



Clarion
THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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Of Psalms And Hymns 2

A. "WE WORSHIP ONE GOD IN TRINITY"

We begin this section with the "Credo," which is now Hymn 45. We deemed it proper to begin the Hymn section with the confession of our faith as formulated by the Church in the Apostles' Creed. That also gives us an indication of the order in which we shall arrange our songs.

Further, we find here the "Te Deum," which is Hymn 46 in our present *Book of Praise*. The "Te Deum" is a song which dates back to the fourth century and has been sung in the Church for hundreds of years.

Of this "Te Deum" we present a completely new rhyming. Our present rhyming is a rhyming — more or less — of the Dutch version. The rhyming which we have now adopted is a wholly new one, made after the Latin original. It has been published some time ago, and the readers who can get hold of the Latin original will be able to test it on its faithfulness to the original song.

Between brackets: "Te Deum" means "Thee, God"; these two words are the words with which the Latin song begins. It is customary to use the first words as a title. For those who are interested in it: whenever the pope issues a papal bull or encyclical, those documents too are known by their first words. Think of the "famous" papal bull "Unam Sanctam" which Boniface VIII issued in 1302.

Anyway, we should continue.

Of the present Hymn 3 we also have adopted a new "rhyming". Some of the terms and expressions found in the present version were deemed less suitable and the language should be somewhat "modernized." The version which we have now adopted is composed of fragments from the Creeds and Confession.

A song which is "new" is the well-known "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty." Almost everyone will know that one. It is based on Isaiah 6:1-3 and Revelation 4:8-11.

The present Hymn 6 ("Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow") has

been retained. We don't have to say anything about it.

"New" is also the hymn "Glory Be to God the Father." If anyone among our readers has the *Gereformeerde Kerkboek* of our Dutch sister Churches, he can find this song in the Dutch version under No. 26.

And that concludes then the first section: the confession of the triune God, the praise to Him, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

B. "WHO SPOKE BY THE PROPHETS"

In the second section we begin with the words which the LORD God spoke on Sinai's mountain. In the present *Book of Praise* this is Hymn 28.

When our present Churchbook was issued, this Hymn numbered only two stanzas; all the other stanzas which originally formed part of that song were left out. That was done upon the advice especially of the Australian deputies, if I remember well. Anyway, it was the opinion of one of them that "we cannot sing commandments" (those are my words and not a literal quotation) and we complied with that, leaving out all the stanzas which dealt with the commandments.

There is something to be said in favour of that.

We can sing the praises of our God; we can also pray to Him in our songs; we can sing of His mighty works in the history of His people; but can we really sing what the LORD *demands* of us in the Ten Words?

One could also reason the other way around: When we sing the commandments, we confess by our very singing that the will of the LORD is good and holy, and that we have the sincere desire to obey that will which alone is good. Singing is confessing, isn't it?

Without going into the arguments pro and con, we decided to comply with the requests of many and to insert a complete rhyming of the Ten Words again. We did, however, adopt a completely new rhyming, one which sounds very simple, but which is really beautiful and follows the text very faithfully.

For a second song in this section it was suggested to take a rhyming of Exodus 15:1-10, but since we have a new rhyming of the Song of Moses in Deuteronomy 32:1-43, a rhyming of Exodus 15 would be a mere repetition, and for that reason it was decided not to include that one.

The next one is then the rhyming of Deuteronomy 32. Our readers will be able to read and sing that rhyming when it is published in the next issue. The tune for this Hymn is the tune of the present Gezang 6 in the *Gereformeerde Kerkboek* of our Dutch sister Churches, page 309.

In this section we also have reserved a place for a rhyming of Isaiah 12. No rhyming has been adopted as yet, and also about the tune no further information can be given at the moment. There was a suggestion to rhyme this part of Scripture to the tune of Psalm 124, but it is all still up in the air.

The well-known Hymn 7 (in our present Churchbook) will again be found in our new book. No changes have been made in "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People." It is a rhyming, as everyone knows, of the first verses of Isaiah 40.

Of the same chapter we shall have a rhyming of the verses 28-31: "Do You Not Know? Have You Not Heard?"

It was felt that of Isaiah 53 we need a new rhyming. We shall try to save the tune, which is the tune of Psalm 22. The main reason for this effort to save that tune for this Hymn is that in this part of Scripture we read of the sufferings of our Saviour, just as we do in Psalm 22. Also by means of the tune we are, therefore, reminded of the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"

In "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" no changes have been made. We did, however, drop the present fifth stanza, since we felt that it would be difficult to re-rhyme it in such a manner that it would become acceptable. The present fifth stanza leaves too much to be desired.

The beautiful third chapter of the

book of Habakkuk has also been rhymed in ten stanzas. It will be sung on the tune Llangloffan, a hymn-melody from Wales. If anyone among our readers possesses or is able to borrow the *Liedboek voor de Kerken*, 's Gravenhage 1973, he can find that melody on page 662, No. 448.

Although we find it in the New Testament, the song of Mary has also found a place in this section. She speaks of the promises of the LORD and their fulfilment, but the fulfilment is still to come at the moment when she sings her song. Thus it is proper to have it in the section, "Who Spoke through the Prophets." We did change the rhyming somewhat, and the last stanza has been changed completely.

The Song of Zacharias is also prophecy and is the last one in this second part of the Hymn section. We did make a few changes in the rhyming, but those changes are only minor. There is no danger at all that it will not be recognized in its "new" form!

Herewith we say farewell to our second part.

C. "WHO FOR US CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN"

This part sings of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We begin with the present Hymn 13, a rhyming of Isaiah 9:2-8.

Since we did have some objections to the present rhyming, we are working on a revised rhyming. One of the elements of the original text is missing, to mention just that. The title "Everlasting Father" cannot be found in our present song, and we feel that it should be included. That's all I can say about it at the moment.

One well-known song which speaks of the birth of our Saviour is the one which in German is called "Es ist ein Ros entsprungen." We have not yet been able to produce an acceptable rhyming of that song, but the tune appeals to us. The song itself is more than a millennium old. We'll have to follow the original.

One that we did accept is the rhyming of Luke 2:8-14, "While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks by Night." No changes have been made either in the rhyming or in the music.

The following place is still empty: it is reserved for an acceptable version of the "Gloria," the song of the angels in Bethlehem's fields. We definitely decided against an English rendition of the Dutch "Ere zij God." We know that with many of the older members that is

a well-loved song, but we could not produce any enthusiasm for it either qua text or qua tune. To put it bluntly: the tune is boring, "zeurderig." Hopefully we can come with something better. If not, we already have the "Gloria" in the rhyming of Luke 2:8-14, so that we are not missing anything if we cannot find an acceptable separate rhyming of it.

The Song of Simeon finds a place after that. Usually we find that song in the company of the songs of Mary and of Zacharias, but Simeon sang of the fulfilment which he saw with his very eyes, and therefore his song rightfully should find a place in the section which sings of the Saviour Who *has* come. We did, however, come with a new rhyming since the one we have been using thus far does not do full justice to the text.

Speaking of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, we also think of what the apostle Paul writes in Philippians 2:6-11. We present a rhyming of that passage and the tune for that rhyming is the "Sine Nomine" of Ralph Vaughan Williams. In the already mentioned *Liedboek voor de Kerken*, that tune can be found on page 453, No. 299.

We sing of the mystery of the birth of our Saviour with the words of I Timothy 3:16, "With Heart and Mouth Let All Confess." As tune for that song we have chosen the tune of the (now deleted) present Hymn 1.

If anyone should ask why we decided to delete the present Hymn 1, the answer should read, "Because that Hymn is actually a rhyming of the last verses of Psalm 72, and we already have a rhyming of that part in . . . Psalm 72." We should try as much as possible to avoid the "overlapping" of songs and a repetition which is not necessary. We have adopted as one of our rules the following standard: A song should *add* something to what we already have, otherwise it should be eliminated. Thus our members will discover that some of the "old-favoured" have disappeared from the Hymn section. Wherever we considered the tune to be valuable we have tried to "save" that tune, to be used with another hymn.

Herewith we have come to the end of the third section.

D. "HE WAS CRUCIFIED AND DIED"

The present Hymn 17 is the first Hymn in this section. "Thee, Holy Lamb of God, We Bless." I do not have to say anything about that song.

The second song which finds a place in this fourth section is a rhyming of Revelation 5:9-13. Actually, I am wrong when saying that it is a (literal) rhyming of that part of Scripture. It is "based on" what we read there. In our present *Book of Praise* it is Hymn 40. We have inserted a new stanza 5, which reads,

From Him who sits upon the throne
The scroll Thou mayest take,
And Thou are worthy as the Lamb
Its seven seals to break.

Further we sing of the glorious work of our Saviour with what at present is Hymn 34. We did make a few changes



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in the rhyming here and there, but basically this Hymn has remained the same. As our readers know, it is based on Romans 3 - 5.

Only a minor change has been made in the present Hymn 60, "All Glory, Laud, and Honour."

That completes the section which sings of Christ's sufferings and death as having taken place and having been completed. We should see to it that we do not sing of these sufferings as if they are still continuing. Christ *has* died for us and is alive again.

That's what we sing of in the following section.

E. "THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN"

We begin this section with the present Hymn 21: "Christ Is Risen, Hallelujah!" Some changes will have to be made in the rhyming and we have not yet adopted a definite text.

