



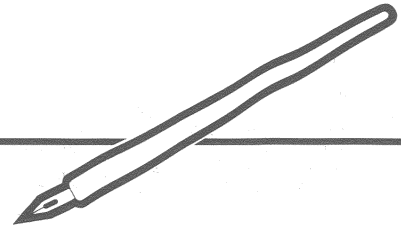
Clarion

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Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church₃

The covenant

We continue our discussion of the book *"Perspectives on the Christian Reformed Church"*. We gave an impression of the first part of "Historical Studies," and wrote about the first "Theological Study" with its optimistic view regarding the future.

Another subject of study was the covenant. Its author, Dr. Anthony A. Hoekema, presents a review of the writings of ten authors on the covenant, from Geerardus Vos (1890) to Andrew Kuyvenhoven (1974).

In this review concerning the opinions about the covenant held in the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), we see a parallel with the thinking in the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands (GKN) during the same period. The basic problem in the discussions held at this time was the relation between covenant and election. Is the covenant made with the believers and *all* their children or with the believers and their *elect* children? The one defends the former position. The other defends the latter view.

In my opinion, this study is lacking in that the name of Dr. Herman Hoeksema is not mentioned here. It is true that in 1924, at the Synod of Kalamazoo, synodical pronouncements on "common grace" led to the formation of the Protestant Reformed Church, but this common grace issues had a lot to do with the questions concerning the covenant. Is there common grace, grace for all mankind? Or is the grace of God particular, that means: for the elect only?

But let us return to the matter of the relation between covenant and election. Those who wanted to maintain that the covenant is made with the believers and *all* their children, and yet tried to include election, came with a distinction between an external and an internal covenant or aspect of the covenant. There is an external covenant with all, and an internal covenant with the elect.

We are reminded that for the same distinction also other terms were used. On the one side the covenant is a legal relation, on the other side there is the covenant as a fellowship relation. The former is the covenant with all, in which God places the believers and *all* their children in a legal or forensic relation with Himself, while the latter, the fellowship relation is only with those who are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and live in fellowship with God through faith. In them the promise of grace has been realized. God's grace is not only external in the promise, but also internal in the heart.

We recognize here the line of thinking that led the Synod of the GKN in 1942 and following years to pronouncements in which presumed regeneration was proclaimed as ground for the baptism of infants. By binding all the members of the Reformed Churches in The Netherlands to this view, the Synods in 1942 and following years caused a split in these Churches. It led to the Liberation in 1944.

Dr. K. Schilder and many more have rejected the above mentioned distinctions of an external and an internal covenant, of a legal (forensic), and a fellowship, covenant relation. God makes His covenant with *His people*. That covenant started in paradise and will last forever on the new earth. Although this covenant knows different dispensations or periods, (the

covenant with Adam and Eve, that with Abraham, the Sinaitic or old covenant, and the new covenant), it is basically the same. For the basic characteristic of the covenant is that God says to His people with whom He established the covenant, "I am the LORD your God." When God said this to Abraham and his house, and later on to the people of Israel, this relation with God was the truth, it was the reality of God's grace. The LORD was their God. This word of the LORD "I am your God" was at the same time the promise. And in this word of promise was included the demand of faith. God's people were called to live in that faith that God's promise was true: This God is our God. God continued to address His people with His promising words which always included that requirement of receiving those words in faith. Unbelief would be breaking the covenant. Whenever a child is born to believing parents and is baptized, this child is ingrafted into the covenant. And whenever unbelievers become believers and join the church, they are ingrafted into the covenant that God has with His people. Then they also are placed in that covenant relation in which God says: I am your God. I want you to believe this.

Furthermore, we must not forget that God's Word is a power unto salvation. The Holy Spirit works and strengthens faith through the preaching of God's Word. God's covenant Word not only demands faith, but also works faith. And then, when, there is faith, it is not our own doing. It is God's work according to election. When there is no faith, but unbelief and a hardening in sin, this is, within the covenant relation, a breaking of the covenant. We cannot blame God for our unbelief and sin. We are responsible for it.

