

Clarion

THE CANADIAN REFORMED MAGAZINE

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September 23, 1978





Nine Years Old

A ninth anniversary means that someone was born nine years ago.

That was the case with our Theological College.

The opening of the College took place on September 10, 1969. On September 8, 1978, we celebrated the ninth anniversary.

That was one of the thoughts expressed by the Rev. D. VanderBoom, President of the Board of Governors, when he opened the assembly in the Wellington Square United Church on Caroline Street in Burlington. Although the number of visitors was not as large as other years, yet there were many who came to be happy and thankful together. One of the reasons why there were not as many as in previous years may well have been that there was no graduation this year. We had no student who completed the course of study and now was to receive his degree in convocation. That will be better next year, we hope, when three of our students are expected to see their studies crowned with a degree and their shoulders draped with a hood symbolizing that fact.

The small number of students is still a reason for concern. The students who follow courses at our College at the moment are not even sufficient in

number to fill all the existing vacancies. And then: look at the vacancies which we are to face some years from now. However, let me write a brief report on the evening and not elaborate on various aspects of Church life.

OPENING

After the "stage-party" (that's what it is called officially, I think) had reached their assigned places, we sang of Psalm 138 stanzas 1, 3, and 4. I noticed a remarkable improvement in the singing of those verses: the second and fourth lines were sung in one breath and not in the usual manner, with a deep abyss gaping right in the middle of the line. The last time when I requested a Congregation to sing stanza 4, I said to the Elders when we had returned to the Consistory room after the service, "The spirit certainly was faltering again!" It came out like this: "Wilt Thou restore — three counts of rest — my faltering spirit." I was the more happy that it was sung properly this time, at least by the large majority of those present.

The Rev. D. VanderBoom then went to the pulpit and we read together Psalm 135. After that, the President led in prayer of thanksgiving and supplication.

In his opening words he welcomed all those present and stated that he was happy that he could do that. This is an anniversary meeting and, since there is no graduation, there is no "Convocation Part" added to it: it is only a College Evening. Although there is no graduation this year, yet we wish to continue this kind of gatherings because every year again it appears that the brothers and sisters are very much interested in the affairs of the College. This evening the main line of the topics is "history." Also with our College we are making history: today we have the ninth anniversary, at least when one counts from the day when the College was officially opened and the appointed professors and lecturers began to work in the College building. The College is much older if one wishes to count from the Synod 1962, which Synod appointed already brethren to guide eventual students with their studies.

Rev. VanderBoom read us also a letter sent by the Church at Carman, conveying its wishes for our College.

After these opening remarks the Rev. VanderBoom vacated the lectern, which was now occupied by Dr. J. Faber, who read the "Principal's Report." Since we publish that report separately, we'll continue with the next point on the agenda: "An address by the Rev. H. Scholten, Lecturer in Church History and Church Polity, entitled, "Modern Trends in Church History."

The address was read by the Rev. J. Mulder. I do not know when it will be published. The Rev. Scholten wishes to go over it again and that is all I can tell you at the moment. It would well be worth publishing this address and we look forward to receiving it.

The singing of Psalm 44:1 and 2, followed the above address and then we listened to an Organ Solo by Mr. P.H. Buist, the organist for this evening. The work he played was Handel's Organ Concerto in B Flat major, Opus IV. He played two movements: Introduction and Allegro. That presentation was rewarded with a well-deserved applause.

Of the following item, an address by the Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, I shall not say much. The title was "Old Trends in Modern History" and it will be published so that everyone can read it.

CONCLUDING POINTS

The concluding points on the agenda begin with an "Offer of Thanks-

giving for the College." At the moment — much to my regret — I am unable to tell you how much was collected. Perhaps we can do so in our next issue.

The collection having been taken, we sang Hymn 53, after which Mrs. L. Selles came with her "regular" presentation of behalf of the Women's Savings Action. However, before she told us about what the older sisters had done, she read a letter from the Busy Beaver Club in which congratulations were offered at the occasion of the College's birthday. "As you know, we are the junior members of our congregations. But we know that birthdays are important, especially this one. That is why we have been collecting money for this gift for some time. We hope it may add something to the festivity of the occasion." The gift to which the Busy Beavers refer was an amount of \$30.95 which was brought together penny by penny.

After that, Mrs. Selles came with her own presentation. She spoke as follows.

MRS. L. SELLES

The Ladies' Savings Action being one year older than the College, has now been running for quite a few years. In the course of those years I have raised objections, time and again, to being in this pulpit. I know that Prof. Faber will accept a cheque for the College at any time and at any place. But my protests did not produce any result: I have to present the annual contribution from the Women's Savings Action officially, in style!

Once the College was operating, all educational material which was requested has been provided; and so have drapes, curtains, carpets, dishes, filing cabinets, the fixing up of students' quarters — all those things were paid for from this action; and once this had been taken care of, the action could stop right there.

But you know how women are: we are not so quickly and so easily content with the results of a task which we have taken upon ourselves. Through correspondence with the ladies in the Churches in Mid and West Canada, we found that we all agreed together to continue the work and to dedicate the money for use for the Library. Part of the money is being reserved for a new building or for the remodelling of the existing one. It may also be needed for the purchase of a large quantity of books, if the need should arise and the opportunity should be there.

In the annual Newsletter, financial statements are given, while a list of contact addresses was printed in *Clarion* for those who care to know.

The Lindhout family (I may say this, for not only Mrs. Lindhout Sr.) takes care of the financial aspects. I like you to know that it is being done with true dedication and love for the study in the ministry. They deserve our thanks.

We were able to fulfil the pledge which we made last year and we hope to be able to pledge the same amount again. May the Lord provide young men who are willing to serve Him in this special office.

On behalf of all the women present in this Church building and the women in other parts of Canada, I bring you *in word* the wish that God may bless you all, Staff, Students, Board of Governors, Board of Trustees.

And *in deed*? I present you with the promise of again \$3,000.00.

Dr. Faber hastened to meet Mrs. Selles halfway when she descended from the pulpit to present him with that written and signed promise, a cheque.

It is not so much the money itself, it is mainly the dedication which the sisters show, that is so highly appreciated. And: when you have something to work for together, you also feel that the bond is strengthened and that the cause itself comes closer and closer. I wished it were possible to have a Convocation and a College Evening in the West sometime. I have my doubts whether that is really feasible, seeing that the transportation of the Faculty, the Board of Trustees, the Students, and, not to forget our faithful and diligent "Jack-of-all-Trades," Miss Ann Van Sydenborgh, would devour a not unimportant sum of money. Chartering a plane would be the cheapest way, I think, but then, I would not wish to have all those people together in one airplane. *IF* something should happen

CLOSING

Prayer of thanksgiving was offered by the Rev. G. Van Dooren.

The singing of Psalm 90:1 and 8 concluded the ninth College Evening.

Many brothers and sisters made use of the opportunity to meet old acquaintances or to make new ones. Gradually, however, the annex emptied and the parking lot was vacated.

Now we have set out upon the tenth stretch of the road. How many more stretches to go before the Day is

there? We do not know; we just have to work and to do our best.

May our gracious God bless our College and all who "labour" there.


"Give us the tools," Prof. Faber said last year, quoting, "and we shall work."

The tools are not just books and pens, writing pads and microfilm-readers.

The tools are men in the first place.

May the Lord our God provide them.

vO



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CLARION
P.O. Box 54,
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EDITORIAL COMMITTEE
Editor: W.W.J. VanOene
Co Editors: J. Geertsema, Cl. Stam,
D. VanderBoom

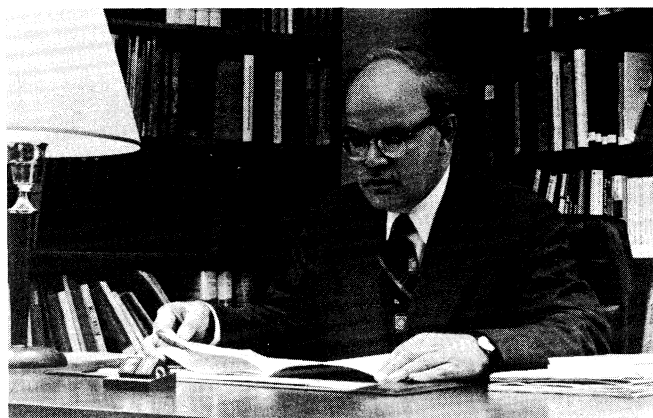
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Principal's Statement 1978

Ninth Anniversary Meeting — Friday, September 8, 1978



Prof. Dr. J. Faber

1. COLLEGE EVENING

The eighth anniversary meeting and the sixth convocation were held on September 9th, 1977. Prof. L. Selles spoke about "Reformed Faith and Modern Trends: Redaction Criticism in New Testament Studies." The degree of Bachelor of Divinity was conferred on Mr. E.J. Tiggelaar, B.A., and Mr. H. Versteeg, B.A. The latter addressed the audience on the theme "Priority in Mission." The Rev. J. Geertsema spoke about "Abraham's Calling in Genesis 14." Mr. H. Versteeg became a missionary in Irian Jaya; Mr. E.J. Tiggelaar became the first minister in the young history of the Canadian Reformed Church at Chilliwack, B.C.

2. ENROLLMENT AND CURRICULUM

For the course 1977-1978, Mr. R.G. Leach, B.A. enrolled as freshman. Four other students, Mr. R. Aasman, Mr. B.J. Berends, Mr. P.K.A. deBoer, and Mr. G.H. Visscher studied the courses for sophomores.

3. ADULT COURSES

In order to broaden the outreach of our College, the Senate organized adult courses during the winter 1977-1978 for members of the Canadian Reformed Churches and outsiders. Twenty evenings were scheduled, four courses of five lectures each, and topics as "The Sermon on the Mount" and "The So-called Five Points of Calvinism" were dealt with. For the coming academic year we planned a more unified approach and chose as topic "Kingdom and Church" which will be discussed during sixteen evenings — four times four lectures — from the side of Old and New Testament Studies, from dogmatological and diaconological viewpoint. Our lecturer in Ecclesiology is exempted for reasons of his health. Guido de Brès High School will offer us the physical possibilities for larger attendance of these adult courses. The parking space around our own building is rather restricted.

4. NEW HANDBOOK

During this academic year, our new Handbook 1978 was published. It re-

flects the restructuring of our curriculum that became necessary after Synod 1974 decided to lengthen the period of study from three to four years. The study of Hebrew and Greek as the original languages of Holy Scripture, and of Latin as the language of the Church for many centuries received even more emphasis than before. If someone compares the program of studies in the new and the old Handbook, he will find that the Reformed character of our curriculum is strengthened not only in this respect but also in a broadening of the study of the creeds and confessions of the Church. According to a decision of Synod 1977, the terms of admission for applicants under the age of thirty still imply the Bachelor of Arts degree or its equivalent. A system of units of credit is built up in this manner that five hours of classwork, including examinations, constitute one unit of credit. This system, introduced in our new Handbook and applied in the text of the academic transcripts of our College, allows for an evaluation of each course and a comparison between the respective courses as far as their weight is concerned in the program of our theological studies.

5. CONTACTS

We thankfully take note of the fact that one of our alumni, Mr. J. deJong, obtained his degree of "doctorandus (oude stijl)" from our sister institution at Kampen, The Netherlands. Before and during his stay in the old Hanseatic city, the Faculty had good contact with the Senate of the "Theologische Hogeschool van De Gereformeerde Kerken in Nederland." In August 1978, two members of our Senate attended, as observers, the Second International Conference of Institutions for Christian Higher Education at Grand Rapids. They met there, a.o., with the delegate of the "Gereformeerde Wetenschappe-

lijk Genootschap" in The Netherlands and with two colleagues from the Theological Seminary in Busan, Korea. Such international contacts are often refreshing. In their report, our observers remarked: "During an open session for institutions to share problems, challenges, etc., we became aware of the important function of several small Reformed and Presbyterian theological colleges in countries such as Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Guatemala, Malawi, Nigeria, etc. Having learned their difficulties and blessings, we returned with gladness and thankfulness to our own small Theological College in Hamilton."

6. CONCLUSION

This brings us back to our own situation. The number of our students remains small. Because of the decision of Synod 1974 to augment the duration of the study with one year, this anniversary meeting does not experience the happy occasion of the conferring of the degree of Bachelor of Divinity. Although we hope to have three graduates next year, only one young man presented himself for admission as freshman, Mr. Clarence Bouwman of Fergus. Our Theological College is in a cyclus of extremely lean years of production. I will not repeat the remarks I made in previous statements about the necessity of prayer and labour in the congregations in order to remedy the situation. Let me end with a word of public thanks to the Board of Governors, the Trustees, and the sisters of Ladies' Aid, as well as the boys and girls of the Busy Beaver Club, for all the work they voluntarily and cheerfully did for our Theological College. The LORD may grant us His blessing in the academic year 1978-1979, one year nearer to salvation than when we first believed.

J. FABER

Old Trends in Modern History*

When you read the title of the address which I am to give this evening you may have thought that you were going to get another scholarly exposition in which the ideas and theories of modern historians are examined and in which it is shown that basically they are revived ideas which are almost as old as mankind itself.

It would, I am convinced, not be difficult for a scholar to prove that what is being propagated with fervour and dedication as the newest discovery in the field of history is actually nothing more than a re-shaped and re-upholstered old concept.

That applies not only in the area of history. One has only to read up a little on the doctrine which have been proclaimed and advocated in the course of the centuries to come to the conclusion that what is being hailed as the newest understanding of God's Word, is in fact, nothing but a revival (in a somewhat different form) of errors which the Church rejected many, many centuries ago.

It is, however, not my intention to try my hand at such a scholarly discourse. You would not expect that either, after having listened to a lecture by a member of the Faculty. After such solid food you expect some lighter fare, a sort of dessert, easily digestible. We are used to that at our annual meetings — aren't we? — where we start off with a solid introduction before, and some light entertainment after the intermission. Since this is an annual meeting, an anniversary-meeting, you may consider my contribution to be such a dessert: light enough so as not to make you forget the main course and yet sufficiently substantial to complement your meal.