The apostle Peter begins his first epistle with the words, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By His great mercy we have been born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." That is the theme of our next song, a rhyming of I Peter 1:3-5. We do have such a rhyming in our present Hymn 37, but it has been replaced by a new one, more faithful to the text.

Our present Hymn 18 will be found next; only one line has been changed. As for the rest it has remained the same.

We are not completely certain about the next song. In the Hymn "Crown Him with Many Crowns" there are elements which appeal to us, although as a whole that song is not acceptable. We have been working on it but have not yet come to a conclusion. It is most likely that only three of the original number of stanzas will be retained and even those three will have to undergo some extensive surgery. That's all I can say about it at the moment.

We conclude the section about the resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ and its immediate fruit with our present Hymn 30, the rhyming of Romans 8:31-39. No changes have been made in it.

F. "ASCENDED, HE SITS AT THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD THE FATHER"

In our present Hymn 38 we already have a rhyming of part of John 14. Al-

though that rhyming is quite old (some two hundred years), there are serious objections to it since it is not a faithful rendering of the text and thoughts are introduced which are alien to the contents of that Scripture passage. We are working on a new rhyming, for it is a beautiful passage which certainly should be found in our *Book of Praise*.

The first and second stanza of our present Hymn 23 have remained the same. The third stanza has been changed, and we have added two more stanzas which incorporate what we confess in Lord's Days 18 and 19 of the glory of Christ our Head.

The following Hymn is our present No. 22: "Christ, Above All Glory Seated." We shall retain this one, too, although a few changes have been made in the rhyming and a few more are to come; we have not yet finalized the text.

The epistle to the Hebrews speaks of Christ's glory and of His work as our High Priest in heaven. In our present Hymn 35 we have a rhyming of Hebrews 4:14-16, but we do not appreciate the present rhyming too much. For that reason we produced a new one with a total of six stanzas.

The following song ("Rejoice, the Lord is King") is based on I Corinthians 15:25 and Philippians 4:4. At the moment I cannot say more about it, for we have not yet finalized it.

Of the rhyming of Hebrews 12:1-3, as it is found in the Scottish Paraphrases of 1745, we have retained the first stanza. Using elements from the other stanzas, we have come to a new rhyming with a total of six stanzas. The tune for this Hymn *may* be the same as the one now used for Hymn 1. However, we try to avoid using the same tune twice and for that reason you should not count on it too much. I am not a member of the Music Committee and may be wrong in some of the cases I mentioned.

From the epistle to the Hebrews we have gathered a few more passages which speak specifically about the heavenly Priesthood of our Saviour. Those passages are: chapter 8:1-9 and chapter 9:11-15. Here I cannot report anything, since no definite assignment has been given and not even a tune has been selected.

Usually, if a Scripture passage has to be rhymed, we first select a tune, for then the "rhymers" know what metre to use, how many lines in each stanza, how long the lines are to be, and so on. I may say that there appears to be an

almost inexhaustible source of melodies and tunes, although not by far every tune found is suitable. Before deciding on one, we play it a few times, sing it a few times, compare it with other tunes, and even then it may happen that a better one is found later on so that the one first chosen is rejected after all.

The work which the Churches have put upon our shoulders is a tremendous undertaking, and I am happy that I am able to tell you all about it. It is also a beautiful work and a challenging task, the fulfilment of which gives much joy and satisfaction. When we have finalized a rhyming and put it into the file marked "Finalized," the sigh that is heard and the gesture with which it is put into that file are not a sigh and a gesture of relief but a sigh of satisfaction and a gesture of gratitude that we have come one step closer to the realization of the goal and the completion of our task: to provide the Churches with a songbook which is truly Scriptural and "speaks" to the membership.

Now we proceed to the next section.

(To be Continued.)

vO

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Prophecy and Israel

In the 1974 and 1975 volumes of *Clarion*, Prof. H.M. Ohmann published a series of articles on "Israel — Its Past, Present, And Future." The first article of that series appeared in issue 23 of the 23rd volume.

Br. Wm. Salomons of Toronto reacted to the thoughts expressed by Prof. Ohmann and sent a submission with the title "Prophecy Today."

Prof. Ohmann goes extensively into the statements made in that submission. For this we are thankful to him. His reply goes far beyond being a "technical treatment" of

various utterances: it is an appeal to believe God's Word as it presents itself, to read it in its entirety, and not to become entangled in millennialist presuppositions and constructions. As such it is also a welcome sequence to Rev. W. Huizinga's articles on "The False Prophecy of Hal Lindsey."

In order to do justice to all and to make it easier for our readers to understand Prof. Ohmann's articles better, we publish Br. Salomons' submission, followed by the first installment of Prof. Ohmann's reply.

Ed.

Prophecy Today

1. Introduction.

We believe the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. Some believe that with the resurrection of the body, world history ends, others don't.

This will be one of the questions examined by Prof. Ohmann and Wm. Salomons.

In discussing a-millennialism and pre-millennialism we agreed to take the last chapter of Zechariah as our starting point.

This should be read first.

2. The world uniting against God's people.

October 21st, 1977. "The United Nations General Assembly approved by a vote of 131 - 1 . . . (7 abstained)" (*Toronto Star*).

This lone negative vote was Israel's.

Israel nowadays has more attention on the page of world news than any other nation.

Could it be that Jerusalem is becoming a burdensome stone for all the people of the earth? (Zech. 12:3).

Some thirty years ago one nation tried to exterminate the Jewish people; behold, the day of the Lord cometh, when He will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle.

Today we can see it coming that some day not even seven will abstain. What is behind all this?

3. The gathering of the nations by the forces of darkness.

In Zech. 14 God is behind it. Why? Because long ago Christ came as King of the Jews (Zech. 9:9), but the "Hosanna" turned into a "Crucify Him." Now they are under the curse of God (see Deut. 28:15, 63-67).

In Rev. 16:13-16 we see the other side of the coin. Here we see Satan behind it. Why? Because long ago Zechariah prophesied that some day a remnant of the Jewish people would repent (Zech. 12:10).

If Satan would succeed to destroy all the Jewish people, this prophecy could not be fulfilled. Satan is working hard.

In God's Word we have received much information about Satan's attacks.

In Rev. 16:16 the location of the battle is given.

It is the battle of Armageddon.

In Rev. 19:17-21 their leaders are mentioned.

Today the world is waiting for a superman. Under the leadership of this superman — the antichrist, and with him the false prophet — the battle of Armageddon will have as purpose the extermination of the Jews.

4. The deliverance of God's people.

Satan will succeed only for two-thirds (Zech. 13:8); then all of a sudden the Lord Jesus intervenes.

In Acts 1 we read that Jesus was taken up from the Mount of Olives into heaven and that He would come back in like manner.

Suddenly He will be there, standing on the Mount of Olives with ten thousands of His saints to execute judgment (Jude 1).

As in Joshua's time, the day will be prolonged, because in one day the armies of the antichrist are to be consumed, a great earthquake is to take place, and Christ is to be established in Jerusalem as King over all the earth.

Jerusalem used to be a burdensome stone for all the people of the earth. Now times are drastically changing (see Zech. 8:20-23).

Although Jerusalem has never been a safe place to live in, now it will be the safest place on earth.

It is also going to be the wealthiest city on the face of the earth, according to this and many other predictions from the Word of God.

These appear to be literal prophesies about what is going to happen on earth. There is no reason to believe that they are symbolic or allegorical.

5. The armies defeated.

The great armies, stamped with the mark of the beast, are destroyed in a terrible way.

What normally happens with a person who has been dead for some time, happens now while they are still alive. And then the fowls of the heavens are called to feast upon the flesh of kings and captains and officers (Zech. 14:12, Rev. 19:18).

6. Christ as King over all the earth (Zech. 14:9).

One of the first things that will be inaugurated by the Lord Jesus Christ is an annual convocation at Jerusalem for the nations left, the nations out of which the armies of the antichrist came, for they will not be destroyed; only the armies will be destroyed (Zech. 14:16).

I don't know if everyone has to make a yearly trip to Jerusalem, or just some representatives, to worship the King, the Lord of hosts. I also don't know what the feast of tabernacles at that time will imply. But I do know that one cannot get away with it. There will be direct punishment. No rain means famine, and famine means death. Extermination as a nation. As before the flood, people will become very old again (Is. 65:20); but death, the last enemy, will not be destroyed until after Satan's rebellion at the end of the thousand years.

7. A thousand years.

The millenium is that period of time during which Christ will reign upon the earth. Zechariah only mentions a certain period (a going up from year to year). From Revelation 20 we learn that this period will last a thousand years. The early church fathers interpreted Revelation 20:2-7 as referring to a future, literal period of time. That this period is still future we can conclude from Revelation 19:20.

The leaders of the Armageddon armies are cast alive into the lake of fire. Those who refused to worship the antichrist (beast) and the false prophet are included in the ones who will reign with Christ.

This is the first resurrection.

I Corinthians 15:23 speaks of three orders of the resurrection.

- A. Christ the first Fruits;
- B. Afterward the Christians at His coming;
- C. Then (when He shall have delivered up the Kingdom to God) they all shall stand before God (Rev. 20:12). Then the devil and all unbelievers will be cast into the lake of fire where the beast and the false prophet are (for a thousand years already). This is the second death.