I cannot go deeper into all that now. After all, we are dealing with a book. Let us go back to the study on the covenant as it is given in this book. There is, namely, a remarkable development. In later studies, after 1940, the whole issue of the relation of covenant and election seems to fade away. Now the emphasis is totally on other aspects. The term "partnership" comes up. We are partners of God in the covenant, we are partners with God in God's work, in God's kingdom. Hoekema mentions in summary what Kuyvenhoven wrote, and develops it further himself. "Membership in the covenant of grace has many implications for the Christian life." Covenant, means building the congregation in faith; it also means sharing the faith with others, those outside the church. It means building Christian homes and families, and Christian schools. "The covenant doctrine stresses the mutuality of the God-man relationship which is basic to Christian ethics. It teaches the priority of divine grace, which is the fountainhead of Christian living. But it also emphasizes the responsibility of man toward his covenant God." We can agree with much of this. The doctrine of the covenant is of basic importance.

From this summary, the reader can see that we are dealing with an interesting study, and a remarkable development. I place a big question mark behind the correctness of the use of the word "partner" for the position of man in his covenant relation with God. After the fifties, in The Netherlands, Dr. H.M. Kuitert developed the idea of God as Covenant-God (God as Ally-God, "Bondgenoot-God"). But he did this in a totally un-Reformed way. It is not the same as "God is the God of the

Covenant." According to Scripture, the God of the covenant establishes a covenant relation with His people, in which He is and remains the sovereign, almighty God. Kuitert calls God the "Ally-God" as indication of God's essence. "God is not without man, because He did not want to be without man. His essence is determined by His relation to man." (Dr. W.H. Velema, *Aangepaste Theologie*, p. 120.) This view means that God and man act together as partners. When man works for (social) liberation, it is God that works and brings such liberation about.

In the light of this modern liberal theology I am even more

opposed to the use of the word "partner" as describing man in the covenant with God. "Partner" tends to indicate equality and co-operation. It brings down the sovereignty of God. Man is not a partner of God in the covenant in the same way as husband and wife are partners. God is, and remains, the Sovereign God of gracious election in Christ, and the members of His people remain His children and servants. Although the relation between God and His people is compared with a marriage, this is never done with the covenant relation between God and the individual members of His people.

J. GEERTSEMA

Easter for the Church

It is at times difficult for believers today to see how something which happened almost 2000 years ago — the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ — affects us today. How are we to draw the line from that event to our own life? In Reformed circles, that line is customarily drawn, first of all, in an *objective* sense: Christ died for us, on our behalf, so that the whole of our salvation lies outside of ourselves (*extra nos*) in the blood of Christ. However, we ought not to overlook another line taught in our creeds, the more *subjective* line, if you will, which stresses our *participation* in Christ's death and resurrection — a participation which creates a living connection between the events surrounding the cross long ago, and the life of the Church today. This living link serves to remind us that the cross still bears forth its fruit today and will do so until Christ's return.

Let us then briefly focus on this off-neglected element of Christ's work — an element which really should not be forgotten, since it drives home the living bond between Christ and His Church. The participation idea, found most of all in the epistles, is important for the whole task and ministry of the Church in the world, important also in the determination of our place and duty in the light of the gospel. The events surrounding Easter must still be living realities in the lives of the saints today. Let us briefly follow through the creed with the epistles of Paul at hand to see how this direct link is taught in the Bible.

* * *

We begin with the *suffering* of our Lord Jesus Christ. He suffered vicariously for us, throughout His life on earth, and we receive the benefits of those sufferings in our justification through grace. Yet we also share Christ's sufferings. As He suffered, so we must suffer for Him and

His sake, Phil. 1:29, 30. And, as Paul says, our suffering is actually a participation in His sufferings, Col. 1:24, Phil. 3:10; *not* in the sense that we suffer exactly as He did, since His sufferings were *unique*; but in the sense that His sufferings have their full fruit, "outworking," and reward in the suffering of his own wherever He gathers them.

This also makes the suffering of true believers *unique* in the world, different from any other kind of human suffering. Believers must suffer for the sake of the *message* of the gospel which they carry in their hearts and confess with their lips — a message which always meets with hostility, enmity, hatred, mockery, and abuse in the world. Satan still seeks to do all he can to destroy the power of the message in the lives of the saints. This struggle will continue to the end of the world, since it has been set by the Father Himself in the first announcement of the gospel message, Gen. 3:15.

* * *

The next step in Christ's humiliation is His *crucifixion*. He was crucified for us, having become a curse for us, Gal. 3:13. But we also share in this event. Earlier Paul states, "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me," Gal. 2:20. The cross of Christ manifests itself in Paul's preaching, also in the opposition that this preaching evokes through unbelief. "Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus," Gal. 6:17. Through the proclamation of the cross, the same imprints made on Christ's body extend to His believers.