The meal this evening consists of "history."

However, we are to be aware of the different meanings in which that word can be used.

It may be used to denote the things which happened and now are gone: "That is history by now," we say then.

It can also be used of a written record of what did happen. As such we speak of "The History of Canada" or "The History of Europe" or "The History of the Church."

I wish to mention one more sense in which we use the word "history": we may also mean by it the course of the world, the development of the nations, the sequence of events and occurrences which together form the progress from the one day into the other.

It is in this latter sense that I should like to make a few remarks about old trends which we find in modern history.

Thereby we do not forget that the presence of old trends does not mean that everything is going to be repeated or even is being repeated. There is no repetition of history and the well-known saying "L'histoire se répète" is misleading. That is our Christian conviction and therein we differ from practically everyone else.

Is it not so that very many, consciously or not, adhere to the idea that everything is destined to disappear, only to form the material from which a new world will arise as a phoenix from its ashes? Is it not the destiny of each and every civilization to be replaced by a better, higher civilization?

Can we not adduce proof from history that from time to time catastrophes took place by which an existing civilization was destroyed? The few who survived the disaster then had the opportunity to make a new beginning, to start off anew with a pure, unspoiled, primitive life. But when they grew in number, there again came conflicts and clashes. There came a repetition of the former events.

Is there not the one cycle after the other without any progress from cycle to cycle? Thus history is not relevant: it has no meaning for the following generations whatever.

Or, perhaps, the civilizations which follow one another do make progress from one to the other, especially along spiritual lines. From whatever angle one looks at it, a civilization is the basic unit of history.

From the idea of re-incarnation to the yearly repeated cycles we find the very same thought which even today seems to fascinate people: Let the present civilization and let the present order of things perish: a new order and a new society will rise triumphantly from its ruins. In order to achieve that and to help that development along,



Rev. W.W.J. Van Oene

man is prepared to commit the worst atrocities and to destroy millions of people. We only have to think of the millions that were driven to death by starvation in the Stalinist era in Russia; of the cruelties which characterize the regimes in Vietnam and Cambodia. From the present destruction a classless, new, and perfect society will emerge in which all the former evils will have been eliminated.

Neither am I the person nor is this the place or proper time to go into the philosophical background of the above mentioned viewpoints. I just mentioned some aspects which I see on the same plane and even following the same line.

It is evident that to those who follow that line of thought history does not mean much, if anything at all. It is more than just a contempt for the persons of previous rulers and dictators that in each new edition of the big Soviet Encyclopedia a different evaluation is given of the person and the importance of a Stalin or a Khrushchev, or that their names are omitted altogether. The basic reason is that history does not mean anything: one can certainly learn from the mistakes of the past, but the past as such is not important. When it comes to the point, it is irrelevant whether the past was there at all or not. The new era began with the October revolution and — if it had been feasible at all — the calendar would no longer have read the year 1917 but the year 1. Forget about what was before!

Although I am aware of the differ-
Continued on next page.

ence, I do wish to mention in the same breath the thoughts of those who do not consider it important or even relevant whether what the Scripture presents to us as historical events did indeed happen or not. They speak of myths, and try to peel a certain message and truth out of the mythical package. But whether Adam and Eve indeed lived and whether there actually was a fall into sin, that is not important. The same applies to what Scripture tells us of the sufferings and death, of the resurrection and ascension of our Saviour. Whether the Lord Jesus actually rose from the dead on a certain day in history, of what value is that or of what value is it to know that? Of what importance is it even whether it was a historical fact?

The result is an a-historical attitude and position. There is no interest in history, there is nothing worth defending or standing for. Who cares? Away with the Establishment! Away with the old institutions! They have proved worthless anyway.

Such an attitude also produces apathy. There is no longer interest in what happens today because there is no interest in what happened yesterday or last year, let alone in what happened one hundred or one thousand years ago. Who can still become excited about anything?

Thus the way is paved towards dictatorship. In this respect, too, there is nothing new.

Was it not like that throughout history? The breakdown of law and order, the failure of the authorities to cope with the situation, the indifference of the people every time anew formed the gate from which dictators emerged and were hailed as the rescuers appearing at the proper moment.

Before Julius Caesar appeared on the scene, armed gangs terrorized Rome and the only solution appeared to be that dictatorial powers were granted to the man who was to bring a return to law and order and security of life.

In our days there are again plenty of cities where it is not safe to walk in the streets after dark; cities where, in many instances, even police officers are afraid to enter certain sections after nightfall.

It was the breakdown of society and the failure of the authorities to uphold their authority which in Germany after World War I led to the rising of the Nazi star and the authoritarian style and the terrors of the Third Reich.

If the French Revolution had not brought about the chaos which followed the outburst of popular dissatisfaction with the whole political, social, and economic situation of eighteenth century France, Napoleon Bonaparte would never have had the opportunities he now had to work himself to the very top.

We do see the very same factors working in our days.

No one can deny that there is a breakdown of law and order. Are we not living in a "permissive society"? It is a society in which the attacker receives more protection than his victim; in which actions are launched for the legalization of practices and usages which are detrimental to physical and mental health. The communists in Vietnam certainly knew what they did when they tried to get the American soldiers fighting there hooked on drugs. But in spite of all evidence, more and more voices are heard advocating the legalizing of drug-use. Is it not so that the law should only express what the majority of the people feel to be right?

On the one hand, people clamour for the recognition of the "right" to live their own lives without any interference and, on the other hand, there is a cry for more and more government regulations. Authority is in decay everywhere; yet "everywhere the state is grasping for more power as the cure-all for man's problems." And as the Roman Empire once offered the masses "land and employment, food and money," so today it is deemed the task of the government to take care of the needs of all the citizens in a similar manner.

There is reason to doubt whether those things are seen and recognized by us and especially by our young people.

Is there not a large amount of apathy among us? Are there not many among us who seem to be unable to get excited about anything?

Yes, I realize that oftentimes there were impure motives and it may well have been that there was a large measure of pride present; yet there were years in which it was possible for the Reformed segment of the population to get thousands of older and younger people to come together for rallies and conferences.

Has a spirit of apathy invaded the Church in our days?

There was a time when a captured Roman youth put his hand into the fire

and held it there till it was burnt, and then proudly announced to the astonished enemies that there were thousands of young men like him, who were prepared to do the very same thing.

There was a time when thousands enthusiastically responded to the statement, "Right or wrong, my country," when young men were prepared to die for their country and for their ideals.

Is that still the case?

Round about us we notice the same fatigue which was characteristic of various previous periods of history and which was a preparation for the rise of dictatorships. Has the fatigue also invaded the hearts of our young people?

It appears difficult to have a good society-life and a fruitful discussion. Only a few take part in the activities and the rest are just putting in their time, if they are there at all, that is. About conferences and rallies they cannot become excited at all. If they go they oftentimes just drive around or do things which a Christian youth should not do at all.

Round about us older and younger ones cannot discover anything worth living for. Thus they flee into the unreal world of drugs, sex, or mystery-religions.

In how far has that invaded the Church?

The Lord be praised for His grace shown in the activity of a larger part of our older and younger people. But the percentage of those who seem to be influenced by the general apathy and indifference is too large. "So what?" "Why should I become excited about that?" Can we still produce patriotism, love for country and nation?

Yes, "This land is your land, this land is my land," we sing. But there are too many who just sit down and sit back and let this land be taken over by the same forces and the same mentality which in the past have proved to be utterly disastrous.

It is, therefore, of utmost importance that we study history and that we know history. History is relevant, for it is not true that there are consecutive cycles which either are irrelevant or more or less form the basis for the next one.

History is a line: it proceeds from the one point to the other. It is the great struggle between God and Satan, a struggle which has already been decided. We do see kingdoms rise and

Continued on next page.

kingdoms fall. But they rise only when they have a task to fulfil and they fall only when their task has been completed and when the saw starts boasting against Him who pulls it. And we know that all power has been given to our Lord Jesus Christ.

When we know history we shall also be able to evaluate correctly the events of the day. That does not mean that we shall be able to explain each and every event, but we are being taught by what happened in the past. Knowing the facts, and maintaining that they are facts and are relevant, we shall see a pattern arising. Judging the facts by the light of the Scriptures we shall be warned and encouraged both.

Time and again it has been tried to bring all tribes and nations together against the Lord and against His Anointed. However, since the Lord God confused the language of mankind no effort in that direction has succeeded. Even in Russia it appears impossible to so forge the various races together that they become really one.

True unity is only there where through the blood and Spirit of Christ the confusion of Babel has been overcome and the partitions have been removed. True unity is possible only through the blood of the cross.

We look at the rise and fall of various empires not as would one who believes that they were irrelevant cycles in the endless succession of civilizations. We look at them as Daniel did who beheld a rock, being hewn out without human hands, and who saw that rock grow until it filled all the earth.

We look at the appearance and disappearance of realms and empires while knowing that they are all links in that one golden chain of history. Understanding the lessons from the past and, by the light of Scripture, judging correctly the signs of the present, we rejoice because we know that Christ Jesus has taken the scroll out of the hands of Him Who sits on the throne.

We rejoice because in the midst of the turmoil we have received an unmovable kingdom, one that cannot be shaken. And we know that in this kingdom our study, also our study of history, is not vain in the Lord.

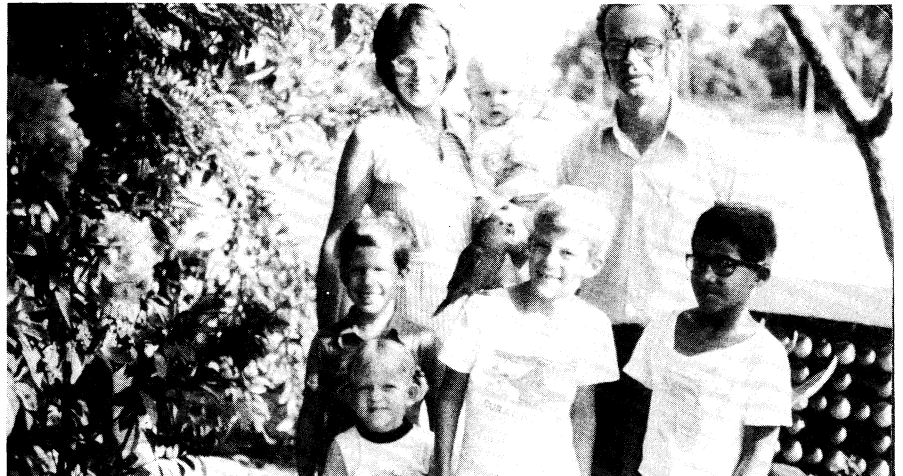
W.W.J. VANOENE

**Address delivered at the College Evening.*

FOR THE READER'S INFORMATION

This issue of *Clarion* was mailed from Winnipeg Central Post Office on September 23, 1978.

Farewell to Rev. C. Van Spronsen and His Family



On Thursday, July 6th, Rev. and Mrs. C. Van Spronsen with their children arrived at Vancouver International Airport after a long trip from São José. Their arrival meant the end of Rev. Van Spronsen's work as a missionary in Brazil.

We are thankful that the Lord enabled him to fulfil his mandate for 8 years. We remember that the first thing Rev. Van Spronsen had to do in Brazil was to recommend to the Consistory a suitable mission field, certainly not an enviable task. The travelling and searching in that vast country was done virtually all by himself with hardly sufficient preparation. Once the family had settled in São José the work was abundantly blessed.

We all know that on the home front we had not much experience in mission work. But Rev. Van Spronsen by his valuable advice made the work of Consistory and Council considerably easier and in many cases set the direction in which the work was (and is) to go.

On the occasion of the departure of Rev. Van Spronsen we also express our thankfulness that he and br. J. Kuik could work together in a brotherly and constructive way. This also is a blessing which would be noticed with gratitude to the Lord.

It is our prayer that the Lord may bless the Van Spronsen family in the congregation at Smithers. May God also continue the work in Brazil by strengthening brother and sister Kuik and by opening the doors for the new missionaries. And may God's permanent blessings be on the congregation

at São José which now consists of 18 communicant members and 15 baptized children, so that it be built up in faith and in number.

There is no indication that visa for Rev. Boersema or Rev. P.K. Meijer will be issued in the very near future. In order that the mission field be not left without a missionary for an extended period, Council considered it feasible to use the existing possibility that one of the missionaries go as a visitor. It was decided to request Rev. Meijer to come to Canada as soon as he has finished his preparatory studies, which may be by the end of September, and then to go to Brazil on a visitor's pass. This approach, which is strongly recommended by Rev. Van Spronsen, has several uncertain elements as well, but Council hopes that the missionary will be able to apply for permanent visa while he is in Brazil.

The present rule, which has been used by teachers in Brazil, is that a visitor, in order to be allowed to stay, is to leave the country after six months but can re-enter almost immediately. This may require quite some travelling in the future. The reason why Rev. Meijer is requested to go and not Rev. R.F. Boersema at this time is that Mrs. Boersema is expecting a baby by the end of November and that Rev. and Mrs. Meijer are more mobile than the Boersema family with their three little children.

We pray that the Lord will bless the decision of Council.

For the Consistory,
J. VANDERLINDE
M. VAN BEVEREN

Prophecy and Israel ⁵

ANSWER TO BR. WM. SALOMONS

CLOSING REMARKS

In this article, I would like to make some concluding remarks about br. Salomons' submission and some related matters.

Somebody may wonder whether this is necessary. "You've kept your promise to br. S.," he'll say. "That's enough for now. Let us wait and see."