8. Prophecy today.

Several times I have been told that we should preach salvation and leave prophecy

alone. True, salvation is the important thing, but prophecy is not to be ignored. Otherwise, why would God's Word be so full of prophecy. It is the outstanding, indisputable proof of the divine origin of the Bible. Jesus, Peter, Paul, as well as the others, said again and again: "It is written" or: "This day is the Scripture fulfilled in your ears."

The last verses of Zechariah give an indication of the character of the millennial reign. There is an emphasis on holiness. Today we live in an unholy and polluted world, and this cannot go on much longer.

The world is so churchy and the Church is so worldly that we can hardly distinguish the one from the other. Today Satan makes sure that he gets hypocrites in the churches, but in that day there shall be no more a Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts. Today much darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the peoples, to use an expression from Isaiah (60:2).

However, "We have a sure word of prophecy, unto which ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shines in a dark place" (II Peter 1:19). It is because of this light that we should not only be up to date but also be ahead of the times.

Conclusion.

As a Canadian Reformed Pre-millennialist, this then is what I think is happening and what is going to happen.

9. The Church period — the day of salvation.

- a. Now Christ is gathering out of the nations a people for His name: the Church.
- b. Soon this work will be accomplished. Therefore the need to preach the gospel to every creature becomes very urgent.
- c. The direction the world takes today is to establish universal unity and peace (asure sign). To accomplish this there are three basic needs.

There is a need for a strong political leader in the U.N.

There is a need for a strong religious leader in the W.C.C.C.

There is a need to solve the Jewish problem.

10. The tribulation period.

- a. Christ's coming on the clouds for His Bride. Also called the rapture or the blessed Hope.
- b. A period of time in which God openly intervenes in the affairs of men. The great tribulation is also called the day of God's wrath, the day of the Lord, or the time of Jacob's trouble.
- c. The world has found the answer to its basic needs.
 - A strong political leader — the antichrist (the beast).
 - A strong religious leader — the false prophet.
 - An attempt to destroy the Jews — the battle of Armageddon.

11. The millennium.

- a. Christ's coming on the mount of Olives. The deliverance of the remnant of Israel as God's answer. Rom. 11:26, Is. 59:19

and 20. (The name "Zechariah" means: the Lord remembers.)

- b. The prophecies concerning Christ's first advent (Isaiah 53) as the suffering Messiah have been literally fulfilled. The prophecies concerning Christ's second advent (Isaiah 11) as the reigning Messiah are now going to be fulfilled in the same way.
- c. At the end of the millennium the battle of Gog and Magog under the leadership of Satan himself.

12. Eternity.

- a. The second death — eternal separation from God for the unbelievers.
- b. The new Jerusalem for the believers of all ages.

From age to age let saints His Name adore,
His power and love proclaim from shore to shore,
And spread His fame, till time shall be no more.

WM. SALOMONS

ANSWER TO BR. WM. SALOMONS; PRELIMINARY REMARKS; NOTES ON THE EXEGESIS OF ZECHARIAH XIV.

It needs no comment that, with br. Salomons, I believe the resurrection of the body and the life everlasting. At the same time I do believe (br. S. begins with leaving this undecided!) that such a radical change cannot but be the final act of world-history, ushering in the new and everlasting era of the world to come. As it is portrayed in Holy Writ in all its blessed consequences, no intermission or interruption whatsoever, be it the great tribulation or the millennium, which is but provisional, let alone a final battle of Gog and Magog under the leadership of Satan himself, is possible. To assume something like this as is done by all pre-millennialists, is to ascribe half-way measures to the LORD GOD. Is a *blessed* resurrection of the body for (a part of) the believers possible, after their rapture, if they realize that part of their fellow-believers are still in troubles (time of Jacob's trouble) and to be delivered as the remnant of Israel? To me this is inconceivable. What is more, it is not a consequence of what Scripture teaches us!

A second note: It hardly needs comment that I also agree with br. S. in what he writes sub 8.: "Several times I have been told that we should preach salvation and leave prophecy alone. True, salvation is the important thing, but prophecy is not to be ignored. Otherwise, why would God's Word be so full of prophecy?" I would like to emphasize this point now that we start our joint examination as br. S. is pleased to present it.

I. THE EXEGESIS OF PROPHECY

However, even if two people make the same statement, they are not necessarily after the same thing! For one thing, my high esteem of prophecy is not influenced by a certain pre-millennialism. I would rather say:

it is the fruit of an education marked and stamped by a deep respect for the Word of God as voiced in the Reformed Creeds. "All Scripture is inspired by God . . ." What was already there since the years of childhood — thanks to God-fearing parents and ministers of the Word — was reinforced as a result of the Liberation of 1944 and subsequent years, during which we were taught anew by eminent ministers of the Word and introduced to the rich treasures of the divine Word. We learned not only that no genre of Scripture (e.g. poetry, prophecy, history) is to be ignored for the practice of our piety and religious life, but also *in what way and according to which method* the man on the pulpit and the people in the pew ought to come to grips with the various genres. I hope to digress on this issue in the final articles of my still unfinished series in our Magazine.¹ During the years of study in Kampen I was privileged to meet and hear this first hand from professors who were pioneers in this field: S. Greijdanus, K. Schilder, B. Holwerda, C. Veenhof. By all of them prophecy was given due attention!

What holds good of prophecy, however, applies to the books of wisdom, poetry (Job and Psalms), history, and law just as well. If br. S. singles prophecy out as "the outstanding, indisputable proof of the divine origin of the Bible," he is too one-sided in my opinion. I can also say lop-sided. Small wonder, for his attitude is too biased by his pre-millennialist views. I know and admit: there is a continuous thread through the Bible: "So it is written," and "This day the Scripture is fulfilled in your ears." It is especially in chapter 40 and following that we hear the LORD GOD harping on the same string as evidence that only He is God amidst all the alleged gods of the

peoples round about. It is sort of a challenge to the idols, running this way: "You there who pretend to be gods, go with Me to the court, in order that one might find out that you are gods indeed. In what way? Well, by doing the very things which I have done from of old." I refer to Isaiah 41:21: "*Set forth your case, says the LORD; bring your proofs, says the King of Jacob . . .*" The idols sit mum. They cannot speak, nor even hear, let alone that any of them ever had done what the LIVING GOD is inquiring of them about. Again I say: there is a continuous line throughout the Bible leading from prophecy to fulfilment, by which the greatness of the God of the Scriptures is brought into full relief. That He once foretold so makes Him outshine the idols and stand out as God indeed. That JESUS has come to bring about salvation is great. That He did so, not by mere power or cunning, but in the capacity of CHRIST, the MESSIAH, promised and prophesied in the Scriptures, according to the draft laid down in the Old Testament, is greater (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 6, Q. and A. 19). Now I know that my salvation is solidly founded.

Prophecy is more than prediction though! I am afraid that our br. S., like quite a few others outside and within the Church, is of the opinion that prophecy is something first and foremost pertaining to the future. That is a misconception. Being men of a particular time or period, they addressed the people of such a time. It was a message for the addressees first of all. Apart from that, "in many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets" as we read in Hebrews 1. By "prophets," all the Old Testament authors are meant. Poets like David; authors of wisdom-books like Job or Solomon; prophets in a narrower sense, and the authors of the history books from Moses on down to the writer of Chronicles. The latter are also part of the revelation.

What matters first in my discussion with br. S. is that the Books of the Bible are composed of at least four genres or types of style. It is a matter of prime importance for the Church and its ministers that each of the four be explained according to the specific rules applying to that special type of literature to which the Book under consideration belongs.

This is not the first time that I write this. I may refer you to a series in

this Magazine, running from December 74 to August 1975. May I also ask br. S. please to look up the issues of February 8 and 22 of 1975. It can save me the trouble of writing again what I have written before. What I am doing now can become a twice-told tale. But let us consider it from the angle that it is always good to refresh our memory and try to be disciples of Paul: "To write the same things to you is not irksome to me, and is safe for you" (Philippians 3:1).

What I'd like to point out to our brother is that the Church which from of old was used to Reformed Dogmatics, the sound doctrine, in the current century has become more and more aware of the necessity of Reformed Hermeneutics. In present day theology Hermeneutics is in the limelight. Hermeneutics means the rules according to which a certain book is to be explained in order that the meaning may be understood.² In other words, the rules of sound exegesis; a theory of exegesis. As I pointed out in the above-mentioned articles, I now say again that a historic passage in the Bible requires an approach different from that of a pericope of prophecy or the psalms.

I am not talking in the abstract. Take, e.g., Genesis 1, the first chapter of the Bible, part of God's Revelation. However, those who agree upon the point differ among each other about the question whether it is to be taken as history, or as prophetic historiography, or prophecy, or even as poetry. I refer to the discussion between Prof. Dr. B.J. Oosterhoff (Apeldoorn) and the Rev. Joh. Francke.³

Conversely, the same applies to prophecy. Prophetic books can contain historic parts. I mention, e.g., Isaiah 36-39, extensive passages of Jeremiah 26-45, and Jonah. It is contemporary history. Scattered throughout these chapters we meet over and over again with genuine prophecy like the other chapters consist of. Again I say that such prophecy was uttered first and foremost in view of the time in which the prophet and his audience were living. That's why prophets can express themselves in such a concrete way: in plain language, strongly worded, not capable of another interpretation. The hearers knew where they stood with the prophet, or I had better say: with the GOD on Whose behest he spoke.