Similar thoughts come up in the letter to the Romans, a letter which begins by heralding the fact of the *resurrection*,

Rom. 1:8. From this point on, the fruits of the resurrection are realized, through the gospel proclamation. "He was put to death for our trespasses and raised for our justification," Rom. 4:25. And in Romans 6, Paul describes how the Church also shares in the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. "We know that our old self was crucified with Him, so that the sinful body might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin," v. 6. Just as the believer suffers with Christ, so he is also crucified with Christ. Suffering for the sake of the gospel leads to, and produces in its own working, the crucifixion of the old nature, the man of sin.

* * *

In the same context, Paul comes to the *death* and *burial* of Christ, two additional steps in His humiliation. All true believers also share these events in Christ, and they also imply the death of the old nature — serving to point out how *complete* and radical the death of sin must be in the life of God's children. So Paul says, "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His *death*: We were *buried* with Him by baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life," Rom. 6:3, 4. Thus, beginning with suffering for the gospel, we come to a steady but complete demise of the old nature, and a steady birth and growth of the new nature.

* * *

We follow through to the *exaltation* of Christ, and see how all Christ's own are included with Him on every step. The first and cardinal step here is the *resurrection*, which passes on to us. Continuing the theme with which he begins his letter to the Romans, Paul says that we must "consider yourselves dead to sin and

alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Rom. 6:11. We are “united with Him in a resurrection like His” and thus are fully ingrafted in His resurrection, being there with Him as He rose from the dead. Just as His crucifixion and death correspond to the *mortification* of the old nature, so His resurrection corresponds to the *quickening* of the new nature. We rise with Him to a new life in the body, Eph. 2:5, 6, so that we might walk in faith and good works.

This new beginning works itself out in every step of Christ’s exaltation. We have also *ascended* with Christ into the heavens, Eph. 2:5,6; we may be *seated* with Him, Col. 3:1, 2, and He will also take us back with Him at the *great parousia*, when He returns as Judge of the living and the dead, Col. 3:4. We are *with Him* every step of the way, and still today our *home* is where He is, Phil. 3:20, II Cor. 5:8. Through the working of the Spirit, He takes us with Him, and we may share His blessings by faith. So we know that we are truly gathered to His fold.

* * *

We see that we are with Christ Jesus in every step of the creed. Actually, all of these steps can be reduced to two fun-

damental steps, namely, Christ’s *humiliation* and Christ’s *exaltation*, His death and resurrection, which includes and incorporates our dying to sin and rebirth to a new life. And here is the point at which we also see the *uniqueness* of the sufferings of the Church in relation to Christ. We have today what He could not have. We are called to suffer, but may do so out of the power of His resurrection, in the knowledge of His exaltation, and through the strength of the outpoured Spirit. He suffered in defeat; we may suffer in victory. He had no helper — even the Father forsook Him; we have Him as our helper, and His Spirit as our strength. In this sense, we may see the reality of ascension, session and *parousia* already working through the gospel here on earth today. For the *preaching* carries out the full victory and the full blessings of Easter. And *faith* in answer to the preaching shows the power of Easter working in the world today.

* * *

So we may celebrate Easter, through the working of Christ’s Spirit. And here not one is lost; all believers are included in Christ, incorporated in His

death and resurrection. “I know my own and my own know me . . . and no one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand,” John 10:14, 29. As representative, *last Adam*, Christ includes all His sheep, and takes them along with Him in His death and resurrection, so that, through the power of *His work*, not one of them is lost.

* * *

So we see how Easter lives and works, and how we may celebrate in hope and in confidence. For here on earth all things may break and fail; but Christ is risen, and has ascended into heaven, and being there with Him, our life is secure. So we can sing:

*Whom do I have in heaven but Thee?
Who shall on earth my refuge be?
Since I have Thee as Rock and Saviour,
I seek no further wealth or favour.
Although my heart and flesh may fail,
God is my strength, I shall prevail,
For He whose steadfast love is sure,
Will be my portion evermore.*