I do not deny that; however, although we made an agreement on the explanation of Zechariah 14, it is not the only text br. S. and I differ about. For one thing, the first verse quoted in his submission is Zechariah 12:3: "And it will come about in that day that I will make Jerusalem a heavy stone for all the peoples." Br. S. wonders if Jerusalem is becoming such a burdensome stone nowadays. Of course, he has in mind the city known under that name today. Zechariah, however, had in mind the city known by that name in *his* time (about 500 B.C.). Although located on the same spot, geographically speaking, between the Old Testament and present-day Jerusalem there is all the difference in the world. For it was YAHWEH, the God of Israel, worshipped there in those days, Who was going to make this city — His abode on earth — a cup of reeling, a stone of lifting to the enemy. These prophecies would be fulfilled. No doubt about that. Verse 1 is a guarantee that the LORD has the power to do so. Then, verse 4, the big confusion in the enemy camp is pictured; it is portrayed like a real war. Does this imply that these things are going to happen in the most literal sense of the word? Not at all. On behalf of his God the prophet phrases it this way, because it was the only way to get the message across, to make it come alive before the audience, who were not able to imagine the Church of God outside and apart from Jerusalem and Judah. And with the prophet it was quite the same. Both were children of their time. Don't blame them for that. And don't blame the LORD God, Who in revealing Himself adapts Himself to the comprehension and outlook of the receiver. And that it is still phrased that way in the Bible is a good example of what Reformed Dogmatics calls: organic inspiration.

Whoever studies this chapter carefully, sees at first glance in verse 5 that it is definitely not the praises of Judah as such nor of the Jews as Jews that are sung. "THE INHABITANTS OF JERUSALEM HAVE STRENGTH THROUGH THE LORD OF HOSTS, THEIR GOD." It definitely is not a Judean nationalism that gives vent to its feelings, unbosoming itself here. It is the language of faith which we hear in verse 5 and verses 7 and 8. The LORD is the sole worker of the miracle! This language of faith was, and is, and will always be characteristic of the Church. Cf. Belgic Confession, Article 27, and Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 21, Question and Answer 54. Therefore, although the prophet is speaking of the land of Judah and the city of Jerusalem, and he and his hearers take them in the literal sense of the word, he nevertheless penetrates to the heart of the matter in showing what actually the strength and source of power is: THE LORD OF HOSTS. That's why there is safety and quietness, there and ever since, wherever He is pleased to come to the rescue, for each and every one alike — a very nice feature in this text. Judah is mentioned before Jerusalem, on purpose; and within Jerusalem, the feeblest among them before the hero. The message is: no discrimination in the Church of Jesus Christ. One is their Master, and they are all brothers.

I agree with Dr. H.C. Leupold who writes in his commentary:

In our study of the following section it will become quite apparent to what time this entire prophecy refers. It will be seen that it covers all time from that in which the prophet spoke to the end of days. What is said concerning Judah applies to the people of God of all times. The claims made for Jerusalem's future find their ultimate fulfilment in the true Zion of God — His Church; in fact they can be applied to Jerusalem only in so far as she for a time harbored the church of God. The whole passage speaks of God's sovereign care and protection of the Church of the Old and New Testaments through the ages and more particularly of the Church's victory rather than the victory of Judah after the flesh.¹

Another passage referred to by br. S. is Revelation 16:16. I have my questions

about br. S's: "In Zech. 14 God is behind it, in Rev. 16:13-16, Satan is behind it." I wonder if we are allowed to make such a distinction, although I see what you mean, br. Salomons: that you like to distinguish God's justified anger with His people, the Church, and Satan's blind hate against that same Church, you ought not to lose sight of Satan, who is always in the picture, e.g. trying to benefit from a period in which God is displeased with His people, nor of God. Does evil befall a city unless the LORD has done it? It is the LORD Who has Satan on the leash.

The point at issue, however, is: What do Revelation 15 and 16 refer to? In reply to his statements I like to subscribe to the survey of this book as presented by Dr. W. Hendriksen in his *More than conquerors*. I mentioned this author in my first article. Also Prof. Dr. Anthony A. Hoekema of Calvin Seminary, Grand Rapids in his contribution in the book, *The Meaning of the Millennium*, writes that "the system of interpretation which seems most satisfactory to me, is that known as *progressive parallelism*, ably defended by William Hendriksen."²

In chapter 15 and 16, for the fifth time a panoramic view of world history (and Church history) is offered. The second series of visions, running from chapters 12 to 22, provide us with the background information concerning the struggle of the Church with the world (described in chapters 1 to 11 of the book), showing who the real champions are: Christ and Satan. In the second panorama of the second series we learn about the seven bowls of the wrath of God being poured out on the unbelieving world. Although this vision runs parallel with that of the seven trumpets, in the vision of the bowls or vials the sound and colour of the last judgment is more dominant, or increasingly dominant, be it that these visions comprise all the centuries.

I take the liberty to just refer now to Hendriksen's book, trying to avoid lengthy quotations. First to chapter IV, page 45. At the bottom of the page we read:

Thus conceived, we notice that the final
Continued on next page.

sections of the Apocalypse, though *synchronous* with the other sections and applicable to the entire course of history, describe especially what will happen in connection with the final judgment.

Hence, although all the sections of the Apocalypse run parallel and span the period between the first and second coming of Christ and are rooted in the soil of the old dispensation, yet there is also a degree of progress. What we mean is this: the closer we approach the end of the book the more our attention is directed to the final judgment and that which lies beyond it.

On page 189 the author returns to the subject, that is, in chapter XII of his book, dealing with Revelation 15 and 16. I would like to draw the attention of the readers to pages 190 and 191, where he proves his point, namely, that the visions of the bowls of wrath runs parallel with all the others and like them covers the entire dispensation.

On page 195, at the bottom, Hendriksen comes to HarMagedon. According to br. S. the Battle of Armageddon has as its purpose the extermination of the Jewish people. Is that statement correct? Hendriksen writes, after having expounded the background of the expression, (Judges 4 and 5):

Hence, HarMagedon is the symbol of every battle in which, when the need is greatest and believers are oppressed, the LORD suddenly reveals His power in the interest of his distressed people and defeats the enemy . . . Sennacherib . . . Maccabees . . . But the real, the great, the final HarMagedon coincides with the time of the Satan's little season. See Rev. 11:1-7, p. 157. When the world under the leadership of satan, antichristian government, antichristian religion — the dragon, the beast, the false prophet — is gathered against the church for THE final battle and the need is greatest; when God's children, oppressed on every side, cry for help; then suddenly, dramatically, Christ will appear to deliver His people. THAT FINAL TRIBULATION AND THAT APPEARANCE OF CHRIST ON CLOUDS OF GLORY TO DELIVER HIS PEOPLE, THAT IS HAR-MAGEDON. It is for this reason that HarMagedon is the *sixth* bowl. The seventh is the judgment-day. As we have indicated, this sixth bowl, as well as the preceding ones, is *evident again and again in history* [emphasis mine, H.M.O.]. Yet, *Like the other bowls, it reaches its final and most complete realization just before and in connection with the last day.*

Br. S. goes into this passage, as you can read in his submission. He takes it as the introduction to the millennium, the realm of a thousand years to be established here on earth, more precise-

ly, in the land of Israel. Like other Premillennialists (It is br. S., not I, who applies this name to himself) br. S. is under the spell of this idea. I don't think that I need to tell my readers what the idea of Premillennialism all implies. Yet, thinking aloud, I wonder: What is the reason why he, with many, many others, is spellbound, captivated by such an idea or complex of ideas? I mean, by such a literal kingdom, in an actual place, with a real king or King on a material throne? as real as any kingdom on the face of the earth?

What could be the reason why our brother, like many others, is gripped by a kingdom where a faithful and regenerated remnant of Israel will be restored and made the nucleus of this kingdom? Why is the kingdom on the one hand Judaocentric, while, on the other hand, we read:

To a spiritual nobility the multiplied responsibilities of government will be delegated. This group is made up of three companies of resurrected saints: the church (I Cor. 6:2; Rev. 3:21; 20:6), the Old Testament saints (Ezek. 37:24-25; Dan. 7:18, 22, 27), and the tribulation martyrs (Rev. 20:4). The redeemed living nation of Israel, regenerated and regathered to the land, will be head over all the nations of the earth (Deut. 28:1, 13; Is. 41:8-16). Having graven that nation upon the palms of his hands, God cannot forget them (Is. 49:15-16). So He exalts them above the Gentile nations (Is. 60:1-3, 12). On the lowest level are the saved, living, Gentile nations. They are organized as nations with kings or ruling monarchs . . ."³

As to these representations, many questions arise. I do not know how to tally such a class-society that unmistakably brings in its train a discrimination among the participants, with that prospect of the future the LORD holds out to us in His Word. What exactly is the relation between Jews and the Church, the Old Testament saints (i.e., Israelites) and tribulation martyrs (i.e., Church)? Does this last group comprise all the martyrs or only a part? If so, why just that part? Why do they call the Gentiles Gentiles, whereas, on the other hand, they assert that those Gentiles are saved? What is SAVED? Are they saved like each of us ought to be saved? If so, why this distinction?

How come, I go on, that our brother, like many others, is under the spell of an idea regarding a future introduced by the coming of the LORD, where somehow or other *sin* still has its place; a place that is taken for granted?

We read on page 80:

There will be a perfect blending of severity and tenderness. He will rule the nations with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:7-9, 12), and "he will gather the lambs in his arms, he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young" (Is. 40:11). "With righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked" (Is. 11:4).⁴

"A perfect blending," Mr. H.A. Hoyt calls it. I would rather call it an understandable mixture, a hotchpotch of what according to Holy Writ ought to exclude each other, especially after CHRIST's second coming.

What could be the reason, I can still go on, why br. S., like so many others outside the Church, is pleased with a state of affairs like that in the Millennial kingdom, where a central sanctuary will be established in Jerusalem where there really will be an annual procession to the Feast of Booths for the use of the people of all nations?⁵ *How come*, that our brother or, if not he, then others, takes into the bargain that the King of the kingdom in the course of his career will be cut off (Daniel 9:26)? A mystery, Hoyt calls it. But our brother does agree that on the renewed earth direct punishment, i.e., that which is wrong, of which it is the retaliation, and even death, has a place?

In answer to my questions, br. S. will say, in the same vein as so many before him, "I believe this because Holy Scripture tells me so. To me Holy Writ is the authoritative, infallible Word of God, in its interpretation to be taken to the letter." Premillennialists are very proud of the orthodox stand they take. They accept all the doctrines the Church of all centuries has accepted: first and foremost, the inspiration of the Bible. That's how they claim a legitimate place in the Church; nay more, of all the church members, *they are the people* who really take the Bible in all seriousness. Their principle of interpretation, Dr. W.H. Rutgers writes, is the bed-rock foundation of their system.⁵ I have discussed this viewpoint in my first article, so I will not go further into it now. I am not so impressed, since I do not think that, in spite of their "orthodoxy," they do justice to Scripture.

And not only that; the last word has not been spoken yet when it

comes to an answer to my above-listed series of questions: "How come?" How come that the Pre-Ms stick to the letter and a literal interpretation? Just as with those who reject "infant-baptism," who always say: "Show me the text where it is prescribed with so many words," with the advocates of Premillennialism there is more behind it than meets the eye. Dr. Rutgers in his book already points out that "Millenarian ideas thrive only when conditions are congenial to it. He means the hardships of life, the disillusionment, the persecution they suffered on the old continent (Europe) which made them move to the new world in search for freedom. Once the freedom was gained chiliasm lost the motivating power generating these hopes. But it did not disappear altogether. As an underground stream it continued, rising to the surface as soon and as often as conditions were favourable." Dr. Rutgers gives the following characteristics in discussing Miller, the famous founder of Adventism, now disavowed by the spokesmen of Premillennialism, yet a genuine representative:

In him and his associates we meet with plain, bald, flat-footed chiliasm; chiliasm with all its fervor, enthusiasm and fanaticism; its pessimism; its biblicism; its legalistic, rabbinistic, calculating literalism; its fondness for veiled and obscure portions of prophecy; its tendency to mysticism and to a false, weak-knee-ed pietism; its pride, a "holier than thou" attitude; its bitter opposition to all other churches, and uncharitable denunciations of those not inclined to accept their doctrines; its rejection of infant-baptism, the baptism of believers forming a touchstone and palpable external token whereby we may be assured that these belong to the true fold, and the concomitant of this, its attempt to reproduce primitive christianity; its rigid doctrine of inspiration, verging, if not identical, to the dictation theory: its preaching of an evangel that subordinates all under one theme, the imminent fast approaching advent of our Lord, ending this dispensation and introducing a glorious millennial reign of his saints on earth; an Evangel which might perchance arouse some sinner from his lethargic slumber because of its appeal to his curiosity and inquisitiveness, since it proposes to lift a veil behind which man would so anxiously and eagerly peep⁶

So far Dr. Rutgers.

If any of my readers are of the opinion that Dr. Rutgers is overdoing things, I may say that throughout his book he gives evidence of good insight in the structure of the doctrine of the Church. I refer to pages 116 and 117 of

his book. A remarkable thing, too, is that he says that Premillennialism is not included in any of the Church creeds.⁷ If some reader prefers the testimony of another, more authoritative and "sympathetic" judge, I mean a judge held in high esteem because of his well-balanced judgment and competency, I would strongly recommend him to read the pages concerned of H. Bavinck's *Gereformeerde Dogmatiek* (Deel IV, page 635ff. (*) 4e druk, 1930). I have nothing to add to that!