That the LORD addressed Himself in such a way to the people was because of the relationship established in

the past: the Covenant between Him and this nation. That is why prophecy is related to the past and refers to it over and over again: to the patriarchs, to the exodus and Moses. It stands to reason that those references to the long, long ago are phrased in an unveiled way. They are known facts, or they are supposed to be known, and if the people do not know them they are upbraided for such a lack of knowledge.

However, when it comes to the future, to things still to take place in times to come, it becomes different. There is a distinction of course between the near and a far future. With regard to the near future, that which falls within the scope of a couple of years, prophets can be concrete to a larger extent. What is within the range of vision now will not have changed so much then. The prophet can sometimes mention the date and the place quite accurately. I refer to my article in the issue of April 19, 1975.

With respect to the distant future, the prophet has to utter himself with more reservations, of course. I hope br. S. will not misunderstand me here. This is not a matter of the prophet's unbelief, as though he did not trust the LORD, or that he doubted that the knowledge or the power of the LORD would reach that far. All but that! It was the very word of the LORD, revealed to him, that was put into writing or passed on to the hearers. No, it was the LORD Himself, the Omniscient and Omnipotent God Who, revealing Himself concerning the far future, had to restrict Himself with a view to the hearers, accommodating Himself to their comprehension and to the environment in which they lived. Otherwise the message, already difficult in itself, would become incomprehensible altogether. Neither prophet nor audience would have been able to make head or tail of it. It would simply have been beyond them, if the LORD would have uttered Himself regarding the far future in as plain a language as He did when current issues or matters of the past were at stake. Of the latter, prophet and people were eye-witnesses, or they had heard about them, so they knew by memory. Those were things they could visualize.

As to the future, the face of the earth would change entirely. Peoples known since olden times would vanish altogether, and new peoples never heard of before could and would move within the people's horizon. Ancient

kingdoms would be turned upside down, and totally new empires would take their place. What did or could Isaiah's contemporaries, worrying about Assyria's rising power, know at all about the Greco-Macedonian empire of Alexander the Great, to say nothing of the Roman Empire of the century of Christ and His apostles? What about the new type of culture these conquerors would bring in their train? What about the type of society, enjoying and employing more modern techniques and equipment, that would arise, or new ideas which would be "in the air" — I think of Greek philosophy and Roman management and administration? Now I do not say anything about the 19th and our 20th century which have witnessed an upheaval as never before. My question is: "If the LORD God has a message with a view to those times — and He has! — how could it be made as clear as possible to the hearers of the Word in the times of the prophets, the eighth, seventh, and sixth centuries B.C.?" It was beyond them, it would baffle them, up to and including the prophet himself, who in his imaginations and ideas was bound to the same time they lived in.

Suppose a prophet today — if there still would be prophets the way they appeared in Old Testament times — received a message from the LORD with respect to 2278 A.D. (supposing the world would still stand then), but the great empires of our times: U.S.A., U.S.S.R., and China had all disappeared and had been replaced by others; and society, technology, traffic, etc., had changed beyond recognition), how would he be able to convey the message to the hearers unless he did so in the language of 1978? We see the apostle John struggle with the problem in the book of Revelation, in which catastrophes of the future are summarized and modern warfare announced. His apocalypse is a book of the New Testament. This applies the more to the prophets of the Old Testament, still farther away from where the scene would be laid in times to come.

Nevertheless, the LORD had a message with a view to those times; a message for His people Israel. In order that His Church, the congregation of true believers — for that is what Israel was in olden times — might be enlightened about its destination, the LORD showed His servants what was soon to take place in as simple and understandable a way as possible. In

what way, we learn by the visions of the Apocalypse and the prophecies of the Old Testament. In those visions and prophecies the headlines are shown, not the details, since there are limits to what the Church, Israel in the Old Testament and the Church gathered out of all peoples in the New Testament can grasp or comprehend, and limits also to what she can bear. She cannot and should not know what is to happen down to the minutest details. What would be the use of it?? To know everything would make the believers lose their way. The Church would get off the track, because it would be too heavy a burden. She would succumb, knowing what was in the offing in particulars. Only the headlines, as, e.g., disclosed in Daniel and the Revelation to John. That is why the LORD confines Himself to those main lines, for the Church on earth ought at least to have cognizance of those lines, in order that she might not be disconcerted when those visions come true, "as though something strange were happening to you" (I Peter 4:12). The caring and providential Father of Jesus Christ is not pleased to let us go our way here on earth without this "minimum guideline" — I would almost say: "this timetable," but I am scared that there are church members like br. S., who are going to apply this in a wrong way, in the assumption that the visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, and the Apocalypse offer the same type of historiography as Genesis or Kings.

To describe the undescribable, the LORD God has taken recourse to what was known to the receivers of the message, to that with which Israel

and its prophets were well acquainted. He took their world-picture and the way they visualized things as point of departure for His "flight through the centuries." That is how I would describe the historiography of, e.g., the Revelation: bird's eye view of history; an aerial view of what is going to be. Prof. William Hendriksen calls it "God's Soundfilm" in his book *More Than Conquerors* (Please, br. S., read that book!). The flight through the centuries will come to an end on the Day that the trumpet will sound and the dead rise, that is, the day of Christ's second and final coming (with the first I mean His incarnation) which is the close of the centuries.

I believe that with Christ's second coming world-history ends. That is what I gather from the Scriptures, according to the rules of sound exegesis, in accordance with the measure of faith. In order to get the right approach of history, our LORD JESUS CHRIST ought to be in the centre, or more precisely: CHRIST as the Saviour of His Church. The Church of Lord's Day 21 of the Catechism, where His all-embracing work of its gathering from the beginning of the world till the end, both in Old and New Dispensations, is portrayed.

(To be Continued)

PROF. H.M. OHMANN

¹ "How do we Avail Ourselves of the Old Testament?"

² S. Greijdanus: *Schriftbeginselen ter Schriftverklaring*, p. 6.

³ J. Francke: *De Morgen der Mensheid*, B.J. Oosterhoff: *Hoe lezen wij Genesis 2 en 3?*

THE INEXPERT ARE INJURED

(*Laedit ineptos*)

As food for man, like many other fish,
A well-dressed thornback is a dainty dish;
But in the cooking less of art there lies
Than how to hold it when you've caught the prize:
For he who doth not know this fish's ways,
And grips him just as he would take another,
Most dearly for his want of knowledge pays
With unexpected pain, too great to smother:
While the more skilled and cautious fisher, he
Seizing him first by one gill, then the other,
Short work of him soon makes and, as you see,
Laughs in his sleeve to hear his neighbour's pother.

JACOB CATS, 1577-1660
Translation R. Pigot (1860)

press review

WHAT IS GOING ON?

Some time ago a reader of *Clarion* sent me a letter with a page from *Maclean's Magazine* of March 20, 1978. It was a page on "Religion." The first part dealt with the fact that scientists come to the conclusion that they cannot explain the origin of the universe, and that science itself brings scientists — reluctantly though — "face to face with the problem of God."

The second article on that "Religion" page — and that is the subject for this *Press Review* — has to do with the matter of protests and even a "split off" in the Anglican Church. It is written by Carolyn Purden under the heading: "The uncomfortable pew." We read:

A thorn is digging itself into the flank of the Anglican Church of Canada. Dissident clergyman Rev. Carmino deCatanzaro was asked to leave Ottawa's St. Barnabas Church early this year for attempting to lead his congregation into a breakaway Anglican Church of North America. Two years in the making in the United States, the schism became fact on January 28 when four bishops were consecrated as heads of a new "purified" church in Denver, Colorado. The bishops strongly oppose the recent ordination of women, revisions in prayerbooks, and liberalized attitudes to divorce, abortion and homosexuality, and they hope to attract all Anglicans and Episcopalians who share their concern. Their aim: a return to what deCatanzaro calls the essential duties of Christianity, "work, prayer and Christian teaching."

A short remark about "Anglican" and "Episcopalian" may be helpful, although it may also be superfluous. They are basically two names for what was the same church: the Anglican Church. It is that church that originally was formed by people who in England had belonged to the Anglican Church, and, having come to the North American continent, formed the Anglican Church here. In Canada that name was maintained. But when the United States became independent, about two hundred years ago, the Anglican Church in the States also became independent, and changed its name from "Anglican" to "Episcopalian." Let us now continue with the article.

Only three clergy and 150 laymen have

joined in Canada so far, but at a time when Anglican leadership is attempting to drag the church whole into the 20th century, a group that seems to want solace from the 15th must rankle. The role the church should play in social and political issues is under fire from within. Headlines issuing from last August's Anglican synod, the meeting of the church's highest legislative body, sounded more like politics than religion. Leader of the church Archbishop Ted Scott believes that modern Christians must meet head-on the problems of the secular world. Under his direction the church has taken on everything from promoting guaranteed annual incomes to protesting business investment in Chile. Though the well-publicized breaches between what one delegate called "the Tories and the NDP at prayer" had healed by the end of the synod, a sense of dismay persists among church members

It is doubtful that the anxiety felt by conservative Anglicans could ever push them into a breakaway church, says Scott. He believes that since the bitterness over the ordination of women — which had polarized the clergy — has cooled down, the provisional Anglican Church of North America will become no more than a sect. Ironically, despite its search for Anglican faith and order, the new church has already fallen from grace: its four bishops were improperly consecrated and will not be recognized by the Archbishop of Canterbury.