Psalms 73:8

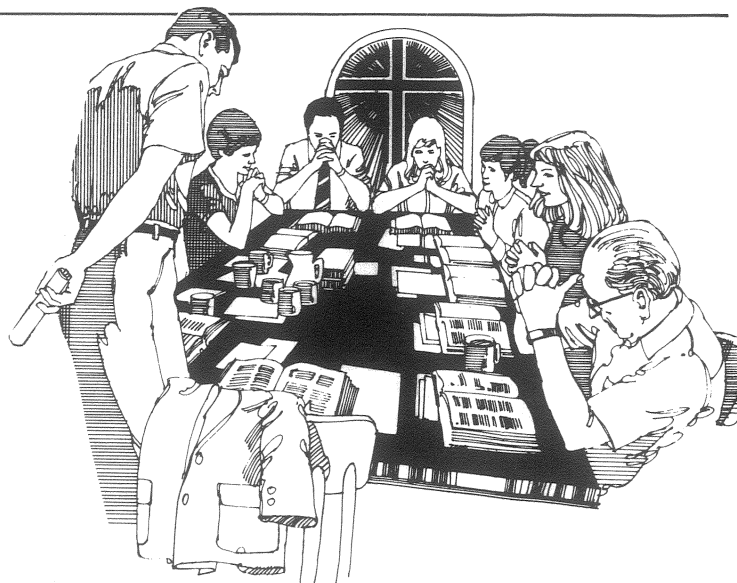
J. DEJONG

Hal Lindsey¹

How do we study the Bible?

1. Uneasiness

An increasing uneasiness is becoming manifest among people. First there was a time that mankind pretended to be able to do everything. People put their trust in science, technology and in the ability of man to get everything under control. Even economic development was to be predictable. Recessions, unemployment and inflation would just be tools in the hands of modern economists and politicians. That would bring a great future with prosperity and peace all over the world. People no longer believed in a God who ruled and governed all things. God had been declared dead and human beings took over control. That was the picture of the Brave New World. Alas, it did not work! Lots of things are running out of control. Technology did not bring the expected relief but rather caused a threat to human existence. Economic development is still unpredictable and unemployment is at a record high in spite of all the effort to bring it down internationally. War, terror and violence go on, and there is



fighting all over the world. Lasting international peace and harmony among men seem to be farther away than ever.

This development has caused a reaction. An attitude of pessimism and desperation has come over mankind. Many are afraid of the future. They do not know what to expect and where to turn to for help. Some take refuge in astrology and the occult. They all need something in which to put their trust. They all like to have something on which they can de-

pend. They all like some “security.”

That is why we can see increasing attention for, and interest in, “religion,” whatever it may be. Especially the eastern religions with their transcendent meditation are the centre of attention. A new form of mysticism is arising. Disappointed people, who feel let down by the rationalistic approach, are turning to the supernatural world and way of thinking.

We can see a spin-off effect of this development in some so-called funda-

mentalist groups and evangelicals in the United States. They say that they take the Bible literally, but they use the Bible to make all kinds of predictions about what will happen in the future. They pretend that they understand every text and that they can tell exactly what is going to happen in politics and in world history in general. They sometimes even go so far as to suggest that they know the date of Christ's return.

There is another development to which we should draw our attention and that is the position of the State of Israel in the Middle East and its future as an independent State. Many people see the existence of the State of Israel as a fulfillment of the prophecy in the Old Testament. There is an "Israel theology," with strong apologists all over the world. They consider the Christian Church to be only an "interim" situation. The Lord's People in the past were the Jewish People and they still are. The Christian Church exists as long as the Jewish People do not accept the Christ, but the time will come that the Lord will reestablish the Throne of David in Jerusalem. The Jewish people will accept the so-called "Jewish Messiah," and then the glorious time will begin in which Christ, seated upon his throne in Jerusalem, will reign over all the nations for a thousand years. That is the doctrine of the millennialists that we hear everywhere today.

Both developments, the increasing interest in mysticism and the growing attention for the future of the State of Israel, are sometimes combined. The Bible is used to satisfy people who like to have security and who are looking for reliable prediction of the future, while at the same time the doctrine of the millennialists is promoted. How strong this development is, and how many people are following this road, becomes clear when we realize that a book like *The Late Great Planet Earth* has been sold in America by the millions, and that its translations have been sold as number one bestseller all over the world. We will give some attention to this development.

We appreciate that Hal Lindsey tries to take the whole Bible literally. We also appreciate that he places the infallible Word of God over against all kinds of speculations of astrologers and other fortune-tellers. He speaks about "hope for the future, in spite of the way the world looks today." He believes "that a person can be given a secure and yet exciting view of his destiny by making an honest investigation of the tested truth of Bible prophecy." (p. 8)

However, in his explanation and interpretation of what the Word of God says, he appears to be very preoccupied, so much so that he imposes his vision

and political point of view upon the Bible, as we will show in what follows.