Trying to answer the question I raised, to find an answer to the repeatedly written "How come?" in the final analysis I cannot find any but this one: that it is the influence of sectarianism that comes to light here; it is the effects of the opinions hailed in the circles of the sects that are playing nasty tricks on our br. S. With sect I do not mean any other church apart from the one we belong to, but more definitely groups like Baptists, Darbists, Adventists, etc. characterized, first of all, by the rejection of infant baptism and often of the institution of office-bearers, etc. The best book I know on the subject is Dr. Kurt Hutten's *Geloof en Sekte*, in which he successively analyzes the favourite themes all the sectarians have in common. First and foremost is that their spiritual life is not dominated by what is the basic truth in the creeds of all the Churches with a Lutheran or Calvinist stamp: that man is saved SOLA GRATIA, by grace only; a grace to be received by faith only. The sectarian does not deny with so many words that it is grace that we receive from the LORD, but, significantly, instead of "receive" he prefers the word "accept." The centre of gravity, the pith of the matter, is shifted from God's free offer to man's decision. Not faith, but conversion, especially their personal conversion, comes into the limelight! Baptism is to be the seal on that conversion; that's why they are in favour of baptism of (converted) adults only. Furthermore, the cross of Jesus Christ is not honoured as it ought to be, but actually plays a secondary role. In actual fact, it is pushed aside by that which the adherents of a certain sect deem of more importance: what happened in the life of the founder of the sect, his beloved teachings, and pet ideas. Members of a sect are very self-conceited, considering themselves to be the true congregation of God (I do hope my reader will distinguish this from what our Belgic Confession says

in Articles 28 and 29 concerning the True Church). And, last but not least, the members of the sect are eagerly looking forward to the future, but honestly not so much with a view to the LORD JESUS CHRIST WHO COMES BACK TO RESTORE WHAT HAS BEEN DAMAGED AND DESTROYED BY MAN'S SIN AND GUILT, BUT BECAUSE IT IS IT (THE SECT) THAT PAVES THE WAY FOR THIS FUTURE AND WILL BE IN THE LIME-LIGHT ITSELF — the apocalyptic apotheosis of the sect, Dr. Hutten names it.

And now we strain our ears. It has a familiar ring. Didn't we meet a similar idea with Pre-millennialism? To be sure, not so narrow-minded and outspoken as with some particular sects, but yet, the tendency is undeniably there. I mean in the peculiar, eccentric picture they paint of the conditions in the realm of the thousand years: that class-society, or caste-system, as I would call it. This would be an altogether strange, weird element in the great hereafter as portrayed in Scripture and confessed in Reformed Confessions, where each and everyone who is saved, SAVED FROM HIS OR HER SINS AND GUILT, is on a par, sharing alike the blessed fruit of the redemption in Jesus Christ! CHRIST JESUS is in the centre as Saviour and Judge (He passes sentence on every church member without any exception and without partiality). This is the consequence of justification by faith only! And with regard to this truth of Lord's Day 23 of the Catechism, the ways of the Church and the sect part.

So, asking if it would be possible after all to reconcile pre-millennialist views with our Reformed faith, the answer turns out to be negative. The two are incompatible. "Never the twain will meet."

And I do not say: "Sorry," for I would not mean it. I am happy that the two are irreconcilable. It would be an alien element in the body of the doctrine of the Church, which is based on the Word of God; the Word of God as understood and explained by sound exegesis. Yes, I do not omit the latter. As I stated in my first article, the first installment of my answer to br. S., Hermeneutics is in the centre of interest in the current theological debate. When I read your submission I find that it is, or ought to be, in the centre of the life of our churches as well.

And that's why I do feel sorry for you, br. Salomons, who subscribe to

these views. You are my brother in Christ. You believe what I believe: God's trinity, the two natures of Christ, divine and human, creation, the fall into sin, and the redemption from sin. I know, and I hope you'll stick to it, and that you avail yourself of these truths (or actually it is one truth) in the proper way. For our Christian faith is a unity, a well-structured whole. In the doctrine of the Church, Dr. Rutgers rightly claims, eschatology is a capstone, not a foundation.⁸

A basic mistake of Pre-millennialism is that its proponents make eschatology the foundation. You did the same in your submission, wherewith the "torch of the literalist is an *ignis fatuus* (a silly light), leading those who follow it, they know not whither," as Hodge says. The truth of the Bible is coherent; there is a system in it, as our confession clearly brings out. God's unity and trinity, creation, fall into sin, and redemption by the way of satisfaction, faith, and justification, regeneration, and sanctification, church and its offices and sacraments, and finally the consummation of it all in the great hereafter, which really is a HERE-AFTER, and not some interval fit into the system. What is professed in the confession can be traced all through the Bible, and rests not just on a single proof-text here or there. And its principles are: SOLA SCRIPTURA (the Word alone), SOLA FIDE (by faith only), SOLA GRATIA (because it is by grace alone), and the end of it is: SOLI DEO GLORIA.

This, br. S., determines my approach to the Scriptures. One brother wrote me in a letter: "You are prejudiced." Right! I am; however, in the right sense of the word. I don't approach the Scriptures in my study as a blank sheet of paper; but according to the proportion of faith (Romans 12:6). In this light we may see light, thank God. This way it is possible to come to grips with Old Testament and New Testament exegesis, a difficult, but a pleasant and definitely not a hopeless task.

I am glad I may teach this exegesis at the Theological College of the Canadian Reformed Churches and not, e.g., in Dallas, Texas, under the supervision of Prof. John Walvoord, and others.

So, when you call yourself a Canadian Reformed pre-millennialist, it is a *contradictio in terminis*. There is a discrepancy in this term. Pre-millennialism can only flourish in the circles of

the sectarians: Darbism, Adventism, Jehovah's Witnesses. It is one of the pet ideas they foster. "Foster" or "nurture," that is the word. Not: "believe." One brother wrote me that he found it strange that teaching Pre-millennialism publicly in the Church is not allowed, whereas, on the other hand, someone is permitted to believe it. He thought it was a contradiction in the life of our churches. In answer to him I would say: "No brother, one is not allowed to teach it, nor to believe it. For you *cannot* believe it. It cannot be part of our faith according to the Scriptures. It is only an idea you can nurse, one of your hobbyhorses you can mount."

As to br. S., I can appreciate that he speaks his mind. He is quite frank. He has the courage to voice his opinions, humanly speaking. I know where I stand with him, although I do hope that he will revise his position. Maybe, there are other brothers and sisters sharing his opinion. If so, my answer is meant for them as well.

I wholeheartedly agree with br. S., when he is told by others: "Preach salvation; leave prophecy alone." Br. S. is right in not being satisfied with such a remark, such a sledge-hammer argument, such a cheap remark. I do not know who it was or who were the ones that "often" told him so. "Often"; so it is a kind of attitude with those people, outside or inside the Church. I do not know where they live or where br. S. met them. In Toronto or somewhere else. I hope that they'll read these lines and change their minds. Are they brothers and sisters? My answer to br. S. is meant for them as well.

If they are brothers and sisters, fellow members of the Church that you and I belong to, they ought to be ashamed of fobbing our brother off with such "fair" words. For what reason did they do so? To help him? But do you call that helping a brother? Or did they do so to get rid of a "bothersome" brother, always harping on the same string, for the moment? Or was and is it because they are too easy-going to take the trouble to study the prophets? That is what they should have done, to help our brother out of his problems! That is the service due to him within the communion of saints. Maybe they were peeved off by the way the prophets and their message were advocated by br. S., but they know as well as we all do that those very same prophets are an integral part of the Holy Word of God. In that firm conviction they should have felt urged

to instruct our brother, and if they didn't feel capable at the moment, they ought to have studied the prophets for themselves at home and together during their society-meetings.

For if the prophets are part of God's Word, they ought to be read and reread, studied and given due consideration. We all believe that the Bible is the Word of God! Great! Well, don't leave it as it is, as a kind of dead capital. Rather try the utmost to work with it, to handle it.

Actually it is no dilemma: "Preach salvation. Leave prophecy alone." Whoever preaches salvation has to preach it from all the pages of the Word of God where it is to be found. In the Gospels or the Acts, sure, and in Romans or Galatians, but in Genesis, Job, or Zechariah as well. There is no part of Scriptures where our salvation is not at stake. That is why I am thankful for those who once were my teachers in Kampen; men who instructed us in the right approach of the Scriptures. With the redemptive-historical preaching of the history of the Old Testament and the proper exegesis of the prophets, the salvation of the church and its members is really served. I hope and pray that we'll never lose what we gained by the reformation of 1517 and following years, and that those who possess this treasure keep handling it in the right way, making themselves and others benefit by it. *Inheritance Preserved* is the title of the book the Rev. VanOene wrote on the history of our churches. Let us continue to live up to the truth of that title, and preserve the inheritance!

To preach salvation and to leave prophecy alone is a thing as impossible as preaching the name Jesus and leaving His title CHRIST alone.

I write this, because we are not just an orthodox church, clinging to a number of truths and that is all, but a church that has been led through three reformations at least: 1517, 1834-1886, and 1944. By means of the latter we were privileged to reap the benefit of a better understanding of the Bible. For the brothers who showed us the way and those who followed them in the reformation I don't claim a special compartment in heaven, as some mockers scoff. It is only a fool who would assume that something like that would come to pass. That really would be sectarian. I hope to meet the LORD with *all* those who are saved out of mere grace

Continued on next page.

Denominationalism 2

THE "AMERICAN" VIEW ON THE CHURCH

As we could see last time, the main idea underlying the "American" thinking about the Church is the "invisible Church" concept. All denominations, purer or less pure, together make up the one Church of Christ. Another word comes into view here: the unity of the (invisible) Church is sought in the *pluriformity* of the (visible) Churches. Each denomination may show its own particular emphasis and style, yet all are united in the acceptance of the one Word of God. While some lament the apparent disunity among the denominations, optimists find this to be a correct and logical situation: no denomination can expect to be perfectly and exclusively "the Church of Christ." Every striving to come to an instituted organization is but a mere "attempt" and should only be presented as such.

CALVIN AND THE CHURCH

Some scholars (like Hudson) are in the habit of claiming John Calvin as one who clearly formulated a similar viewpoint concerning "the invisible Church." We even read that "the denominationalist theory of the Church was implicit in the thinking of the Pro-

testant Reformers" (Hudson, *Denominationalism*, page 22). The Reformers are said to have recognized as true Churches "all churches which possessed an essentially common faith, Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican."

Calvin, however, has been annexed more often to promote viewpoints which basically were not his at all. The same happens with other gifted "leaders" throughout history. Dr. K. Schilder was involved in quite a debate with Dr. V. Hepp on this very same point and proved that Hepp wrongly interpreted Calvin as promoting "the pluriformity of the Church" and working from a "visible-invisible" construction (K. Schilder, *De Kerk*, I, page 314ff.).

Calvin's teaching on the Church is essentially quite simple and wholly balanced. He recognizes the important fact that "to God alone must be left the knowledge of His Church, of which His secret election forms the foundation." We can appreciate this fact: only God knows and sees the full and ultimate form of His Church as it is gathered from the beginning to the end of the world. But this cannot be misconstrued as a clear doctrine concerning the

"Church invisible," for Calvin then immediately speaks of the Church as "the communion of saints" and adds that all the blessings which God bestows on the believers are "mutually communicated to one another." Calvin actually spends very little time and space on what could be termed "the invisible Church," but speaks at length about the judgment which ought to be formed concerning the visible Church, giving the *marks* of the Church as they also are found in the Belgic Confession.

K. Schilder has written of Calvin that he stressed unity in worship and polity, and in order to find this unity, Calvin argues, God gave the marks of the Church. Recognizing that God alone knows the final number of His children, Calvin is speaking of the Church as it presents itself visibly and concretely ("de Kerk zoals zij optreedt in het concrete leven"). So it would appear to be quite false to rank Calvin among those who defend denominationalism.

UNOVERSEEABLE

When Calvin does speak of the "invisible Church" he means either the totality of all God's children throughout all time, or the totality of all believers on earth at a given time, the exact number of which in both cases is known only to God. This totality is not "visible" to us, but only to God. But then the word rather denotes the fact that to us this Church is *unoverseeable*. Calvin certainly does not use the term "invisible" to relativate the importance of the "visible Church" or to create some huge invisible superstructure of which each and every religious institution is automatically an integral segment.

The Belgic Confession speaks about the Church in this exact same way. This Church is being gathered from the beginning to the end of the world (Article 27) — therefore essentially unoverseeable to us, limited humans — also spread over the whole world — therefore, again, to us unoverseeable — yet always *visible*, even "though sometimes for a while it appears very small."

This Church is visible as a "communion of saints" (Article 28), in which all are called to participate fully, and it is known by clear marks (Article 29), so that it can be easily distinguished from "all sects which assume to themselves the name of the Church." It may be clear that our Confession nowhere speaks of an "invisible Church," but of the Church which God visibly gathers

PROPHECY AND ISRAEL — Continued.

by faith only when He comes in His royal power and glory. That is what all the creeds of the Church of the centuries profess, phrasing what they believe about the great Hereafter; not the millennium.

Br. S., I am going to stop now. I hope that you read and ponder what I have written. Take your time to think it over. I would like to see you make progress on the way of salvation together with the other sheep of the flock, heading for the same destination.

The flock of Toronto is privileged again having its own pastor and teacher for a year. He'll take care of you, no doubt.

Let him clarify your insight into the Old Testament history and prophecy, in private, and publicly by preaching the Old Testament truth; that is, by preaching salvation from Moses and the prophets.

That is what you need, as well as the brothers and sisters who dismiss you with their; "Preach salvation," etc.

That is what we all are in need of!

Sometimes I hear a complaint of a brother or sister: "I wished we would hear more sermons on the Old Testament. Not that the sermons we hear are contrary to the truth. But I would like to see the wonderful revelation of God expounded in all its facets and aspects, so as to be more confirmed about what a majestic God we may believe."

In conclusion I would say: We all badly need instruction in the Old Testament Revelation.

H.M. OHMANN

¹H.C. Leupold, *Exposition of Zechariah*, page 234.

²*The Meaning of the Millennium*: four views edited by Robert G. Clouse; with contributions by G.E. Ladd, H.A. Hoyt, L. Boettner, A.A. Hoekema.

³H.A. Hoyt in *The Meaning of the Millennium*, page 81.

⁴H.A. Hoyt, *op. cit.*, page 80.

⁵Dr. W.H. Rutgers, *Premillennialism in America*, Doctoral dissertation, Free University, 1930.

⁶Rutgers, *op. cit.*, page 91, 92.

⁷Rutgers, *op. cit.*, page 107.

⁸Rutgers, *op. cit.*, page 118.

from out of all times and places, according to His divine pleasure and council, and which is found according to the marks set in His revelation. To partake in this catholic gathering of believers, one must be enjoined to that Church which unequivocally displays the marks.

