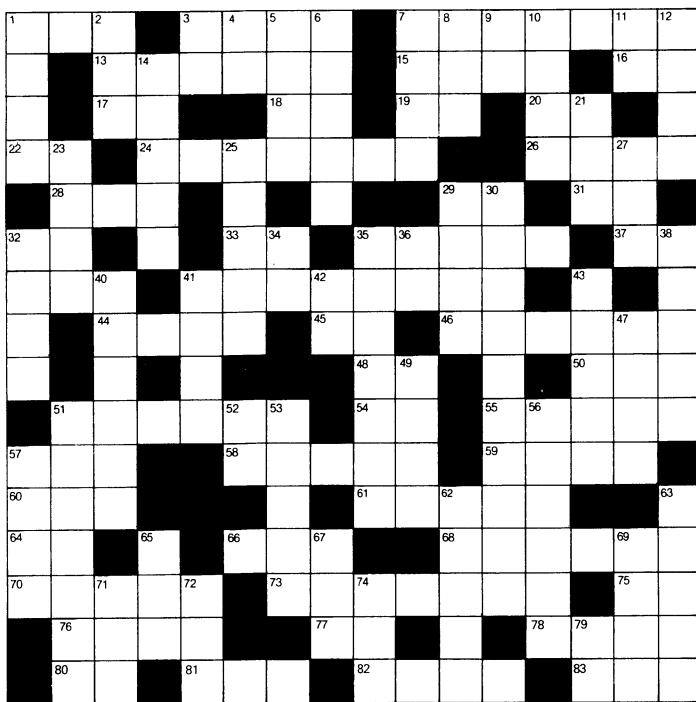
individual gets a raise just to offset the loss of purchasing power of the dollar he should be as well off as he was at the beginning - no better and no worse. Without indexing, the raise would have pushed him into a higher tax bracket so that the government received a larger percentage of his raise than of his previous top income. After tax, then, his income would really be worse than it was before inflation took place and he received the raise that was supposed to compensate for it. In fact, without indexing, tax rates were being increased without formal notice or legislative approval. Now, with indexing, the government receives no automatic windfall from inflation and must seek formal approval to raise tax rates.

The Ontario government has found this aspect difficult to swallow since it found its tax receipts significantly reduced from what it expected. That of course, was exactly what indexing was intended to do. However, Ontario apparently doesn't believe in equity and, consequently, now again finds it attractive to levy its own taxes. That probably means that we will have to pay more. It also probably means that Ontario taxes will be non-indexed (as are Quebec's at the moment) so that the provincial government can again quietly benefit from inflation without the scrutiny of the legislature. If taxpayers are specifically told that taxes must be increased to pay for increased services they may be tempted to question the government's priority.

Apart from the flexibility to raise taxes specifically to meet changing provincial priorities there appears to be little benefit in the proposed change. The costs involved to the government are no doubt high. The cost to the individual taxpayer will be even higher. The trouble of preparing two tax returns is bad enough but as the tax legislation between the provinces and the federal government becomes more and more different we will have to be knowledgeable about two complete sets of laws. Many taxpayers who have not already done so, will throw their hands up in despair and call in the experts. Only the accountants and lawyers will stand to gain.

Hopefully, an aroused public may prevent this change which seems designed only with a view to increased political power for the Ontario provincial government. JOHN BOERSEMA

Puzzle No. 8



ACROSS

1. beverage
3. disagreement
7. part of the house
13. outlaw
15. for aerial use (prefix)
16. musical note
17. town (abbrev.)
18. errors excepted (abbrev.)
19. north latitude (abbrev.)
20. symbol for osmium
22. measure of length (abbrev.)
24. belongs to a car
26. releases heat and light
28. go astray
29. follow copy (abbrev.)
31. wind direction
32. in the location of
33. not down
35. a lover of Daphnis
37. vice versa (abbrev.)
39. son of (prefix)
41. city in Ontario
44. stolen goods
45. see 16 across
46. Bible book
48. Rupee (abbrev.)
50. --- volente
51. exclamation of pleasure
54. identification (abbrev.)
55. a male animal
57. a protuberance on a stem
58. ecclesiastical assembly
59. sour
60. some
61. oil product
64. Saint (abbrev.)
66. a small hotel
68. commands
70. a serous fluid