2. Different types of literature in the Bible

Our starting-point in Bible study is that we believe everything the Bible says, because it is the inspired, infallible Word of God. Still, we have to make a distinction between different types of literature in the Bible. All Scripture is inspired by God, but the Holy Spirit has used different types of writings and different styles. We can divide the Books of the Bible into three basic groups, in the same way as the Old Testament was divided in the past. In the Hebrew Bible the order of the books is not the same as in our translations. A distinction is made between the

ecy in the Historical Books and in the Poetic Books. We can find prophecy and historical notations in the Poetic Literature. A sharp division of the different types of literature is impossible, but we have to acknowledge the difference in order to understand the message.

The Historical Books give us in the first place historical facts. We have to read and study these facts in their context and we have to search for the message, for the redemptive historical element in the narration. But it remains historical literature. In history, the Lord reveals Himself to us in His greatness and majesty. He shows the works of His hands. He reveals His righteousness and His mercy through Jesus Christ.

When we study the poetry, we have

"A prophecy can have a first fulfillment in the actual time and circumstances of the prophet, and also a final or ultimate fulfillment in the distant future. Sometimes the first fulfillment in the actual time of the prophet is in itself a sign, a symbol, or a promise with respect to the final fulfillment."

Historical Books, the Books of the Prophets and the Festive Literature or the Poetic Books. Although the distinction between history, prophecy and poetry is not something that goes along a sharp line, it is important to keep these differences in mind when we study the Bible.

Of course there are historical elements in the Prophetic Books and also in the Poetic Literature. We can find proph-

to consider the special nature of this part of God's revelation to us. In the poetry, figurative speech is used very often. We can find different figures of speech, especially in the so-called "Wisdom Literature" like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. We find the metaphoric language, the simile, the parable, the analogy and the antithesis, to mention only a few. All these figures of speech need special attention.



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It is often a very profound way of teaching and it needs careful scrutiny and much study to understand the message. Negligence, with respect to this special character of the revelation in the Poetic Literature, would cause a wrong interpretation or exegesis, or it would make it almost impossible to understand the meaning of that portion of the Word of God.

With respect to the Prophetic Books there are some other points we have to notice. Prophecy means: to speak the Word of God, to repeat His Word, to explain His will and the meaning of His deeds, and to reveal His purpose. Prophecy is sometimes an explanation of the great deeds of the Lord in the past, revealing the meaning of what took place. Sometimes it is a special message of the Lord for His people in the present time,

“Prophecy is always like a painting with perspective. You cannot determine the distance between the foreground and the background.”

the time in which the prophet speaks in the name of the Lord. Sometimes it is a revelation of what the Lord is going to do in the future. The word “prophecy” nowadays, often refers to the revelation of the Lord with respect to the future. Although that is just one of the three situations mentioned above, we will take the word “prophecy” in the rest of this article in that way, except when otherwise indicated.

As far as the explanation of prophecy is concerned, we have to realize that not everything we read in the Bible can be understood by us, at least not at the present time. After Christ’s return, when we live on the new earth, we will understand everything, but for now our knowledge is restricted.

In this respect, the Apostle Paul writes in I Cor. 13:8-10 “as for prophecies, they will pass away; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophecy is imperfect, but when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away.”

He compares our knowledge and understanding with looking in a mirror. Not the type of mirror we have today, but the type they used in his time: a polished piece of metal, hammered as smooth and flat as possible. It always gave a distorted picture. That is why he writes in I Cor. 13:12 “For now we see in a mirror dimly but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood.”

Let us keep that in mind. The Word of God is clear, and teaches us everything

we have to know. As far as the Law of the Lord is concerned, His commandments and His ordinances, His will for our daily life, the Bible is clear and does not leave us in the dark. We can find, in the Bible, everything that is necessary for us to know in this life, to God’s glory and our salvation. (cf. Art. 2 B.C.) However, the Bible is not given to mankind to satisfy curious people, who like to look into the future and who pretend to know everything about what the Lord is going to do.