The late Rev. I. de Wolff has argued correctly that it belongs to the beauty of our confession that it does not speak in systematic terms of the Church as "visible-invisible," "institution-organism," or "general-local," but in a simple, Biblical fashion. In the Scriptures, the word "church" can denote the whole or a part. It is therefore quite inaccurate and dangerous to speak of a local church as a "manifestation" of the one (invisible) Church of Christ. The Church which locally displays the marks is *fully* the Church of Christ, as is the Church of all ages, and not just the manifestation of something invisible. If we speak of the Church in terms of "manifestation," we give opening to the theory of pluriformity.

MY TASK

All this determines the correct attitude towards the Church of Christ. It is not my task to determine how great and how small the Church ultimately is — the Lord knows the number! — but it is my calling to seek out the Church according to the Scriptures locally in my time and place and to be united with this Church in true fellowship as a living member. I shall not be guided by what I see of the Church, but by what God says of the Church. His is the commandment; ours must be the obedience.

AN EASY TASK?

The question may arise: Is it easy or even possible today to make a clear distinction between the true and the false Church? In Article 29 of the Belgic Confession we read, "These two Churches (i.e., the true and the false) are *easily* known and distinguished from each other." But that was written in 1561, and since that time many denominations have come into being. Surely Guido de Bres in his time meant the Roman Catholic Church over against the Reformed Churches, but is it still that simple today?

In other words, may we always think in a "black-white" scheme, or is there perhaps a "grey area"? May we perhaps apply the notion of "purer" or "less pure" here? To use an example, may we say that the Christian Reformed Church is a false Church, or an or-

ganization which, at most, is becoming somewhat false? I know that such questions at times are the topic of discussion among our members.

Here, too, we should not make things more complicated than our confession puts them. We should not forget, on the one hand, that "deformation" is a process which takes place through the years and is not generally completed overnight. The one denomination may give more evidence of deformation than the other. After first leaving the Truth, a Church finally persecutes those in its midst who are of the Truth, and then the process is completed. So the situation is not everywhere the same, and in our approach to others we must take this into account.

But, on the other hand, the *marks* of the Church are clear. If any of these marks is not present, then indeed the qualification "false" is applicable, and we should not hesitate, when necessary, to accept the consequences of our Confession, otherwise we practically deny what we confess. And the qualification "false" simply means that such a Church is not faithful to the Word of Christ and therefore leads the sheep astray. This matter is no less clear today than it was during the days of Guido de Bres.

However, be aware of one thing. We are presently speaking of instituted *Churches*, of their official doctrine and polity, and not of individual *members* of those churches. Was it not John Calvin who already said that "there is a slight difference in the mode of judging of individuals and churches"? Any church, which presents itself as such, must (according to Calvin) be "brought to that test (of the marks) as to a Lydian stone." While we are not called to judge the hearts of those living in other denominations — the Lord knows His own! — and may safely assume that there are children of the Lord also elsewhere, we are nevertheless bound to seek the true Church of Christ and to maintain active unity with His obedient people. Such is the language of our Confession.

APPEAL TO UNITY

So the Reformed Churches cannot justly be accused of thinking that only (Canadian) Reformed people will, as it were, "enter heaven," and of teaching a haughty exclusivism as the sole churches of the Lord. On the contrary, whenever our churches have found believers who share the same basic confession, a plea was made for unity in

the Truth. Even where there were differences of important historical and contemporary significance, our Churches have appealed for the same unity, seeking to remove the divergencies by means of well-organized contact and discussion. But neither have our Churches covered up the issues at stake in order to achieve a quick and superficial fellowship which already bears in itself the seeds of discord. We have sought unity in the Truth, but also truth in unity. And it needs no proof that in this striving we have made mistakes and shown shortcomings, but the striving is unmistakably there.

It cannot be that in one place various "true" Churches permanently exist alongside one another, without being one in faith and fellowship. Since, as Paul writes to the Ephesians, there is one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, all must be eager "to maintain the *unity* of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Due to historical or particular circumstances, such Churches may continue separate for a time, but unity must be sought and will be realized if the members diligently follow this apostolic command. The problem, very often, is that these local churches each, in turn, are part of a denomination, and do not wish to leave such a federation. And so the matter of ecclesiastical unity is often found at Synods and Assemblies.

Then it must be a unity which results from full mutual recognition of the Truth of God's Word for doctrine, polity, and worship. If agreement and common understanding can be reached in these matters, then the Churches can come together on the basis of a common accord and work out further fellowship at local levels. Was such not the case in 1892 when the Churches of the first and second Secession came together to form the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands?

In the case of foreign churches, the same basic principle applies: full unity, even with exercising of corporate responsibility. While not binding one another in intermediate affairs (although these may certainly be discussed!), the Churches should see to each other and assist one another in every way possible so that the Church is and becomes more and more "the communion of saints." Therefore we persist in rejecting all kinds of "loose" associations since these do not meet the Scriptural requirements concerning the *unity* of the Church. And, similarly, we

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press review

DEACONNESSES IN THE CHRISTIAN REFORMED CHURCH

It is known by now that Synod 1978 of the Christian Reformed Church opened the office of deacon to the women members of their churches. I take over here what the Rev. Henry Vanden Heuvel wrote on this point in *The Outlook* of August 1978, and I add to it the decision regarding Mrs. Marchiene Rienstra, who graduated from Calvin Seminary and wanted to become a minister in the CRC. Here follows the article on this matter:

In many ways the decisions taken on Wednesday mark the heart of Synod 1978. Just as synods in the past are remembered for the decisions taken then, as for example 1928 suggests "Worldly Amusements," so Synod 1978 will be remembered as the synod that permitted the ordination of women to be deacons in the Christian Reformed Church. In my opinion, this decision was a "water-shed"; that is, a decision which will have ominous results for the CRC. Before making further comments on the results of this decision, I wish to report on how the decision was made.

Report 31 in the Agenda is called "Hermeneutical Principles Concerning Women in Ecclesiastical Office." This Committee was appointed in 1975 as the third committee appointed by various synods to deal with the matter of women in ecclesiastical office. The previous two reports were not adopted by their respective synods. Therefore synod in 1975 appointed the present Committee to study "the hermeneutical principles concerning women in ecclesiastical office." The committee came with a divided report. Four of the members of the committee recommended that consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon as delineated in the Church Order, Art. 25. The majority committee further recommended that the church continue to reflect upon the question of admitting women to the office of elder and minister. Their grounds for this second recommendation touch upon a very important matter. The first states, "the evidence from the Bible is not as clear-cut on this issue as one might wish and requires the ongoing reflection of the church." And the second says, "the desire of the church to use all of the gifts of the Spirit given to all of its members should be an ongoing concern of the church."

The minority report on the hermeneutical principles recommended that "consistories be allowed to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon, provided

that their work is distinguished from that of elders." And their second recommendation is that the "offices of elder and minister not be opened to women" on the ground that there is no evidence in the Bible for opening the offices of elder and minister to women.

The Advisory Committee of Synod tried to present a recommendation that would be most in harmony with the report of the Study Committee. The reporter, Rev. Wilbert Van Dyke, observed that when the Advisory Committee first began working on the report, they were divided equally between those in favor of admitting women to the office of deacon, and those opposed. But the more they talked and discussed, the more unified they became, until at last they were able to come with a unified report. In seeking to prepare the delegates of Synod for their recommendation, the Advisory Committee made several "Observations." One of these was a paragraph dealing with the matter of "unity in diversity." The Committee states that some churches do not permit women to vote at congregational meetings; others do allow this. Yet both kinds of churches live together in unity within diversity. So, argues the Advisory Committee, we as a denomination can live together with this decision on women in ecclesiastical office. Each consistory has to decide the matter for its own congregation. (However the matter of women in ecclesiastical office is a different thing from allowing women to vote in a congregational meeting. The kind of unity expressed by the advisory committee is a unity that forces a position upon the church which a segment is convinced is contrary to Scripture. Such unity is false unity.)

The recommendation of the Advisory Committee was "that consistories be permitted to ordain qualified women to the office of deacon as delineated in the Church Order, Article 25." This recommendation obviously was debated at great length. It was also debated before a paced gallery. Every seat in the Fine Arts Auditorium was taken. It was learned later that the Orthodox Presbyterian Church had adjourned a session of its Synod to permit its delegates to hear our discussion on this issue.

The debate centered primarily on two issues. First there were several voices claiming that the recommendation did not go far enough. Rev. Jacob Kuntz of Classis Chatham spoke with enthusiasm for the recommendation, but urged the Synod to go beyond the report and open the offices of elder and minister to women. He argued very logically from the report on the nature of office as adopted by Synod in 1973, that

the offices are one. There is no difference in authority or importance between the three offices of the Church Order. To be consistent, he said, if we open the office of deacon to women, we must also open the other offices to women. And of course, he was right. The decision of Synod 1973 opened the door to the decision facing the church in Synod 1978. The nature of office was declared in 1973 to be primarily function, and since many women are already functioning as "deaconesses," there is no reason why they should not also be given the office of deacon. Most of the Canadian delegates also spoke strongly in favor of the recommendation.

On the other side of the issues, many speakers brought out the important matter of the authority of the deacons. The Committee referred to Article 25 of the Church Order, but Article 35 of the Church Order says that the consistory has charge of the government of the congregation, and the consistory is comprised of elders and deacons, together with the minister of the Word. But the issue of authority did not meet with much favor in the minds of the Advisory Committee or Study Committee. The point that was stressed again and again was that women and men are equal before God, and ought to be treated equally in the church. One delegate speaking against the recommendation of the Advisory Committee told of a conversation he had had with a member of the PCA (Presbyterian Church in America), a church which recently had broken away from the liberal Presbyterian Church in the U.S. This man from the PCA said in response to the discussion on the matter of women in office, "Brother, that's why we left the mother church!"

Toward the end of the discussion, Rev. Andrew Kuyvenhoven, vice-president of Synod, spoke movingly for recommendation. He suggested that hermeneutical principles of interpreting the Scriptures call for an understanding of the continuing working of the Holy Spirit in the church. He referred to I Corinthians 11:2-14 which speaks of women in the church. There the apostle Paul says that women must have their heads covered when they are worshipping God. But, Kuyvenhoven said, the hermeneutical principles by which we interpret Scripture lead us to see that that rule was for a local situation and is no longer relevant among us today. The same understanding must be used to deal with the question of women in ecclesiastical office. We continue to be led by the Spirit. And the Holy Spirit leads us to see that the message of Scripture must be understood in a different way from the way in which we have always previously understood it. This argument regarding the working of the Holy Spirit came up again and again in various contexts during Synod. The fact that the Spirit gives gifts to women proves that they must therefore be ordained as deacons, elders, and ministers. Never mind that the Bible speaks

clearly on this subject: the Holy Spirit leads us to new truths through the gifts that He gives, and through our ever new understanding of Scripture. Oh, the subjectivism of such logic! It will be the downfall of our church.

At last Synod was ready to vote. The roll was called and the chair announced that the recommendation carried by one vote! Pandemonium broke out in the galleries. Someone remarked that it sounded like all the women there had just received a free trip to Hawaii on a game show. But alas! The vote was miscounted. An elder from Classis South asked for the floor and said that he had also been counting, and his count showed that the recommendation had lost by one vote. So the chairman asked for a recount. And sure enough! The elder was right. The recommendation had indeed lost by one vote.

But that did not end the matter. At once a motion was made to go to the minority report of the Study Committee. The minority report had recommended that consistories be permitted to ordain qualified women as deacons provided that their work be distinguished from that of elders. Now a motion was immediately made to approve that recommendation. But was that procedure legal according to the rules of Synod? The rules of Synod state that a motion is not acceptable if it is verbally or substantially the same as a motion already rejected by Synod. Many delegates believed that there was no substantial difference between the motion that was defeated, and the recommendation of the minority report. It was therefore brought to the chairman's attention that this new motion was out of order. But he ruled that it was in order, that it was substantially different from the motion already defeated. And his ruling was sustained in the face of the challenge.

The recommendation of the minority Study Committee was adopted by a vote of 87 to 64. Apparently the provision which was added to the minority recommendation persuaded the minds of some who had previously voted against the first motion.

This was not the end of the matter of women in ecclesiastical office. That evening Synod took up the appeal of the Church of the Servant regarding Mrs. Marchiene Rienstra, and her desire to be declared a candidate for the ministry. The Advisory Committee of Synod recommended that Synod "declare that the Board of Trustees acted properly when it decided that it could not permit Marchiene Rienstra to become a candidate for the ministry of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church." The ground for this recommendation was Church Order Article 3.

The discussion regarding this recommendation brought out some very revealing insights into the thinking of the CRC in general, and the seminary professors in particular. Every delegate, for example,

was given a document signed by Dr. Melvin Hugen, professor of Pastoral Theology at Calvin Seminary, in which he pleaded for Synod to "accede to the appeal of the Church of the Servant and present Marchiene Rienstra to the Churches as a candidate for the ordained ministry." It would be enlightening, I think, to look briefly at this document prepared by Dr. Hugen in order to see how he reasons regarding this matter. His argument is based on the way God brought the early church to admit Gentiles into the Church of Jesus Christ. He claims that God is doing the same thing today, and is calling the CRC to admit women into the gospel ministry. He says, "God has not left Himself without witness; He shows us how He changes the mind of His church concerning His Word. In the Acts of the Apostles there is a revelation that has immediate bearing on the question now facing us. Peter and the rest of the church believed that the covenant promise was for Israel and only for Israel. They had read the Scripture in no other way." Of course, this is patently false. It simply is not true that "they had read Scripture in no other way." The O.T. shows how the promises of God repeatedly are for Gentiles as well as Jews. The practice of the Church in "proselyte baptism" is an example of their understanding of that fact. Dr. Hugen is setting up a false premise for his argument.