73. kind of salmon
75. expression of surprise
76. city in Europe
77. you (French)
78. meditate in silence
80. see 64 across
81. woman devoted to a religious life
82. possession (abbrev.)
83. by means of

DOWN

1. slow journey
2. about (abbrev.)
3. upon
4. gave as a gift (Latin abbrev.)
5. regulated selection of food
6. kind of meat
7. financial institution
8. kind of fish
9. Doctor (abbrev.)
10. see 7 across
11. originating from
12. animal (female)
14. mad
21. transgression
23. river in Columbia
25. to sit on one's heels
27. revolution of a motor
29. fall down heavily
30. governing body
32. expression of approval
34. Prime Minister (abbrev.)
35. well-known magazine
36. height (abbrev.)
38. mask
40. weather condition
41. part of the day (time)
42. on condition that
43. older person
47. encounter by arrangement
49. boy's name

51. pursuers of game
52. for instance
53. songs of praise
56. bicycle built for two
57. type of fish
62. fine-grained silt or clay
63. a son of Jacob
65. chewing material
67. negative adverb
69. flowering shrub
71. decay
72. human beings
74. small open container
79. see 33 across

G. DEBOER

News from Neerlandia

Tuesday, March 4, was a joyful occasion for the congregation of Neerlandia and, we are sure, also for Rev. M.C. Werkman of Chatham.

Rev. Werkman had been asked to speak for us on the topic: "Why Reformed Education". The title speaks for itself already, and the importance of the matter was taken serious by young and old alike. Rev. Werkman pointed out to us that the education of our children, of the children of the church, was a serious and far-reaching matter. Leaving this in the hands of the public school system or mixed educational institutions could over the long run mean the death knell to the institutional church of Jesus Christ. God has given us the command, and we have publicly promised, and confessed, to bring up our children in *all* the commandments of God.

After recess questions of interest were asked and ably answered, and we were urged to set up a school society, elect a board, and give them the mandate to investigate ways and means of, with the help of God, starting our own day school in the not too distant future. This was unanimously agreed upon. We already had a three-member Saturday School Board (W. Holwerda, C. Hamoen, and B. Wierenga) and decided to elect another two members. P. Werkman and Mrs. A. Hamoen were elected.

The congregation of Barrhead will be invited to our membership meeting which we hope to have early in April, after we have received more information, so that together we may strive to fulfill our duties in the education of the children of the church. We are only small in number, with God's help and blessing we will do our best to see to it that our children are brought up in the fear of the Lord, also in the school which they attend.

We would like to thank Rev. Werkman for his encouragement and support in this matter. This is always the richest blessing in the communion of saints. May his Sender also bless his words and actions for the church.

E.H.

our little magazine

Hello Busy Beavers,

Oh, I know what you are looking for! You are just as curious as can be! And everybody who sent in a story is hoping he/she will be the winner! I know.

But in my mail this week there were still lots of stories - and I think I will get some more. Now that the mail is slow. So we had better wait awhile, right? We don't want to disappoint anyone, do we?

So instead of our exciting news here is a poem for you by Busy Beaver, *Marjorie Smouter*. And I have some real brain teasers from Busy Beaver, *Andrew Vink!*

God Made Everything

God made the birds,	
God made the trees,	God made the ocean,
God made the tiny insects,	God made the sea.
God made the bees,	God made everything,
God made the rivers,	Even you and me.

* * * * *

BRAIN TEASERS: There's a trick to it!