The meaning of a prophecy and the way it will be fulfilled is not always clear to us. Even the prophets themselves did not always understand the meaning and the impact of what they were saying. When Daniel received a revelation from the LORD and when he wrote down the words of the prophecy, he asked the

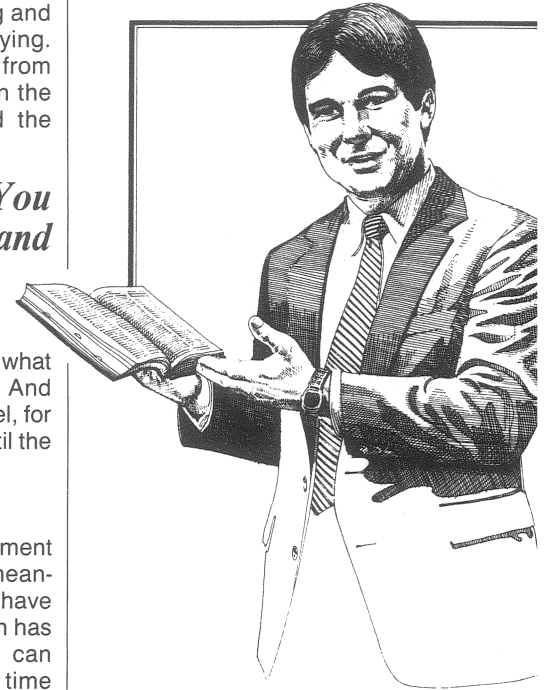
angel who spoke to him: “O my lord, what shall be the issue of these things?” And the answer was “Go your way, Daniel, for the words are shut up and sealed until the time of the end.” (Dan. 12:9)

3. Multiple fulfillment

When we speak about the fulfillment of a prophecy, and search for the meaning of a prophecy in this respect, we have to keep in mind that a prophecy often has a multiple fulfillment. A prophecy can have a first fulfillment in the actual time and circumstances of the prophet, and also a final or ultimate fulfillment in the distant future. Sometimes the first fulfillment in the actual time of the prophet is in itself a sign, a symbol, or a promise with respect to the final fulfillment. There can even be a third fulfillment. The prophet might not understand the full meaning and impact of his words, and the people, who are witnessing the fulfillment might not be aware of the fact that an even greater and more glorious fulfillment is yet to come. Neglecting this very important principle of exegesis can easily lead us to wrong conclusions and can make people feel that there are contradictions in the Bible. We will give some examples to make clear what we mean.

In Isaiah 7:14 we read: “the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” Discussions have been held about the question why in our translation the expression “young woman” is used, while Matthew 1:23, where this text is quoted, speaks about a “virgin.” Some even con-

sider that the RSV translation is not reliable for this reason. However, it is clear from the context that the prophet speaks, in the first place, about a lady in his own time, who is expecting a baby and who will express her trust in the Lord in the way she names her baby, in spite of the terrible political situation. In this respect she will be a sign, a token, a symbol and an example for Ahaz, the King of Judah. That the prophet refers to the present political situation in his own time is clear from what we read in the verses 15 and



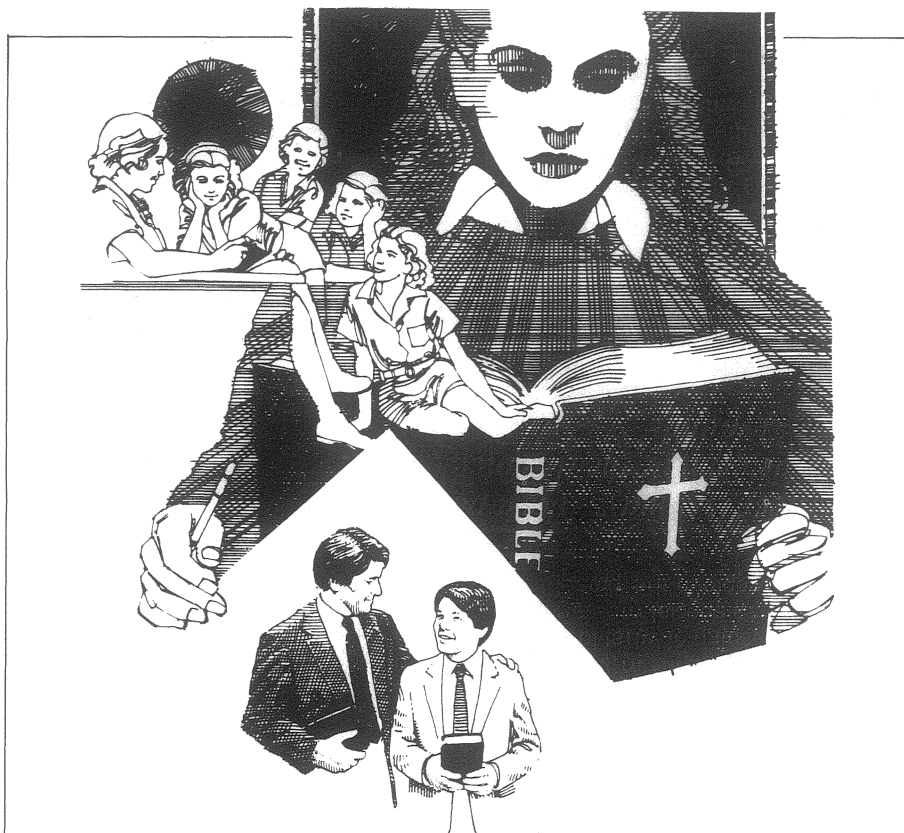
16: “He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land for whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.” The prophet clearly speaks about the City of Jerusalem, which will be set free. The two kings who are besieging the City will be deserted. This liberation will take place very soon, before the child will be able to choose between good and evil.