He further shows how God led Peter and the N.T. Church to receive Gentiles into its number. "This is what God did; He confronted the church with a specific case that was contrary to its understanding of the Scriptures. He poured out His Spirit upon the uncircumcised Gentile, Cornelius, and upon his household (Acts 10): Peter knew well that the gift of the Spirit meant that they also were included in the covenant." He goes on to say, "Without question such gifts [the gifts of ministry] are gifts of the Spirit, and without question they are given for ministry (I Cor. 12, Rom. 1:3-8, and Eph. 4:11-16)." Dr. Hugen assumes too much here. "Without question," he says. How does he know this is "without question"?

Thus the logic of Dr. Hugen is that the Holy Spirit is leading the Church beyond Scripture. Whereas the Bible clearly speaks of the authority of the man over the women, an authority rooted in creation and in the fall (I Tim. 2), Dr. Hugen says that the Holy Spirit is leading us to this new understanding of Scripture? We know this by the fact that He has given the gifts of ministry to such a woman as Mrs. Marchiene Rienstra.

Dr. Hugen was not alone in coming out so boldly in favor of the appeal of the Church of the Servant. The president of the seminary, Dr. John Kromminga, also spoke of his fervent desire that the church would very soon open the office of the ministry of the Word to women. It is amazing that two men from our seminary should come out so openly and forthright-

ly for a position which is so clearly opposed by Scripture on the ground of that woman is not to have authority over a man, and that she is to be in submission to him.

When the vote was called on the appeal of the Church of the Servant, Synod ruled not to accede to that appeal. For the time being Mrs. Rienstra is not a candidate.

In connection with the above, an article in *Nederlands Dagblad*, "THE VARIANT," of Saturday, August 5, 1978, is also revealing. It is an interview of Mr. P.A. Bergwerff who, as correspondent for this well-known paper, was in Grand Rapids at the time of the synod. The article mentioned above contains an interview of br. Bergwerff with Prof. Dr. J.H. Kromminga, the rector of Calvin Theological Seminary. From this article I take over the following part in translation:

The sensational decision of the last synod to admit female members of the congregation to the office of deacon he calls a step in the right direction. "Although this decision will cause quite some unrest, I think the church will learn to live with it."

"The execution of the decision, however, is left in the freedom of the churches; and I think that about half of the churches will execute the decision. Further, I hope that as soon as possible also the office of elder, as well as that of minister, will be opened for the female members of the congregations. This, of course, has everything to do with the question how much room there is in the church."

Thus spoke the professor, who further did not leave any doubt about the fact that the room [tolerance] within the Christian Reformed Church by long is not great enough in his opinion. "I believe that there has to be room for developments like these. In our churches we always have had a relative isolation, but during the last years we got more and more city-congregations which are often quite progressive in comparison with rural churches. We have to learn to live with each other . . ."

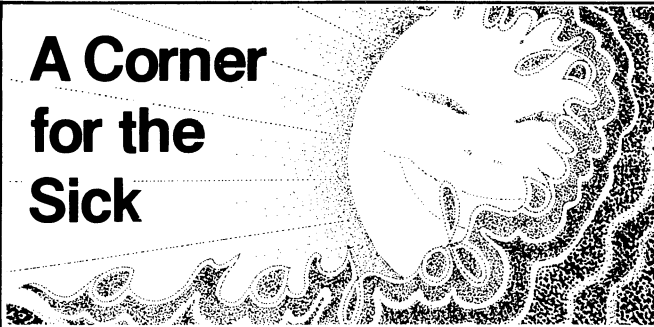
Under the heading "Education," the point "evolution or creation" is shortly touched on. Br. Bergwerff writes:

When I asked about the contents of the education at Calvin College and Seminary, Prof. Kromminga illustrated his argument with the well-known question: creation or evolution. "On this point there has been a slow revolution. Ten years ago we still made a big issue of it. But today, I think, everyone is convinced that — although, of course, the world is created by God — there surely has to be spoken of a certain evolution. That, in fact, is no longer an issue."

And, rightly so, he adds: "Anyway, on this point we no longer come behind The Netherlands." His words are very true.

Continued on next page.

A Corner for the Sick



"He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still." *I John 2:9*

We all know what it means to be children of the light! When we read the second chapter of John's first letter, do we not feel guilty?

How often do we not show hatred and revenge when we should shine as lights in the darkness? It is not strange to us to hurt in turn when our feelings are hurt. It is our sinful human nature that makes us behave this way!

What a blessing for us that we are reminded of our shortcomings, even when such reminders often sting and hurt us. We read in Proverbs that the words of the wise often do hurt and go deep. Is it not because we recognize the truth that wise words so affect us?

Proverbs 12:15 reads: "The way of the fool is right in his own eyes, but the wise man listens to advice." Let us listen to what John is trying to teach us (read Chapter 2 of his first letter). "If we say we know God, we should walk in the same way Christ has shown us!" (verse 6).

Jesus gave His life for us when we were yet sinners. Do we then have any reason left why we should not love our brother and sister?

It is our sin that prevents us from obeying this commandment. Our human minds are very clever in dreaming up excuses to prove ourselves right. We can name numerous occasions of wrongdoing in our neighbour, but Christ's commandment stands! If we pretend we do not sin, we make God a liar. Verses 7 and 8 of Chapter 4 read: "He who loves is born of God and

knows God. He who does not love does not know God: for God is love." "He who says he is in the light and hates his brother is in the darkness still" (I John 2:9). But we may read the comforting words also, in verse 1: "But if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He is the expiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world."

This directs our attention the more to Christ, as we confess in Lord's Day 25: "for the Holy Spirit teaches us in the gospel and assures us by the sacraments that the whole of our salvation stands in the one sacrifice of Christ made for us on the cross."

Our attention has been asked for:

JOSIE OVERBEEK

P.O. Box, Laurel, Ontario

Josie is a nine-year-old girl who together with her cousin was in a serious farm accident. In His wisdom the Lord decided that it was better for Josie's cousin, Alida Jonker, to be with Him, but the Lord spared Josie's life. She received internal injuries and has to stay in the hospital for at least one month. Afterwards she will have to stay off her legs for quite awhile. Her life is out of danger, and she would really love to receive cards and letters, especially since she will be celebrating her 10th birthday on October 1st. She is in grade 5 and loves sports. She has 3 brothers and 2 sisters.

MRS. JANE BREUKELMAN

Box 83, Neerlandia, Alberta T0G 1R0

Jane has to take a necessary rest, although she is not ill. Sometimes this makes it harder yet. She is expecting a baby in a few months but has to stay off her feet till then. At the moment she is in the hospital but may go home soon. To receive mail will give her some diversion and shorten the time.

Brothers and sisters let us remember the sick and lonely in our prayers also, and let us not forget the families that have suffered bereavement.

Send your requests to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma

*380 St. Andrew Street E.,
Fergus, Ontario N1M 1R1*

PRESS REVIEW — Continued.

I think this does not need much comment. The matter is clear. And it is sad. The worst thing in this development is that it is acknowledged that the Scriptures speak differently on the point of women in office, as well as on creation over against evolution, but that the new, liberal, deviating aberrations are defended by speaking about the revelation of the Holy Spirit. What the HOLY Spirit says is no longer bound to the Bible. The Holy Spirit now reveals His will also in what people find and think. This is subjectivism. Now the

"Holy Spirit" can "reveal" anything that comes up in man's mind, even though it is clearly contradictory to the express Word of Scripture. This way of thinking and speaking is in principle the spiritual death of the Christian Reformed Church. May God work, not a revival, but a *reformation*, if conversion will not come.

I would like to make two more remarks. The argument for opening the office in the church to women is — as I understand — that the Holy Spirit gives, or has given, gifts to women; and this fact that there are gifted women is a revelation from the Spirit, teach-

ing that therefore they must be allowed to enter into the offices. My question is: "Why did the Holy Spirit not reveal this 1900 years ago?" Then there were also many gifted women in the Church!

In the second place, should all those who want to be and to remain Reformed, not less easily worship the Lord in the midst of the Christian Reformed(?) Church, in order not to give the impression to others, so also to the youth, that there is not all that much difference between them and us, so that one hears questions like: "What is the difference anyway?"

J.GEERTSEMA

The Enlightenment and the Present World ²

THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE CITY OF MAN

The Enlightenment was not confined to any one country. Its ideas were propagated throughout Western Europe, and infiltrated as far as North America in the West, and Prussia and Russia in the East. The heartland of the movement, however, was France. It was also here that the earliest consequences became apparent. The nation that was in the forefront in sowing the wind of unbelief was also the first to reap the stormy harvest: the devastating French Revolution was an immediate outcome of Enlightenment teachings.

The leaders of the Enlightenment in France were mainly middle class intellectuals, who belonged to a variety of professions and included authors, journalists, lawyers, scientists, and theologians. They are usually referred to as the "Enlightenment philosophers." Together with their colleagues in other countries, these philosophers had various traits in common. I will briefly describe them.

First of all, they had renounced biblical Christianity. This rejection of revealed religion was not simply an outgrowth of their condemnation of the established church. That condemnation was understandable, for the Roman Catholic church of France was wealthy, worldly, tyrannical, and cruel in its suppression of religious dissent. However, Christianity itself was considered objectionable, quite apart from what the French state-church had done with its message. Its teachings about a fall into sin and about the need for supernatural redemption constituted a stumbling block and embarrassment for the humanistic philosophers, who strongly believed in the potential goodness of man, and who never tired of proclaiming that Christianity was a religion of base superstition, quite unworthy of those who had become enlightened by the proper use of their reason.

The philosophers did not, on the whole, turn to atheism, at least not openly. Rather, they adhered to a new kind of religion, which had recently been invented in England and became

known as Deism. Deism taught that there was a god, but that this God had no longer any direct dealings with man and the world. He had created the universe, set it in motion, and then retired. The laws He had established in the beginning took care of the world and all that was within it for all time. These laws were both rational and unchangeable, so that man could discover and apply them, and put his trust in them forever.

Obviously, in this religion God was primarily the Great Architect, the First Cause, the Prime Mover, whose reality had to be assumed because it seemed the only way to account for the existence of all that was (for evolutionism had not yet been invented in the early eighteenth century), and whose goodness and rationality were assumed in order to make the world a safe and comfortable place. The Deist God had still another function. A belief in His reality was also considered necessary for the enforcement of social order. According to the Deists, God wanted man to behave morally. Although it was somewhat illogical, since the philosophers had ceased to believe in God's interference with the world, they nevertheless thought it wise to assert the reality of a future life, wherein God would reward moral behaviour and punish immorality. This policeman function was given to God principally to ensure the behaviour of the common man. As the philosophers were fond of saying to each other, even if they were atheists, they would never allow their servants to know. What might not happen if these ceased to believe in a God who would reward and punish in a future life? Mankind, as yet unenlightened, might reject any norms and society might dissolve into chaos.

The philosophical need for this Deist God did not survive the Enlightenment. Evolutionism, which began to be discussed half-way through the century, soon made it possible to abandon the hypothesis of a Prime Mover or Great Architect. Furthermore, the attempt to maintain religion as a means of social control ended in dismal failure. It did not take the mass-

es long to catch on to the trick played on them by their masters and teachers. They rejected the Deist God-as-Policeman. The slogan "Neither God nor Master" would soon ring in the servants' quarters and city slums of revolutionary France.

Deism nevertheless did not wholly disappear with the rise of evolutionism and the outbreak of the French Revolution. Versions of it were preached in so-called liberal churches throughout the nineteenth and well into the twentieth century. In our own days it is on the decline. Modern man-without-God is not as optimistic and sure of himself and his world as his forebears used to be, and if he is interested in religion at all, it is not in the cold religion of Deism. He wants it to bring him security, a release from the sense of futility, happiness, adventure, or success. Deist religion has consequently been replaced by (forgive me the difficult word) eudemonistic religion — that is a religion catering to the emotional needs of man. It is not always realized that this twentieth century "success-and-happiness Christianity," in its man-centredness and utilitarianism, is a cousin, if not a direct offspring, of the Deist religion of the Enlightenment.

The remaining articles of the Enlightenment faith can be stated more briefly. The philosophers disbelieved in original sin and asserted that man, given the proper training and conditions, was capable of both willing and doing that which is truly good. They despised the past (although they wrote many books on history), and looked to the future for the revelation of all goodness and wisdom: the word "progress" became a fashionable one in the eighteenth century. The continuation of this progress, they fondly believed, could and would be assured by the right use of man's reason, and eventually it would lead to the perfection of man and his society, to the establishment of a new paradise, a heavenly city, here on earth.

And this brings us to still another tenet of the Enlightenment creed: the faith in the redeeming powers of human reason. The philosophers held to this faith without wavering: the application of man's reason would in the end set right all that was wrong at present. And they were convinced that the powers of man's reason had been shown in their magnitude by the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. They had unbounded admiration for the scientists, and the accom-

plishments of the new science filled them with great hope for the realization of their utopian dream. Agreeing with Francis Bacon that (scientific) knowledge is power, they were convinced that in time the scientists would bring about the perfection of man's natural environment, and also ensure his physical health and well-being. Some of the more optimistic believed, in fact, that ultimately not only sickness, but even death itself might be conquered. Once the scientists had done their job, half the battle for the establishment of the new paradise would have been won.

The other half of that great battle was for the perfection of human nature, that is, for the reformation of man's habits, the restoration of his mental and emotional health, and the correction of that which was wrong in his relationships with his fellow-men. For not only man the individual, but society also, indeed society primarily, had to be redeemed. For was not man a "social animal," whose happiness could only be assured if he was fully "socialized" — that is, if he fitted well and happily in his society? Or rather, was not man the *creature* of society, so that ultimately his salvation would depend on a well-ordered, well-planned, and fully harmonious social environment? This task of recreating man and society belonged not to the scientists, but to the philosophers.

How were they going to do it? Not yet by following the scientists' example and method: the attempt to condition control, manipulate and change man by "scientific" means would not come until after the Enlightenment, although admittedly it was the outcome of the Enlightenment's ideals. I may give some attention to this future development at a later date. The philosophers of the eighteenth century, however, unlike their late-nineteenth and twentieth-century disciples, still thought that man was rational, as well as potentially good. Therefore, the way to lead him out of his present darkness was by appealing to his reason and good-will: that is, to teach him. Show man what is wrong, and he will avoid it; show him what is right, and he will follow it. In the eighteenth century it was still as simple as that.