1. You are the pilot of an airplane that flies from London to Naples - a distance of 1,000 miles. The plane goes 200 miles per hour, and makes one stop for 30 minutes. What is the pilot's name?
2. We all know there are twelve 8c stamps in a dozen, but how many 15c stamps are there in a dozen?
3. How can you put your left hand completely in your right-hand trouser pocket, and your right hand completely in your left-hand pocket both at the same time? Of course you must be wearing your trousers or slacks.
4. A man had a clock that struck the hours and also struck once on the half hour. One night he came home late. He opened the door, and the clock struck once. Half an hour later it struck once. Again, after half an hour it struck once; and half an hour after that it struck once. What time was it when he came home?
5. What is the smallest number of ducks that could swim in this formation: two ducks in front of a duck, two ducks behind a duck and a duck between two ducks?
6. A set of 10 books is arranged in an orderly way on a shelf. Each book has 100 pages, making 1000 pages all together. A worm starting on Page 1 of the first book, eats his way through to page 100 of the last book. How many pages has he eaten?

Answers:

1. Well, what's your name? You are the pilot!
2. Twelve, of course!
3. By wearing your trousers or slacks backwards to front.
4. He heard the last of the twelve strokes of midnight as he opened the door.
5. Three ducks in a row, one after the other.
6. He ate 802 pages. Look at a row of books on a shelf. You can see why the worm didn't touch ninety-nine pages of the first book or of the last book.

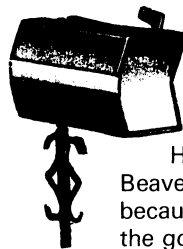
BIRTHDAY WISHES

To all the Busy Beavers who celebrate a May birthday: "Happy Birthday" and "Many happy returns of the day"!

"Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,
And favour with God and man."

You should grow wiser and try hard this year
To please God as much as you can.

Linda Huttema	May 1	Theresa DeGelder	15
Nelly Jane Tenhage	1	Irene Lodder	15
Rolean Hulzebosch	3	Rita Hoeksema	16
Peter VanGrootheest	7	Barry Post	16
Alice Sandink	9	Jimmy Hoeksema	17
Sylvia Selles	9	Hilda Beyes	19
Yvonne VanGrootheest	9	Sandra Veenema	19
Jenny Bosscher	11	Jake Ruggi	20
Yvonne Wieggers	11	Denise Boes	21
Geraldine DeBoer	12	Keith Doesburg	21
Peter Kok	12	Lizzie Oosterhoff	24
Bobby Lindhout	12	Carl Mulder	25
Janet Oostdijk	12	Teresa Metzlar	26
Ronny VanAndel	12	Brenda VandenBos	27
Janet Dekker	13	Jacob Kuik	27
Elaine Knegt	14	Audrey Knol	30
Theresa DeGelder	15	Kina VanderPutten	30



From the Mailbox

Hello *Allan Wildeman*. Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club. I know you'll be a good Busy Beaver because you had all your quizzes right! Keep up the good work! Please write and tell me your age and birthday, Allan.

And a big welcome to you too, *Cheryl Hansma*. We are happy to have you join us, and we hope you will really enjoy joining in all our Busy Beaver activities. Thanks for the story, Cheryl.

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Marjorie Smouter*. We hope you will really enjoy being a Busy Beaver. I'm glad you feel at home in your new school, Marjorie. How are your music lessons coming? Thank you for the story.

Thanks for the pretty card, *Jane Kobes*. It was nice to hear from you again.

Is your father better again, *Jacqueline Kobes*? I'm glad you like your new teacher. Thank you for your contribution to the Birthday Fund, Jacqueline. You'll hear soon about our contest!

Hello *Loretta Dam*. It was nice to hear from you again. Did you have a nice holiday in B.C. at Easter? Are your flowers out already? Thanks for the riddles, Loretta. Write again soon.

Thank you for the nice card, *Mike Wildeboer*. And you did very well on the quizzes! Did you get your bookmark already?

You are getting to be a really good quizzer, *Tammy Alkema*. You had no mistakes at all! Did you do as well on the Easter quizzes? You may send whatever you like for the Birthday Fund, Tammy. Every little bit counts.

Thanks for your story, *Elnita VanLuik*. I'm glad you like your teacher. Bye for now. Write again soon, Elnita.

You really did have a lot of fun in the snow, didn't you, *Sylvia Jans*? Did you enjoy your holiday just as much? How did you do on your quizzes, Sylvia?