So far the article. In this last aspect we see one of the wrongs of the Roman Catholic Church which was maintained by the Anglican church in the days of the Reformation: the consecration of the priests in connection with the hierarchy. According to Rome only he is properly consecrated to be priest, with the right to hand out grace in the sacraments, who is consecrated by a recognized bishop with approval of the pope. And so only he is a legal priest in the Anglican church who is consecrated in the right way by the right person. It is different in the Reformed Churches. We say: an office-bearer who is called by the congregation is called by the Lord — never mind what any bishop or archbishop or even pope may say or think.

In this connection I now quote part of an article in *Christian News* of June 5, 1978. It is taken from Religious News Service (RNS), and it introduces to us Bishop Chambers, the man who

consecrated the four above-mentioned, not-recognized bishops. We read there:

BARNSTABLE, Mass. (RNS) — Episcopal Bishop Albert A. Chambers, in a letter to Presiding Bishop John M. Allin, has restated that he has "no intention" of resigning his episcopal orders or from the Episcopal Church.

His letter ridiculed recent decisions of the ruling House of Bishops, saying, "You can declare by a majority (perhaps the House of Bishops might even be unanimous) that 2+2 equals 5. But it doesn't and never will."

Bishop Chambers was asked, in a private letter from the Presiding Bishop, to resign from the Church because of his unauthorized consecration, last January in Denver, of four bishops of the soon-to-be-formed Anglican Church of North America

In his letter, he [Bishop Chambers, now 71] said, "Now that I have consecrated four strong and dedicated bishops who will maintain through their growing dioceses the faith and order which we have inherited, I intend to return to my 'fully retired' status."

In a letter to Bishop Chambers in March, the Presiding Bishop said his request for the retired bishop's resignation represented "the consensus among a large majority of your brother bishops"

Bishop Chambers' current letter states, "the sternness of the responses you say you have received . . . are of no more weight to me than the irresponsible actions the so-called 'majority' of the House of Bishops have taken the last few years."

"What did they all do when Bishop Pike preached heresy? [Pike claimed he spoke with the spirit of his dead son.] Nothing. Was the House of Bishops afraid of a trial because they don't know what they believed?"

"What did they do when those retired bishops violated the provisions of the Constitution and Canons a few years ago by purporting to ordain women to the priesthood? Nothing. Why? For several reasons. Some did not have the theological education to know it was wrong. Some lacked the courage of their convictions, if they had any. And, finally, the purported 'ordinations' did not attack their basic hierarchical and financial structure."

Bishop Chambers continued, "Now I come along and by my actions, validly (even if, as you say, irregularly) consecrate bishops, which action **does** sap the House of Bishops' very foundations and weaken its financial security. Of course **now** they band bravely together to take a strong stand to keep this new enemy (**me**) out."

According to Dorothy Faber, editor of the *Christian Challenge*, the Anglican Church of North America, although it will

not be a constituted denomination until its mid-October meeting, has between 15,000 and 20,000 members. If the higher estimate is true, the schismatic group represents a little less than 1 per cent of the 2,860,000 inclusive membership of the Episcopal Church and might pose a benevolence threat.

Bishop Chambers told the Presiding Bishop, "You and the bishops, in the strength of your majority, truthlessly denying the minority sufficient opportunity to be heard, have emasculated and destroyed the Constitution and Canons under the subterfuge of forcing through by a majority a modification or interpretation of the Canons You can, indeed you are well on the way, fill the ranks of the clergy with declared, practicing lesbians and homosexuals, and with a little more finesse you can eliminate sin"

Bishop Chambers stated that "the fact that only one member of the House of Bishops came forward to support the Faith once delivered to the saints, to preserve the form as well as the substance of our worship and liturgy, is ample proof that the House as a body is composed of confused men . . . [who] . . . appear to be wolves, dressed in sheep's clothing, who waste the widow's mite in lawsuits to prevent faithful priests from ministering to their flocks"

"Of course you can, with your brave majority, fuss, fume and pass resolutions and amend Canons and Constitutions and fulminate anathemas, but I will continue to do what I was called to do when I was ordained and consecrated."

"These are strong words, John, but you and the House of Bishops have played me false [Your] letter urges me to inform you that I am not to be counted 'as a bishop or as a communicant of this Church.' I neither have nor will renounce my orders; I have no intention of withdrawing from the Episcopal Church."

That is strong language, indeed. Here is a man who stands up for the old truth. And the hierarchy in his church tries to get rid of him, not because he is a heretic, but because he rebukes the church for its sins and deviations. Do we recognize here what we confess in Article 29 of the Belgic Confession about the false Church; and do we see how a formality is used to break the "opposition"?

From the same issue of *Christian News* I quote also another article, which was reproduced from a paper which appears in British Columbia: *The Province*, of May 20, 1978. The article was written by David Virtue. It says:

Rev. Allan Kerr is one very upset Anglican priest.

He does not like the way the Anglican

Church in Canada is going, and he intends to shout it from the steeples — as loud and as long as possible — at whatever personal cost to himself and his future.

In response to articles in *The Province* on declining church attendance, and the church's socio-economic drift, he invited the religion writer to talk with him and his congregation on Sunday about the church's direction and its long-term future prospects.

This writer found a lively congregation with more than 200 people, a large number being young.

In an interview, the rector expressed his opinions about where he stood and what he felt was the church's direction.

Last year he got fed up with the Primate's World Relief Fund doling out money to African liberation movements, and other questionable organizations.

Partly in jest, but mostly in anger, he wrote out a check for 30 cents to express his protest.

Religious protest act No. 1.

Kerr, 45, rector of St. Alban's the Martyr in Burnaby, is also fed up with what he sees as his church's desire to jump on every passing theological bandwagon as though God were subject to the will of some trendy bishop's new "discovery."

He recently wrote in *Topic*, his church's magazine, that "every fuzzy-minded statement made publicly by Bishops Robinson and Pike, every work like *The Myth of God Incarnate*, only creates uncertainty in the minds and hearts of many Christians."

Driving the point home, he said: "Christians have not only the pounding of the permissive world coming at them, but they have questionings about the basis of their belief in God."

About Bishop Pike I gave an informing note above. With respect to the other one, Bishop Robinson, I think that John A.T. Robinson is meant, the man of the so-called "God-is-dead"-theology. And *The Myth of God Incarnate* is a recently published book, written by a number of Anglican theologians, in which they declare that the doctrine of the incarnation of Christ is a myth.

We continue the article.

Religious protest act No. 2.

These are the factors, he says, which St. Paul calls "principalities and powers" that are wavering in the bloodstream of many Christians' faith, and for many it has been a soul destroying experience.

Kerr is angry and upset, and he's tired of being a closet cleric.

"It's time for plain speaking. Our leaders have let us down. In their hearts they've abandoned any vestige of orthodox Christian faith and have succumbed to the world spirit of this age.

"And we wonder why nobody listens to us. Well that's the reason why. Secretly

our bishops and priests have given up on God and the gospel of Jesus Christ and have exchanged true belief for socio-economic reform and shooting off at the mouth about South Africa and a host of political matters that are not only exceedingly complex for secular politicians to grapple with, but are almost impossible for priests ostensibly helping people at the parish level."

Religious protest act No. 3.

Said Kerr: "The year of renewal we had in the New Westminster diocese was a dismal flop. Nothing came of it. We are no further ahead today as a church than we were three years ago. We're only fooling ourselves. We're little more than what St. Paul called 'sounding gongs and tingling cymbals.'"

"The ghastly truth is, Jesus Christ is not being preached from our pulpits, or, if He is, He's being identified with the latest form of political liberation lunacy coming down the wire. It's a travesty of the first order."

Kerr said that while the Anglican Church and its leaders argue over what a guaranteed national income should be for all Canadians, groups like the Mormons are picking off hundreds of disillusioned Christians and sweeping them into their churches.

Kerr said he talked to two Mormon missionaries working his area and they told him they had made nearly 200 new "converts" recently and they still haven't even built a temple yet.

A Mormon spokesman confirmed the Burnaby ward had 400 regularly attending church and another 400 from Coquitlam.

Kerr recently vented his wrath against the *Canadian Churchman*, his church's official national newspaper, over a series of articles on homosexuality.

"The church waffled on where it stood on the issue. There was no clear cut position on the subject. No moral or spiritual guidelines. The article baptized homosexual behaviour as normative. In God's name, what are we standing for?"

Kerr and most of his congregation promptly cancelled their subscriptions to the magazine.

"It's not the airing of the issue I mind. It's the fact that the church seemed to ratify and glorify homosexual behaviour as okay. That strikes me as unbiblical and wrong. There was none of Jesus' redemptive message nor of His attitude of go and sin no more."

"The truth is, it's not okay. The church must exercise compassion and give guidance, but it should not give the practise of homosexuality its blessing."

Kerr says the church must renew its faith in the proclamation of the gospel. "The love of God demands that the Christian give himself to bring the freshness of the beauty, truth and righteousness of Jesus Christ into a confused and sinful world."

Kerr says that if the church is to truly fulfill its mission, every worshipper must be a disciple and servant of Jesus' church, and to gossip the gospel around.

"We are to know Christ and to make Him known. This is the real mission of the church, and one which we are called to do. The future vision of our church hangs on it."