And so the philosophers got ready to educate mankind. They made a success of it. Although the eighteenth century did not have the media of which the twentieth can boast, the philosophers managed to get their ideas across at all levels of society.



News items are published with a view to their importance for the Reformed Churches. Selection of an item does not necessarily imply agreement with its contents.

Synod Groningen: Women's Suffrage Rejected

Groningen, The Netherlands. The Synod of the Reformed Churches (liberated) in The Netherlands has by a large majority (24-12) decided not to grant women the right to vote in the election of office-bearers. This decision was reached after a lengthy but calm debate. Synod concluded "that it is not in agreement with the position of sub-

THE ENLIGHTENMENT — Continued.

They educated many of the upper and middle classes by means of the fashionable discussions in the "salons" of the wealthy and emancipated Parisian ladies. They reached a wider audience by propagating their views by means of dramas, comedies, popular histories, popular books on the new science, novels and poems, — and also by means of the sermons uttered by those priests and preachers who had joined the philosophers' ranks. In addition, they published their famous "Encyclopédie," an enormous 35-volume project compiled under the editorship of Denis Diderot, to which practically every philosopher contributed.

By these means the masses were to be enlightened, which was the prerequisite to leading man and society in the pathways of perfection. In the following issues we will have a closer look at the contents of this educational programme. We will notice that the ideas then propagated, although they may have undergone various refinements, are still very much alive in the present age. We will also notice that they did and do contain a revolutionary dynamite far beyond the imagination of the philosophers. F.G. OOSTERHOFF

ordination which the Scriptures give the woman in the congregation (I Corinthians 14:34-36 and I Timothy 2:11-15) to grant her in this matter an independent, decisive vote." (See: Comment). Synod also decided to establish further informative contacts with various foreign churches, such as, e.g., the Presbyterian Church of America, the Presbyterian Church in the United States, the Reformed Church of Japan, the Reformed Church of Taiwan, and the Dutch Reformed Church of Sri Lanka (Ceylon).

Lambeth Conference: Women in Office

Canterbury, England. The Lambeth Conference, the international Synod of the Anglican Church, which met recently at Canterbury, decided to accept the ordination of women to the priesthood. But the Conference does ask the Churches to exercise great care and caution when proceeding to do so. Local communions must be enabled to accept such a step.

Salvation Army: Against WCC

Geneva, Switzerland. The Salvation Army has suspended its membership of the World Council of Churches in protest against the financial aid which the Council recently decided to give the Rhodesian Patriotic Front, the radical guerilla movement which opposes the present combined white-black government of Rhodesia. The decision, taken by Canadian General Arnold Brown, was motivated as follows, "We don't support violence."

Diaconate For Women?

Grand Rapids, MI., U.S.A. While the Christian Reformed Church recently voted to accept women into the office of deacons, the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Evangelical Synod (RPCES) decided for the third consecutive time not to take such a step. The grounds were that either the Scriptures are not explicit enough in this respect or the issue has not been sufficiently studied by the church.

OPC Remains in RES

Grand Rapids, MI., U.S.A. The General Assembly of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church overwhelmingly defeated a proposal to withdraw from the Reformed Ecumenical Synod (RES) and decided instead to urge two other churches, the Presbyterian Church in America and the Reformed Presbyterian Church, Ecumenical Synod, to join the RES. The Assembly also called upon its fellow NAPARC members

to conduct a joint study on the "women in office" issue. Talks will be continued with others concerning church unity.

COMMENT

WOMEN'S VOTING RIGHTS

The Synod of Groningen could finally come to a decision in the recurring, much-debated issue of women's voting rights. And since the Synod of Coaldale appointed Deputies to examine the same matter with respect to our own Churches, the debate and the ensuing decision at the Synod of Groningen are important and interesting also for us in Canada.

You might remember that there were two reports from the Dutch Deputies, a majority report which favoured women's suffrage and a minority report which argued that this right was not reserved for the sisters in the congregation. The matter has been coming up constantly since 1930 when the Synod of Arnhem decided "not to grant the female members of the congregation the right to vote in church." Seeing the "emotional" nature of the subject, I have the feeling that it might be quite possible (as with the question whether adopted children should be baptized) that somehow it will emerge again at subsequent Synods. But, for the time being, the issue seems to have been settled in our sister-Churches.

By this decision the practice of many years is continued. The Committee which had to report to Synod on this issue already suggested that, unless clear Scriptural teaching compels a change, it would not be wise to remove long-standing traditions and thus cause much unrest and division in the Churches. And, personally, I greatly appreciate such a suggestion. The matter does not seem to be of such immense urgency that despite much opposition it must be forced upon the Churches. If women's suffrage is worth defending at all, the Churches must receive ample time to digest all the relevant Scriptural material and thus come to a greater common assent.

Synod, however, did not just take this stand only for practical reasons, but was quite outspoken in rejecting women's voting rights in principle, as Prof. Dr. J. Douma noted in *De Reformatie*, in an "even stronger formulation" than Arnhem 1930. While the Synod recognized that the whole congregation is involved in the process of appointing office-bearers (through

nominations, prayers, election, and approbation), the actual ELECTION ("het zich uitspreken in de stemming") was considered to be of a different order since it has "a BINDING character for the Consistory." Giving women such a binding, independent, and authoritative voice would be contrary to Scripture, e.g., in I Corinthians 14:34: ". . . the women should keep silence in the churches. For they are not permitted to speak, but should be subordinate, as even the law says"; and in I Timothy 2:12: "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over men; she is to keep silent."

If I understand this well, it means that "voting" is the same as governing or exercising of authority. This seems to be the HEART of the whole matter. Does a "vote" really carry such weight that it can be called a form of "governing," possibly even of "general governing" (algemene regeermacht)? If that is the case, women may indeed not vote and the issue is definitely settled. But if the "vote" does NOT have such a character, why should women be exempted? The Synod of Arnhem elaborately discussed the value of the vote and considered it to be a form of governing, be it of a general nature. Groningen has strongly based its decision on the same thinking.

Yet I would like to see more clarity on this very point: does participating in the election of a government also constitute a participation in the government itself? Or is it right to say that when a Consistory presents candidates, the congregation only enters a "preference vote" and nothing more? (Dutch: Verkiezen tegenover kiezen; voorkeurstemming of stemming?) Do we in Reformed Church polity really know of a voting congregational meeting which rules OVER the consistory? To be honest, I am hardly convinced (See also a previous article, "Who Governs the Church?" *Clarion*, Volume 26, No. 19, September 24, 1977). Perhaps the Deputies appointed by Synod Coaldale can shed more light on exactly this aspect.

These questions do not imply that I violently disagree with Groningen's decision. It only means that I would appreciate more information on the basic issue, the character of the vote itself. The Synod's decision is concise, almost terse. Desirable conciseness, however, does not always include desired clarity.

Cl. STAM

PRESS RELEASE

Meeting of Board of Governors, Theological College, Hamilton, Ontario. September 8, 1978.

1. The president, the Rev. D. Vander Boom, reads from Scripture I Corinthians 12 and leads in prayer.

All Governors are present; Rev. J. Vischer replaces Rev. M. van Beveren.

2. Election of officers: Rev. D. Vander Boom, president; Rev. J. Mulder, vice-president; Rev. W.W.J. VanOene, secretary.

3. Correspondence sent and received is reported by the secretary:

a. Report on interview with Mr. R. Leach, B.A., who in September '77 has been admitted to the College.

b. Faculty plans a series of lectures for the general public during the Fall and Winter 1978/79 on "The Kingdom of God and the Church."

c. Faculty will be reminded of the need to periodically issue a written digest of the lectures.

d. Prof. Ohmann and Rev. Geertsema will interview Mr. Cl. Bouman, B.A. who wishes to be admitted to the College.

e. The Series Lectionum 1978/79 is approved.

4. Reports:

a. Report of the Second International Conference of Institutions for Higher Education at Calvin College, August 13-19, 1978. Prof. Faber and Prof. Selles attended as observers.

b. The Principal's statement 1978 is read.

c. From the Library report it appears that the Library is steadily growing.

d. The report on the coursework for the academic year 1977/78 submitted by the faculty, is dealt with.

e. Reports of visits to lectures are submitted by Governors. The Board thankfully noted that the instruction given is sound, biblical, and scholarly.

5. Visits to the lectures are arranged for the coming academic year.

6. Rev. D. DeJong will, D.V., deliver an address on the College Evening, September 7, 1979.

7. The Acts and Short Report are read and adopted.

8. The Rev. D. DeJong leads in prayer of thanksgiving; the president closed the meeting.

For the Board of Governors,
J. MULDER, vice-president

OUR COVER

White Lake in Manitoba's Whiteshell Provincial Park. (Photo courtesy John Vandenberg, Winnipeg, Manitoba.)

Installation of Rev. S. De Bruin

AT EDMONTON, ALBERTA, AUGUST 13, 1978, BY REV. D. DE JONG

Opening song: Psalm 48: 1 and 4: "Great is the Lord, come sing and laud Him in the city of our God . . . Let Judah's daughters with rejoicing, Thy judgments and Thy truth be voicing."

The Scripture reading was II Corinthians 1:1-14 and the text chosen by Rev. De Jong was II Corinthians 2:14-17.

Rev. De Jong led us in prayer of great thankfulness for the new minister and pastor received from God through grace alone. We do not deserve this grace. May we in all this give Him the glory.

"Brothers and sisters, we are having a parade from Pentecostal Day through to the end of the world. The church at Edmonton is a wagon in this parade. Last year our minister left for Calgary. We ask about the new minister: Will he be able to fulfill his task?"

The theme: It is God who leads His victory parade through this world.

1. The purpose of this parade is to make God known everywhere.
2. The effect of this parade is eternal life or eternal death.
3. The participants in this parade are those who are not peddlars but preachers of God's Word.

1. THE PURPOSE

Paul, thinking and writing about the hardships preachers of the Word meet, finds comfort in the fact that they are part of God's victory parade. God leads in His victory parade through the streets of this world in triumph. He turns us into soldiers of Christ. When we suffer — and it is in and through Christ — we are being led by God in His victory parade. Through us He spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of Him, our God. Through us He makes Himself known everywhere as triumphant over Satan through the blood of Christ. For we are the aroma of Christ to God.

2. THE EFFECT

We will be injured, persecuted, and painted to prove and test us. We may rejoice, however, when His Name is revealed. We may then also share in His (Christ's) glory.

The smell of Christ's (and our) sweat and blood is to God like the fragrance of incense to His glory. A fra-

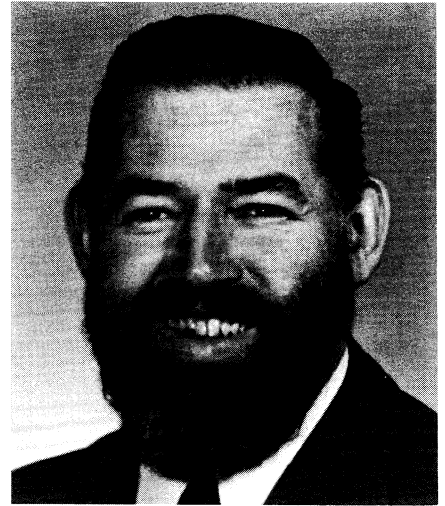
grance from life to life. If we show that we live in Christ, only then do we bring life to all those who believe.

There are also those who cannot stand the smell of Christ. They will be killed. It is a bad smell to them and leads to their doom.

This is the double effect of God's victory parade, the double effect of how we live and speak, and, specifically, of the proclamation of God's Word. You may also expect this from the preaching of your new minister.

3. THE PARTICIPANTS

But who is sufficient for these things (verse 16b)? Who can be participants in this parade? We might be inclined to ask, "Will he be able to manage? Will we unitedly stand behind the new minister? Is this the question, or "Who can make alive or kill?" You can easily form a nice, easy congregation if you change the aroma a little. Then it seems they manage it well, those who do this. Then, however, they are peddlars; those that cheapen their merchandise. Anyone can preach a whittled-down gospel. But only men of sincerity can preach the true gospel. They must stand for what they preach, not coming with own opinions, but with the Word of God. They speak in Christ only, spreading His aroma. God's anger against sin is so great that rather than leaving it unpunished He sent His Son. Peddlars only peddle soft, easy



Rev. S. De Bruin

merchandise. The promise of God to you is that He will always lead you in His Victory Parade. He fulfills this promise, if only you spread the fragrance of Christ. Amen."

We sang Hymn 48:1, 2: "The hope of faith shall not deceive us."

Then the form for installation was read and its questions answered, whereafter we sang to each other Psalm 121:3, 4. "The Lord your Keeper is for aye, From henceforth and forever."

Thereafter Rev. De Jong led us in prayer from the form for ordination: "Merciful Father, we thank Thee that it pleases Thee by the ministry of man to gather a church to Thyself unto life eternal, out of the lost human race. . . ."

The service was ended after we sang Hymn 30:1, 2, 3: "If God is on our side against us shall be none."

THE INAUGURAL SERMON OF REV. DE BRUIN

After the customary greeting the congregation was requested to sing Psalm 95:1, 3, "The Lord be praised, come, let us sing, and let our voice with rapture ring . . ."

The Scripture reading was I John 2:7-11, 3:11-18, and 4:7-5:5, after which Rev. De Bruin led us in prayer. In this prayer the congregation confessed that she so often fails to show true thankfulness for all the blessings received through faith in Jesus Christ.

The text chosen for this occasion was I John 4:7-11. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God . . ."

As his introduction Rev. De Bruin announced that he would like to speak to us about one of those four-letter words which are so often used and abused in our present society. Most of these words, he said, are not fit to mention, but one of them is, and this word is "L-O-V-E." He stressed that everyone in the world likes to be loved, but that not everyone is able to *give* love, for only those who have received love from God are able to give love.