It is perfectly clear that the fulfillment of this prophecy took place a few years later. At least the first fulfillment. There is also a second fulfillment. In Matthew 1:18-22 we read about our Lord Jesus Christ, conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. And in verse 22-23 it reads: “All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ‘Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel’ (which means, God with us).”

The RSV is correct in translating Isaiah 7 "a young woman shall conceive and bear a son" and not "a virgin . . ." The young woman in Isaiah's time was the first fulfillment of the prophecy. She was at the same time a symbol, a sign and a prophecy herself. She was made, by the Lord, a sign of the final fulfillment of God's promises in Jesus Christ. That is why the prophet says to king Ahaz in Isaiah 7:14 "The Lord Himself will give you a sign."

In the book of Isaiah we can find many of these examples of multiple fulfillment. In Isaiah 11 we read about the shoot coming forth from the stump of Jesse. It is the prophecy of a son to be born in the Royal palace of the king in Jerusalem. But it is at the same time a prophecy of the great Son of David, Jesus Christ, who will rule and gather His people in righteousness, and who will judge all the nations. It is perfectly clear that Isaiah 11 reached its fulfillment when Jesus was born. But from the verses 6-9 it also becomes clear that there is even a third fulfillment. We read there: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fating together, and a little child shall lead them. The cow and the bear shall feed; their young shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. The sucking child shall play over the hole of an asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the adder's den. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

The first part of the prophecy was fulfilled with Christ's first coming to earth. However, the peace and harmony in nature, among the animals and between human beings and animals, has not yet come. The final fulfillment of this prophecy will take place on the day of Christ's return. Then "they shall not hurt of de-



stroy in all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea."

And, to mention one more, in Psalm 22 David cries to the Lord in his troubles and his affliction. The question is not whether David speaks about his own misery or about the suffering of our Lord Jesus Christ. He certainly speaks about his actual situation and his own misery, but he speaks as a prophet and, inspired by the Holy Spirit, he reveals the Word of God. In this way Psalm 22 is a prophecy of the suffering of our saviour Jesus Christ on the cross. The same can be said about Isaiah 53 and many other passages.

Prophecy is always like a painting with perspective. You cannot determine the distance between the foreground and the background. It is like someone who walks on a straight road and sees two towers in the distance. It looks as if they are just beside each other. Sometimes they even cover each other and the observer only sees one. However, the closer he comes to the first one, the more he sees the distance. When he passes the first one, he realizes that the second tower is in the next city and that he still has to walk for many hours before he will reach that point.

That is the way in which the prophets in the Old Testament saw the coming of the

Messiah. It was one point in the distant future. They did not see any distinction between the first and the second coming of Christ. They were just looking forward to the great day of the Lord.

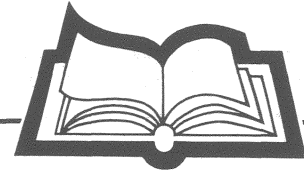
We know much more than they knew. We have received the revelation in the New Testament. We have heard about the first coming of Christ and we know that He will come back. That is why we can see in Isaiah 11 a prophecy about Christ's first coming and about His glorious return. We have passed the first point and we can look backwards and forwards. However, all this must make us careful as well. We do not understand everything perfectly either. Remember what the apostle says in I Cor. 13 "we see in a mirror dimly."

In Matthew 24 Jesus speaks about the tribulation which is to come. Much of what He says there was fulfilled in the year 70, when the City of Jerusalem was destroyed. But it is also a prophecy of what still is to come at the end of the world-history. The same counts for the book of Revelation. Certain aspects may have found their fulfillment during the destruction of Jerusalem, but it is still a prophecy of what is to come.

— To be continued.