This is clear and plain language. And we can be thankful that the Lord gives outspoken men like this Kerr, who see and tell what is wrong. Let us hope and pray that this knowledge of God and His Word may grow and increase to the spiritual benefit of many, and that there is the insight into God's word which makes more people aware of the Scriptural truth as confessed in Article 28 of the Belgic Confession: "Go out of her" (Revelation 18), "separate [yourselves] from all those who do not belong to the Church, and join [yourselves] to this congregation."

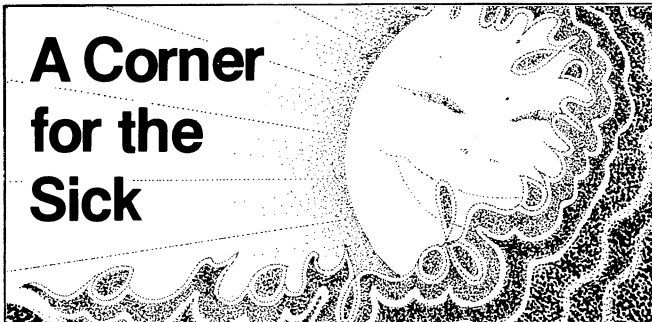
It is good to see that an insider speaks up and says those things that from the Reformed side have been said so often already. May the LORD bless these people and lead them in the way of His Word with all His children, in the way of a new reformation.

J. GEERTSEMA



This picture was taken for the first Yearbook of the Emmanuel Christian High School in Guelph, Ontario. It shows the complete staff of the Emmanuel and Maranatha Schools of the Canadian Reformed School Society of Fergus-Guelph and District. In the front row we see, from left to right: Miss W. Diek, Grades 1 and 2, Mrs. O. Sikkema, Business and Remedial, Mrs. H. Hutten, Home Economics, Mrs. P. Smid, Relief Teacher, Mrs. J. Van Delden, Grades 3 and 4, Mrs. J. Kamphuis, Relief Teacher. Back row, left to right: Mr. P. Smid, Grades 5 and 6, Vice-Principal, Mr. J. Moesker, Grades 7 and 8, Mr. A. Van Abbema, Drafting, Mrs. W. Van Huisstede, Business, Mr. N. VanDooren, Grades 9 and 10, Principal, Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene, Church History.

A Corner for the Sick



Take heed then how you hear; for to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away. Luke 8:18

The Lord Jesus spoke these words to His disciples after He had explained to them what the parable of the sower meant. To the crowds He spoke in parables, but the disciples were privileged. The Lord Jesus told them, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God; but for others they are parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand," (Luke 8:10).

The Lord Jesus emphasized frequently how important it is to hear. How many times is it not written in Scripture, "Whosoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches." Even from heaven Christ appeared to John on the isle of Patmos, and He

spoke those same words as he had spoken to His disciples many times before. We confess in Lord's Day 31 (compare also Articles 3 and 4, Chapter 1, Canons of Dort) that, by the preaching of the word, the kingdom of God is opened or shut. When we receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all our sins are really forgiven us of God for the sake of Christ's merits, but to unbelievers it is proclaimed and witnessed that, if they do not sincerely repent, the wrath of God and eternal condemnation abide on them, as long as they are not converted.

Let us, too, take heed how we hear, remembering that the Lord Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever!

*I am the First, and I the Last,
through endless years the same;
I AM; is My memorial still,
and My eternal Name.
Ho, ye that thirst! to you My grace
shall hidden streams disclose,
And open full the sacred spring,
Whence life for ever flows.*

Hymn 42:4 Book of Praise

Please remember our sick and lonely brothers and sisters in the holiday season! Send your requests to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma
380 St. Andrew Street E.
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1

Letters-to-the-Editor

Esteemed brother,

In my opinion you owe the brotherhood in Burlington a public apology for what you wrote in the *News Medley, Clarion*, June 17th, page 268/9, for two reasons:

1. You "condemned" them for inviting the Rev. Curry who, as Director of Educational Services of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, had already previously given worthwhile advice re: the organization of the Vacation Bible School. The more strange because you were the president of the recent General Synod which declared that this Church, in whose midst the Rev. Curry has a good standing, is a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. You cannot mean that it is more important *who* speaks than *what* is said. Even less can I accept that you hold the sectarian view that all that is "outside" the Canadian Reformed Churches is for that reason condemnable, whoever he be. Thus you risked "judging rashly and unheard" and - as we know already - will have quite some company "joining you in condemning."

2. Though rejecting the false dilemma that those who "evangelize" (a primary calling of the Church!) run the risk to be "so-so" in Reformed doctrine, in fact you typed an insinuation against those who invited the Rev. Curry that, if "this is not the last time" (it wasn't the first time either, see above!), the brotherhood runs the risk to be not-so-good-Reformed anymore. Also in this respect you already have company. To me this is the opposite to "defend and promote the honour and reputation of my neighbour."

Though much more could be said on what you wrote and how you wrote, I understand that you received more reactions, and thus I kept mine as short as possible, repeating that we wait for your apology, expressing the hope that this kind of writing may stop.

Yours in His service,
G. VanDooren

* * *

Esteemed Brother,

Your letter came too late for the previous issue. On the one hand, I am glad that it did, and that now I have the opportunity to elaborate somewhat on what I wrote.

I read and re-read the relevant passage from the news medley. I asked myself, "Was what I wrote so unclear that even the Rev. G. VanDooren did not get my points?"

I did not judge anyone; I did not condemn anyone; I did not pass judgment on anyone not belonging to a Canadian Reformed Church. All I did was: give my opinion or - if you wish - my judgment about a certain action; say, "Don't you see how in this manner you give a stick into the hands of those who work with false dilemmas?"; and warn, "If you continue in this way you might go from one step to another, or someone else may do it, and you or someone else might indeed end up where they do not wish to be."

Those were the three points which I tried to make.

In the first place.

If a minister belonging to, let's say, a Mennonite Church in Kitchener had been invited to tell about the life in *his* church, I might have doubted the wisdom of doing so (there are many books available which give us sufficient information), but the matter would have been completely different from the present case.

Apparently the Rev. Curry (sorry I have to mention his name; neither he nor, for that matter, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church has anything to do with the whole issue) was invited before and "had already previously given worthwhile advice re: the organization of the Vacation Bible School."

I conclude from that information in your letter that that advice concerned the more or less technical matters of setting up, conducting, and using the medium of the Vacation Bible School; perhaps also a sort of explanation of the material used.

If a committee feels that they need such advice (seeing they use materials with which an invited speaker is thoroughly familiar and even more than familiar) I could see no objection to that. I do not say that I would have voted in favour if I had been a committee member; I only say that I cannot see much wrong when a committee asks for such advice.

Here, however, the situation was different.

I quote again from the bulletin:

"We would like the members of our congregation to become better acquainted with the meaning, importance and need for evangelism, in order that the Ebenezer Canadian Reformed

Church may become, as a whole, more evangelism-oriented."

Everyone, I think, can see that this is a totally different thing.

Here the *congregation* (not a committee that wishes to have some organizational guidance) is invited to come, not to be told or advised regarding the organization of something, but in order to "be equipped for the ministry," to use a favoured quote of yours.

Of *that* invitation I said, "It is wrong."

When the Congregation has to be "equipped for its ministry," has "to become better acquainted with the meaning, importance and need for evangelism," and this in order that it "may become, as a whole, more evangelism-oriented," then I say, "To equip the saints for the ministry is the task and privilege of those whom Christ has given to His Church."

I hope that you keep in mind the *tertium comparationis* and that no one tries to get more out of it than I mean by it when I say, "Is there then no 'prophet' within the Canadian Reformed Churches that you have to go to someone else?"

When the congregation is to be "equipped for the ministry," *all* - and I mean *all* - possibilities within the Canadian Reformed Churches should have appeared exhausted before we should ask someone not belonging to those Churches, however Scriptural and Reformed his approach and stand may be. *That* is the point I tried to make.

I am certain that the committee did *not* exhaust all possibilities. I, for one, was not asked. In order to take away any impression as if I felt slighted or bypassed I wrote that I certainly was not offering myself for the "job." I would not feel up to it at all, to be honest. But the fact that I was not asked is proof that it was not that far that an invitation had to be extended to a non-Canadian Reformed minister, since those who first of all have the task to equip the saints for their ministry appeared either unable or unwilling to fulfil that task.

Am I clear now?

In the second place.

I am well aware that among us a gradation is made. I alluded to that also in the news medley of June 3rd. We do not have to conceal from ourselves that there are members among us who *practically* adhere to the words of the Westminster Confession that some

Churches are purer than others (also within the one federation), even though *theoretically* they reject them. We do not have to elaborate on this point; it is a "public secret."

I reject such "differentiation" among us; yet, without giving in to any sectarian tendency (and I think my stand in this matter is no secret, as you yourself already state in your letter), we should do our best to avoid everything that could provide "fuel" for such tendency.

For that reason I deem your committee's action very unwise.

It did not serve to promote the reputation of the very congregation it was intended to "equip for the ministry."

That's what I pointed out (or tried to point out) in the second place.

In the third place.

My third point was a warning, not a prediction, much less a forecast.

It was this warning: From the one step comes so easily the next one.

Does not the history of Christ's Church prove that?