The theme chosen for this sermon was "Keep on loving one another, for love is from God." He had two points:

1. True love and its origin.
2. The recipients of this true love and the command to exercise it.

In what follows I will endeavour to give you a summary of the rest of the sermon.

"TRUE LOVE!"

Why this qualification of the word "love"? Is this word not sufficient in itself to explain love? No, it is not. The reason is that the world has so many wrong ideas about love. So often their concept is limited to sexual union or the desire for material possessions. The worldly idea of love is often only a poor initiation of love, and at bottom is nothing but self-love. It is totally different from the love revealed to us in the Scriptures, and this is the only true love.

The world cannot understand this true love, for it does not even understand the concept "truth." Truth is relevant, according to the unbelievers, and, as such, each person must determine truth for himself. However, all men differ; even the individual can differ from day to day, as such, his understanding of truth changes from day to day. This also applies to this understanding of the concept "love." Who then can determine what true love is all about? Only our Lord God. He is the embodiment of all truth (John 14:6). He *is* love (our text), and because He never changes (Matthew 3:6), neither does His love. True love then is a love which is eternally the same, and this love God has given to us.

The greatest manifestation of this love is that He sent His only begotten Son into the world in order to be the propitiation for our sins. In so doing, God gave *Himself* to us. There is no greater sacrifice.

To love, then, means to give the self. This giving of God was a sovereign act, and not a response to man's needs. God gave because He has wanted to give from eternity. However, this giving (love) was not for all of mankind; that is, it was only for the elect. Christ's suffering and death was sufficient for the whole human race, but *efficient* only for those chosen in Christ. As a result there is simply not a Christian alive who has not received the love of God in his heart. There is nothing to boast of in ourselves, for God first loved us before we could love Him (verse 10).

Love is an active concept, *not* passive. Every action of God toward His people is an act of love. Also when He

chastises us He is engaged in loving us; e.g., Israel in the desert and later in Canaan. God's intention is always to bring His people to repentance.

We have received the command to love each other in the same way as God loves us. To love actively is a constant struggle. We need only read I Corinthians 13:4-8 to see how difficult it is for a sinner, but, in spite of its being difficult, the command is to love, and whoever does not love, simply does not know God. "He who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen (I John 4:20).

We can love, for God loves to give His children what they need. He loves to give them what Christ has won for them. But having received these gifts He requires that we use them for the welfare and salvation of others. When there is division among us we often fail to see that the root cause of it all is a lack of loving one another. When we do not love with a true love, it is awfully easy to fall victim to becoming pharisaistic, sectarian, or liberal. It is only when we truly love one another that we will be able to bear our burdens. Then, by God's grace, we are able to exercise patience and gentleness with each other. But this exercising of a self-giving love must be continuous; our example is God Himself Whose love and patience are unending.

This true, self-denying love, when properly exercised, will eliminate all divisiveness in the congregation. The more we love, the more we will rejoice, even though we have only a small beginning of that new obedience. This beginning is there because God has started something in us; He has poured His love in our hearts; and the more we exercise it, the more we will rejoice.

Therefore, keep on asking for God's grace, and keep on working at loving one another, and, even though it may seem at times to be a useless exercise, keep right on sowing the good seed, for in due time God will give increase. Keep coming to each other with the love of God; it will always be effective. God will use your true love either as an aroma to life or to death (II Corinthians 2:15, 16). His Word, which we are privileged to sow, will never return empty, it will always have its desired effect (Isaiah 55:11).

Let us heed the command to love one another, for in so doing we may expect to receive joy, and healing of all divisiveness and problems. Let us love one another with that love which

comes from God, that love which does not change. May our Lord work powerfully in the hearts of each one of us, so that we may truly be patient and gentle with each other for the furtherance of His kingdom, to the glory of His name. Amen."

We sang Hymn 36:1-4 "Behold, the amazing gift of love . . ." and after the prayer of thanksgiving Hymn 19.

After the benediction, opportunity was given for congratulatory messages. Rev. D. De Jong spoke on behalf of the church at Calgary and as representative of classis Alberta-Manitoba. He stressed the fact that both congregation and minister had received a gift in each other, and voiced the hope and prayer that both may properly exercise the charge received.

Br. S. Tuininga represented the church at Neerlandia and expressed the hope that we should fully realize the blessing received in the person of a new shepherd and teacher from the Great Shepherd, and said, "We rejoice with you and are happy for and with you." Also a congratulatory message was received from the church at Carman, Manitoba.

On behalf of the Church
at Edmonton, Alberta,
DOUWE S. POSTMA

Church News

Classis Pacific, convened as Classis Contracta at Houston, B.C., on September 5th, 1978, after examining the documents presented, granted an honourable release from classical services to the Rev. M. Van Beveren of New Westminster, upon his acceptance of the call extended to him by the Ebenezer Church at Burlington-East. Rev. J. Visscher of Cloverdale was appointed as counsellor of the Church at New Westminster at their request.

For the classis,
C. VAN SPRONSEN, clerk h.t.

DENOMINATIONALISM — Continued. cannot make honest use of each other's services (either worship services or office-bearers) *until* such agreement and unity has been achieved. Otherwise the matter becomes quite confusing and disorderly, and the Truth is at stake. Let us come to agreement on these matters.

Next time, D.V., a few more aspects of this American theory of denominationalism.

Cl. STAM

our little magazine

Dear Busy Beavers,

Remember our BIRTHDAY FUND PROJECT? Well, every project has a goal, a finish, right? We reached our goal when we sent our birthday present to our College on its ninth birthday celebration, September 8.

What was our birthday present? Look here!



Of course it couldn't really look like that, could it?

For all the money you Busy Beavers sent in I bought a money order that I sent to the college with this letter:

The Faculty and Students,
Theological College of the
Canadian Reformed Churches,
374 Queen Street S.,
Hamilton, Ontario

Box 54,
Fergus, Ontario,
September 5, 1978.

Dear Brothers;

On this happy occasion of the eighth birthday of the Theological College, the Busy Beavers from all over Canada want to present to you in this way the enclosed gift for the benefit of the Library.

As you know we are the junior members of our congregations. But we know that birthdays are important, especially this one. That is why we have been collecting money for this gift for some time. We hope it may add something to the festivity of the occasion.

We would also like to say: May the Lord bless and guide you in your work in the year ahead.

Sincerely yours,
the Busy Beavers
of the
Busy Beaver Club.

Pssst! Busy Beavers, did you see just a lit - tle mistake in that letter? Did you see EIGHTH instead of NINTH birthday? Do you ever make a mistake like that? Oh well, you know what? NEXT TIME we send our College a birthday present we will make VERY SURE we won't make that mistake again! Imagine that! Having only 8 candles on your birthday cake on your 9th birthday!

Now that we're talking about birthdays anyway, let's go right ahead with Birthday Wishes for our Busy Beavers who

celebrate a birthday in October. Here's hoping you all have a very happy day with your family and friends, and many, many happy returns of the day. May the Lord bless and keep you all in the year ahead. Happy Birthday, Busy Beavers!

Michael Krabbendam	October 2	Harriet De Jonge	October 10
Jeffrey De Boer	3	Kathy Stol	12
Francine Medemblik	7	Marieke Geertsema	19
Anita Tenhage	7	Carolyn Paize	23
Irene Vande Burgt	8	Melanie De Gelder	29
Marian Van Dyk	8	Patsy Linde	29
Diane Beukema	10	Marian Linde	31



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club *Brian Vanderlaan*. We are happy to have you join our club, and hope you will participate in all our Busy Beaver activities. Did you enjoy your summer holidays, Brian? How did you keep busy? Write again soon.

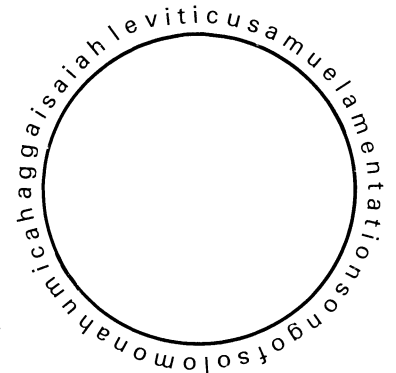
You have been keeping very busy this summer, I see, *Ria Hofsink*. The plan of your house looks very interesting. You'll have to write and tell us how you like living in a round house! Bye for now, *Ria*.

Hello, *Sylvia Poppe*. It was nice to hear from you again. Thank you for your story and letter. Are you glad you're back at school, *Sylvia*?

QUIZ TIME

Puzzle Wheel

How many names of Bible books can you find and circle?



Thanks for sharing Busy Beaver *Greg Hofsink*. Now let's see how you did on the quizzes last time. Did you find what it was in Mary's new school bag? Cheese sandwiches!

At Odds with Others

- | | | |
|------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1. Samson | 5. Ezekiel | 9. Jordan |
| 2. Moses | 6. Barnabas | 10. Tyre |
| 3. Galilee | 7. Jeremiah | |
| 4. Sarah | 8. Dinah | |

How did you do? Did you get them all? Good for you. Keep up the good work!

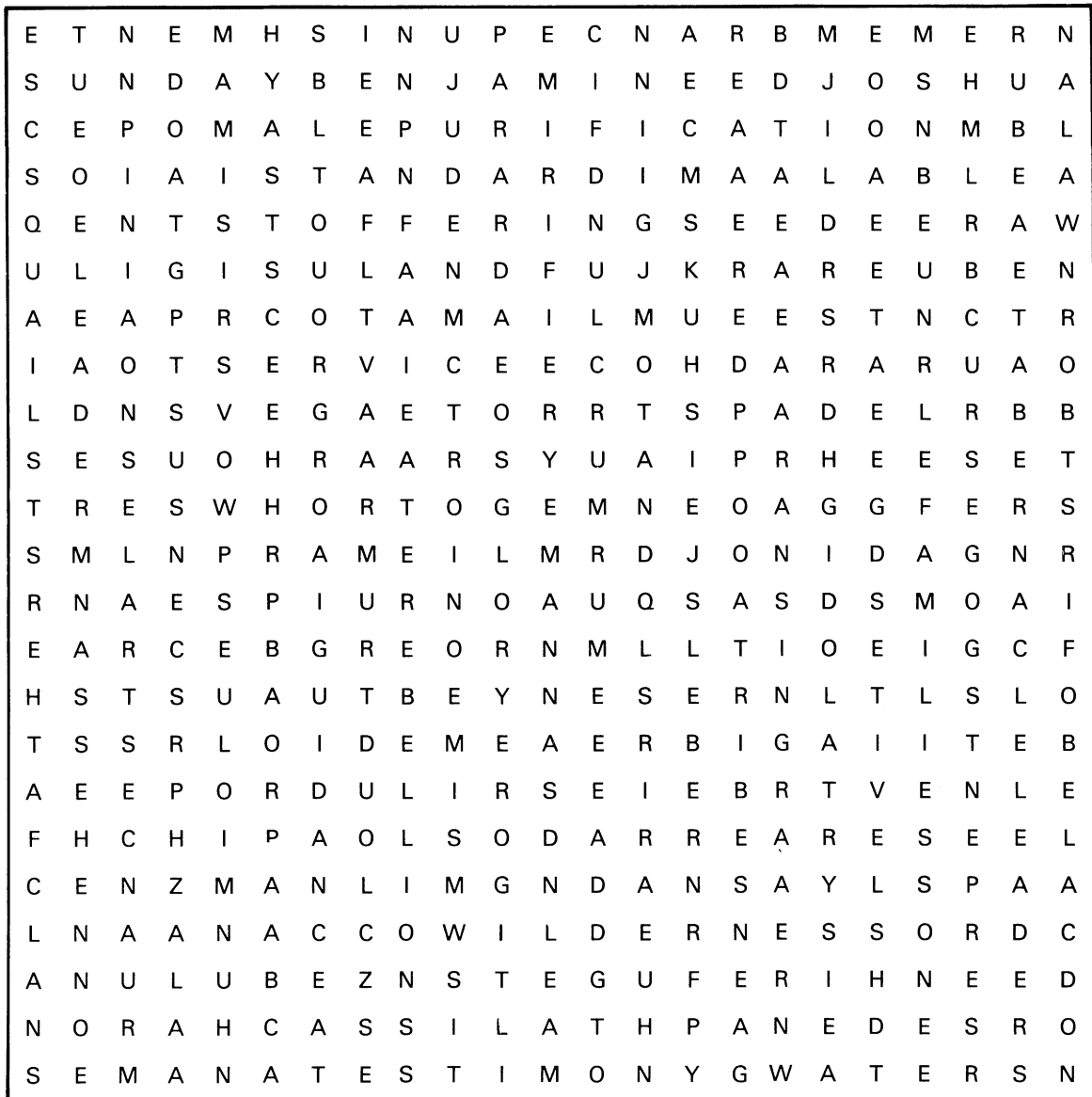
Are you getting curious who won our Big Summer Contest? We'll find out soon! Maybe next time already. Watch for the news!

Bye for now, Busy Beavers. Keep busy!

Yours, Aunt Betty

Word Search — Puzzle No. 32

NUMBERS



- | | | | | | |
|-------------|--------------|----------|-----------|--------------|------------|
| Aaron | clans | glory | leaders | Passover | service |
| able | cloud | go | Levites | plague | Simeon |
| ancestral | congregation | guidance | | punishment | Sinai |
| angel | curse | | male | purification | spies |
| ark | | head | man | | standard |
| Asher | Dan | Hor | manna | quails | |
| | departure | houses | Manasseh | | tabernacle |
| Balaam | | | Moses | rebellion | tent |
| benediction | Ephraim | Israel | murmur | rebels | testimony |
| Benjamin | | Issachar | | refuge | tribes |
| blessing | families | | names | registered | vow |
| | fathers | Jordan | Naphtali | remembrance | |
| Caleb | fiery | Joshua | Nazirite | restitution | war |
| Canaan | first-born | Judah | numbered | Reuben | water |
| census | | | | | wilderness |
| cherubim | Gad | land | offerings | separate | |
| cities | generations | law | Og | serpents | Zebulun |

W. Diek