I do not believe that the invitation was either a fruit of our Synod's (1977) decision regarding the Orthodox Presbyterian Church or even was occasioned by it. Previous contact with the invited speaker preceded the synodical decision. Or am I wrong in this and was also the request for advice regarding the organization of the Vacation Bible School a result of the decision of Synod 1977 regarding the Orthodox Presbyterian Church? I think that even chronologically that would be impossible.

The first invitation — to which the second one was only a sequel — was extended upon the basis of personal conviction regarding the Scriptural stand and Reformed conviction of the invited speaker. I do not doubt your assurance that this speaker is wholly Scriptural in his conviction and presentation. That is not the point at issue here at all.

When an "outside" speaker is invited on the basis of one's (or a committee's) personal conviction, that is a precedent. And we know what power precedents have wielded in the history of Christ's Church.

There is the very real possibility that, after some years, someone either in Burlington or somewhere else decides to invite a speaker from another "denomination" on the basis of his (or his committee's) personal conviction that that minister is thoroughly Reformed in his whole outlook on life, and that

he (or they) decides to do so because "they did the same thing in 1977 or 1978." Perhaps that man in, let's say, 1984 is thoroughly Reformed; it is also possible that he is not.

Again others might invite someone who is "perhaps wrong in a few points, but so good and Scriptural on the point we want him to speak about . . ."

That is the danger against which I warned.

No insinuations at all.

Principiis obsta, which I translate as: Cause things to cease when they are in their initial stage, or: nip things in the bud.

Your letter was the third reaction I received. The two previous ones were published in our previous issue. I write you this because in the bulletin of Eb-

enezer Church it was stated that "several of our membership have written to the editor of *Clarion* to clarify the situation so that our *Clarion* readers will be correctly informed what really took place."

Thank you for writing.

I hope I have made clear what I did and tried to achieve.

As always, Yours in Christ,
W.W.J. VANOENE

P.S. I got a fourth letter after I had already completed my reply to you; it arrived the day after that, and is too long to be inserted in this column; besides, it is such a misrepresentation and misinterpretation of what I wrote that I will do its writer a favour by not publishing it. And further, his letter has been answered by my reply to you. vO

40th Wedding Anniversary



Our parents and grandparents, Rieuwert and Margaretha Buitenbos, started their married life together in Enschede, The Netherlands on August 12, 1938. In March, 1952, they immigrated to New Jersey with four daughters and one son. Since no church was established there they moved to Grand Rapids, Michigan, in June 1957.

The Lord granted them good health and happiness in the years they have shared together. All the children are married and belong to the Church, including twenty-three grandchildren. Currently Mr. Buitenbos is serving his second term as an elder in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Fill the Earth and Subdue It

Genesis 1:28 *God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it . . ."*

Mark 16:15 *And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all Creation."*

Twenty-seven years ago my parents came to Canada. I was only seven years old at the time, the oldest of five children. The youngest child was just about a year old. The voyage from Antwerp to New York took two weeks, and the rusty old freighter had to fight her way through a November storm. When we arrived in Hamilton by train, the snow was on the ground already. There was no welcoming committee, and the job that was supposed to have been waiting had disappeared. With the job had gone also the house that we were to have lived in. The beginning of December 1951 was not a good time to look for work. Without the help of other fellow immigrants it would have been a hard time indeed.

The above story is true. It is not, however, extraordinary. The years around 1950 saw this kind of experience repeated time and again as new immigrants arrived, ill-prepared, in a strange land, often not knowing the language, and ignorant of the economic structure.

Why did they come? Why did they brave the risks, the great distance, and the strange customs of this new land? Some came to find work, some wanted a farm of their own, some came to establish their own business, and some were just seeking change. There can be no doubt that they did so in great faith in their Lord and Father. It was also, consciously or otherwise, directed by the mandate given to mankind in Genesis 1:28.

The great flow of immigrants continued through the fifties. By 1960 the flow had decreased to a trickle, and then it practically stopped. Better economic conditions in The Netherlands had removed the major incentive to emigrate. The great growth of the Canadian Reformed Churches due to the constant influx of new immigrants had stopped. Now the increase in numbers had to come from young people's growing up, getting married, and having children of their own. This was also according to Genesis 1:28.

As the Lord blessed their work, the immigrant congregations established themselves and prospered. Church buildings arose, schools were built, and our people firmly established themselves in their communities. Congregations grew, and then split into more congregations, almost as inevitably as the changing of the seasons. As the congregations grew, so did our capabilities, and in due course a Theological College was set up and began graduating new ministers. High schools were set up, and missionaries were sent out to the far corners of the world. Thus we obeyed the mandate given to us in Mark 16:15.

But, meanwhile, what was happening in some corners of Canada? Of the almost thirty congregations now in existence, some did not show this steady growth. These were some of the congregations that had never been large. Several of these congregations were geographically not very close to their nearest neighbour. They did not have the numbers to support a minister, and they could not successfully support their own school. As a result, those who had settled in these small congregations felt pressured to move away to where those facilities were available, to the larger congregations. Those in larger congregations, who normally might have moved there, did not go to the smaller congregations because of the isolation and lack of facilities, facilities for which they had already sacrificed so long and hard. Thus the smaller congregations did not grow at all; in fact they dwindled in numbers.

According to my 1978 Yearbook there are now five congregations with

less than 100 members. These congregations, with one exception, have since 1971, over the course of the last nine years, decreased in size. During this period the Canadian and American Reformed Churches have increased in total membership by 18%. The number of communicant members has increased by 40% over these nine years.

It is interesting to consider a few more figures. The "average" Canadian Reformed Church has 302 members and 141 communicant members. But is there such a thing as an average church? Only five of our churches fall in the range of 250 to 350 members. There are seven churches with more than 400 members. Fifteen out of twenty-nine churches, those that have memberships over the average of 302, have a total of 6779 members combined. This means that half the churches have 75% of the members. Well, what does this all mean? It has been said that one can prove almost anything with statistics. For the moment let us agree on only one thing: there is a problem in the small congregations. The small congregations must grow in membership if they are to survive.

What has happened since 1951? Have our church members lost the desire to go out into the world? Twenty-seven years ago there were few Canadian Reformed congregations, there were fewer ministers, and no schools at all. Yet we came in large numbers to this new land. By the same token, we were not happy with that. We worked, we sacrificed to improve the situation. The churches were built, the schools were established, but let's not stop part way. We need to regain that momentum we had not even a generation ago, so that those who are struggling in the small congregations are not abandoned, so that those congregations do not disappear entirely.

Here in Ottawa, where I live with my family, we are members of one of the smallest congregations in Canada. We represent ten percent of the congregation. If you compare that to being, say, one two-hundredth of a congregation, then it is obvious that each and every member is significant in a small church. I would find it hard to justify to my fellow church members here a move away from Ottawa. The congregation of Ottawa is obviously too small. We are hoping and praying and also working at changing that.

What can we do, here, now, and today? We can all reexamine our position in our present situation. If we

OUR COVER

Marsh land in Jasper National Park. (Photo courtesy John van Laar, Abbotsford, B.C.)

moved away tomorrow, would anyone notice the difference?

I am not suggesting that Ottawa is the only congregation in need. There are at least five congregations in Canada deserving and needing more members. I am sure that in each of these congregations you will find brothers and sisters eager to assist you. Now that we can no longer count on immigrants from The Netherlands to swell our ranks we must depend on you. We hope that you, too, will recognize our need, and will respond not only with your prayers, but also with your active participation. The mandate of Genesis 1:28 is still in force today.

C. TORENVLIET Ottawa.

Church News

CALLED to Winnipeg, Manitoba; Watford, Ontario; Guelph, Ontario; Neerlandia, Alberta:

CANDIDATE J. DE JONG

of Hamilton, Ontario.

CALLED to Ureterp, The Netherlands:

REV. CI. STAM

of Burlington, West, Ontario.

GUIDO DE BRÈS

PRESS RELEASE

of the Board of Directors of Guido de Brès High School meeting held on June 19, 1978.

Our Chairman, br. J. Schutten, informed us that last Thursday was the last day of school. We were blessed with a good year, for which we are thankful to our Lord.

The minutes of our previous meeting, held May 15, 1978, were adopted. The correspondence was read by the secretary. A draft reply to br. G.J. Nordeman was accepted. The inquiry of Mr. DeVries, Brantford, a member of the Free Reformed Church, to send his children to our school, was considered by the Board, and the Promotion Committee was requested to discuss the matter with him.

The Principal reported that on the whole student behaviour had been good. School activities also went well. The proposed budget for school supplies for next year in the amount of \$20,500 was approved. The Ladies Auxiliary will be asked to help us finance part of the Carpentry Programme. A proposal by the Principal with respect to the Professional Development Days was endorsed. The Board expressed appreciation to our staff for the dedicated efforts which resulted in a good year for our school.

Permission was given to Dr. Faber to

use the library of the school for the Teachers' Summer Courses. Our teachers will be urged to attend this program and will be reimbursed for 50% of the fees.

The treasurer reported that a letter will be mailed to all members who did not meet their pledges for the building fund.

A contract was signed with Langdon Bus Lines for transportation from Toronto, Brampton, and Burlington.

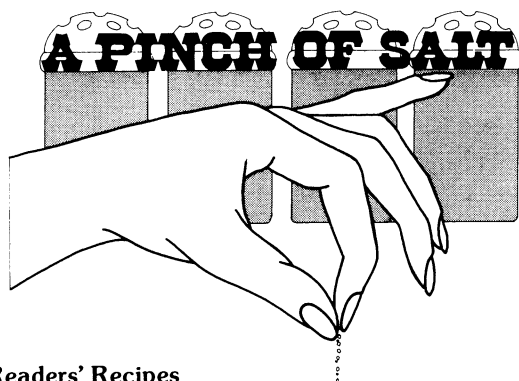
The Board decided to meet again on July 17, 1978, the Lord willing.

ARIE J. HORDYK,
Secretary.

For a Precious,
Lasting Gift

GIVE
A
BOOK

Your Local
Correspondent
Will Gladly Help You



Readers' Recipes

This time I want to share with you two of the recipes sent in by Mary Lee. If you have a recipe that you think we would all like to have, won't you send it to me?

Make Ahead Muffins

2 cups flour (maybe whole wheat)
2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. salt
1 cup bran
2 well-beaten eggs

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup corn oil
2 cups milk
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup sugar
1 cup raisins

Mix batter and store in refrigerator. Can be made the night before and eaten hot for breakfast. Will keep a week or more. Good hot with jam, very moist.

350°F 30 min.

Yogurt Fruit Dressing

1 cup yogurt
2 tsp. honey or corn syrup
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. nutmeg
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. ginger
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. lemon rind

Mix well and chill. Serve over prepared fruit.

Hint: In Holland they season their broad beans with something called **bonenkruid**. Known in Canada as savory, it looks like little green leaves. Sprinkle some on your broad beans before cooking or reheating canned ones. I also use it on lima beans. It just adds that special flavour!

Word Search — Puzzle No. 29

GENESIS

R	A	C	H	E	L	O	D	L	O	S	O	D	O	M	H	A	G	A	R	M	L	G
E	H	A	H	A	L	E	P	H	C	A	M	S	E	H	P	E	N	I	E	L	D	E
D	C	G	O	O	D	O	M	I	N	I	O	N	P	E	R	B	A	H	I	B	R	N
E	O	S	E	B	A	B	E	L	A	K	M	E	V	I	L	E	S	I	D	R	E	E
A	N	A	P	H	T	A	L	I	R	I	S	T	N	E	A	T	S	N	E	O	A	S
T	E	J	H	E	K	I	C	A	T	O	N	O	C	W	N	H	A	E	L	T	M	I
H	R	U	R	C	N	O	H	Y	J	E	E	I	O	R	R	E	L	B	T	H	U	S
A	B	D	A	N	O	S	I	R	P	M	V	B	A	D	E	L	V	U	S	E	A	G
S	D	A	I	E	W	V	Z	R	I	E	N	H	S	G	T	A	A	E	E	R	S	I
E	O	H	M	G	L	S	E	S	L	I	A	S	A	E	E	B	T	R	R	S	E	V
V	O	E	R	Y	E	S	D	N	A	R	E	U	T	N	D	R	I	I	W	C	J	E
E	L	S	O	P	D	M	E	R	A	S	G	B	A	E	E	A	O	C	O	O	A	N
N	F	S	N	T	G	E	K	S	S	N	A	D	N	R	N	H	N	G	L	U	C	O
O	L	A	I	C	E	T	N	H	A	M	T	U	G	A	D	A	L	N	E	N	O	I
Y	I	N	M	A	V	H	O	L	V	A	B	E	L	T	E	M	O	I	A	T	B	T
T	L	A	A	I	E	U	A	B	I	R	T	H	R	I	G	H	T	N	M	E	S	A
N	E	M	J	N	N	S	H	R	O	A	D	A	M	O	S	I	N	N	H	N	A	E
E	A	E	N	O	S	E	T	H	U	S	A	C	A	N	A	A	N	I	S	A	C	R
L	R	Z	E	B	U	L	U	N	R	E	B	L	E	S	S	I	N	G	I	N	A	C
P	S	F	B	P	H	A	R	A	O	H	G	O	D	G	O	S	H	E	N	C	A	S
E	I	S	S	A	C	H	A	R	E	B	E	K	A	H	D	A	N	B	R	E	S	E
L	O	R	G	R	A	C	E	C	U	R	S	E	D	E	M	E	R	C	Y	H	I	E

Abel	creation	famine	Issachar	Methuselah	Satan
Abraham	curse	flood			Saviour
Adam			Jacob	Naphtali	serpent
ark	Dan	Gad	Joseph	Noah	Seth
Babel	death	generations	Judah		seven
beginning	dominion	Genesis		Peniel	Shem
Benjamin	dream	God	knowledge	Pharaoh	Simeon
Bethel	Eden	good		plenty	sin
birthright	Egypt	Goshen	language	prison	Sodom
blessing	Enoch	grace	Levi		sold
brothers	enmity		life	Rachel	subdue
	Ephraim:	Hagar	Lot	rainbow	
Cain	Esau	Ham		Rebekah	wrestled
Canaan	eternal		Machpelah	Reuben	
countenance	Eve	Isaac	Manasseh		Zebulun
covenant	evil	Ishmael	Melchizedek	salvation	
		Israel	mercy	Sarah	

W. Diek

our little magazine



From the Mailbox

Hello Busy Beavers,

Are you all enjoying your holidays as much as I did? I'm curious to hear how you did! And I'm hoping many of you will write and tell me, or better still, write a story about your holidays and ENTER it in OUR CONTEST.

That reminds me! Have YOU sent in YOUR entries for OUR BIG SUMMER CONTEST? The sooner the better!

* * *

A very happy birthday to all Busy Beavers who celebrate an August birthday. All the Busy Beavers, including me, Aunt Betty, join in wishing you a very special day with your family and friends. And may the Lord bless and guide you in the year ahead. Trust and obey.

Danny Linde	August 1	Bruce Hartman	August 16
Cynthia Dam	2	Trudy Tamminga	17
Billy Doekes	3	Kathy DeBoer	18
Karen Ellens	3	Sandra Knegt	21
Evelyn Geusebroek	3	Marlissa Lindhout	21
David Bisschop	5	Arthur Pieterman	21
Cynthia Linde	5	Tommy Linde	22
Caroline Boeringa	6	Martha Meester	22
John Hofsink	6	Henry Vis	24
Margaret Hansma	9	Hetty Witteveen	27
Elizabeth Medemblik	10	Adele Hulzebosch	28
Joanne Hulst	11	Jeanette VandeBurgt	28
Carol Griffioen	11	Jeanette De Boer	31
John Beukema	15	Theo Wierenga	31
Sidney Doesburg	16		

* * *

BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT

Did you think, "Oh yes, I MEANT to send some money"? And you haven't? Don't worry. There's still time. But not long! So if you were planning to send something: DO IT NOW. In a few weeks we will have to send our present.

And that's what I want to talk to you about!

When we send our present of money from our Busy Beaver Club we also want to tell in a letter WHO the gift is from, WHAT the money is for (books), and we want to send our BEST WISHES for a good year at the College.

Now I will tell you what I was thinking . . .

Many of our Busy Beavers are very good letter-writers. I think the people at the College would enjoy getting a letter and a present from our Busy Beavers, don't you think so too?

Why not write a letter for the College, (your Dad and Mom can help you) and send it to ME at MY ADDRESS and I will pick out the BEST letter and send it WITH OUR PRESENT to the College.

Sound like a good idea? Try it tomorrow!

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Brian Berends*. We hope you'll really enjoy participating in all our Busy Beaver activities. Sounds to me as if you had a really good time on your school trip. Bye for now.

And a big welcome to you too, *Francine Medemblik*. Thank you for sending the poem and the really big word search puzzle! Have you joined in our contest, Francine?

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Peter Van Woudenberg*. We hope you will enjoy being a Busy Beaver. How did you like your school play day in the park, Peter? And did you help a lot with the haying?

Did you have a good time camping *Martin Doekes*? Did you get to see the Peace Tower in Ottawa? I'm glad too, that you passed Martin. How was Gerry's birthday?

How did your swimming lessons go, *Annette Bosscher*? Are you enjoying your holidays? I think you really liked that ride on the jumbo jet!

Thank you for your contribution to the BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT, *Carolyn Stieva*. You did very well on the quizzes, too! Your school trip sounded interesting too, Carolyn. Bye for now.

Did you enjoy camping, *Charles Doekes*? And did you get to go sight-seeing? And you went to Ottawa on a school trip, too?

Hello *Sylvia Poppe*. Nice to hear from you again. Thank you for the poem.

And thank you to you, too, *Billy Doekes*, for your entry in the poem contest. Did you have a graduation to mark the end of your elementary school career? I hope you will enjoy the challenge of high school next year.

Thank you for your poem, *Marion Overbeek*. "Write again soon."

I really liked your poems, *Helena Blokhuis*. Thank you for writing.

You will have to write and tell me about your camping trip, *Joanne Doekes*. Or will you write a story about it for our Contest? And how is your garden coming?

* * *

Can you finish this rhyme?

Lists

Lists are handy,
Lists are quick,
Lists are dandy,

We have lots of things to do. We could use a list this time, too. Don't you think?

Here you are:

THINGS TO DO

1. Send my contribution for our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT.
2. Write my poem.
3. Do the quizzes.
4. Write my holiday story.
5. Write a letter to go with the BIRTHDAY PRESENT.

Bye for now, Busy Beavers. Enjoy the last month of your holidays! I'm looking forward to hearing from you.

With love from your
Aunt Betty