W. POWELSE





“After this He appeared in another form to two of them, as they were walking into the country.” Mark 16:12

Masked Glory

The closing announcements of the work of Christ in the gospel of Mark contain an expression which immediately raises questions. Mark unequivocally states that the Lord Jesus appeared in “another form” to two disciples, as they were walking along the way — and no amount of textual trickery can alter what the evangelist clearly says, *nl.* that in the Easter appearances the Lord Jesus appeared in different “forms,” first in one form, then another. This sort of language immediately raises difficulties for us, since we confess that the Lord Jesus was not a “ghost” or “phantom” after His resurrection, but *true man*, having only one form, a *human* form. Why then does Mark write things down in this way?

The question presses all the more when we recall that this appearance corresponds to the one to the two disciples who were journeying to Emmaus, as we read in Luke 24:13ff. Luke does not say that the Lord Jesus had an altered form; rather, the eyes of the disciples were kept from recognizing him. Christ was unchanged; the difficulty lay with them! In Mark, however, it is Christ who has “changed”; *He* appears in another form.

Now we certainly must hold firm to the constant stress of Calvin and other Reformed exegetes that the Lord Jesus was not a phantom or ghost after His resurrection, a strange being who appeared in different forms. Just as Christ was man before Easter, so He was true man after Easter — now, however, with an incorruptible body. Yet Mark’s choice of words — given by the Holy Spirit — tells us something about the way the risen Lord appeared to His disciples. Mark does not speak of a change of *being* or *substance* in writing about different forms; he does speak of appearances of the same Person with *differing degrees* of glory. On the journey to Emmaus, the disciples were kept from recognizing the Lord Jesus; their eyes were “touched.” But the Lord Jesus also had a different form! Here, in this appearance, there is no sign of *glory*, and no sign of the victory of Easter. Everything is masked, and the whole situation is completely ordinary, very human. Thus, while Christ’s person and body remain the same, His glory is more hidden than usual; not a trace of it can be seen.

How do we come to this explanation? Well, Mark uses the same word “form” when describing the changed appearance of the Lord Jesus on the mountain of transfiguration, Mark 9:1, 2. There the Lord Jesus also appeared in another *form*; there, however, His glory shone forth upon the disciples. Before Easter, the disciples saw a glimpse of the future glory. Now after Easter, He changes form in the opposite direction. The glory which He had now rightfully earned is

masked, covered for His disciples. Also *after* Easter, “He laid His glories by.” Why?

He does so for the sake of His disciples, and for the sake of their future office and task. The Lord Jesus subjects the form of His appearance to the will of the Father. The disciples must be equipped in the Word, in the *Scriptures*, so that they can be brought to *Pentecost*, and so be prepared for the proclamation of the good news far and wide. Here appearance is subject to *Word*, and the form of the appearance is subject to the future mission of the Church.

We then see that Christ’s Easter appearances, too, are subject to the law of *accommodation* in revelation. Christ holds back the glory that human eyes are not yet ready to absorb. Just as there were rays of exaltation in the state of humiliation, so we meet with rays of humiliation in the state of exaltation. For Christ does not seize the glory He won with the cross; rather, He administers — in official Messianic duty — the blessing of His victory to the Church. He stays in *office*. He carries on with His Messianic task — now in the application of the acquired gifts and blessings to those who are His own.

That is why we may say we have *more* than the disciples had, — even though they saw the Lord Jesus in person. We share His appearance in *proclamation*, and that is what He was working towards. Since Easter, the Lord Jesus has changed “forms” more often, changing from one degree of glory to another, Rev. 19:11ff. The glory of Moses was a *fading* glory, II Cor. 3:7, but Christ’s glory increases, and only keeps increasing. And through faith in the proclaimed *word*, we are also “being changed into His likeness from one degree of glory to another,” v. 18. So the Church progresses with Christ from the first Easter appearances, through ascension and enthronement, on to *parousia* — return in *full* glory, when all the blessings of grace will be revealed.

That is the comfort of Easter for the Church which lives by faith and not by sight. Today we are still under the law of accommodation in revelation. “We have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us,” II Cor. 4:7. But the gospel of Easter may still be preached! The triumph of Easter is still working itself out. And the conclusion draws near. “It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is,” I John 3:2. Then, when faith gives way to sight, our eyes will *be able to see*, glory will be *full*, and God will be all in all.

J. DEJONG

PATRIMONY PROFILE³⁵

By Rev. W.W.J. VanOene

The General Assembly decided "that, where there are vacant congregations among us who desire to call a minister, they shall have the freedom to do so from among the Christian Seceded Congregations, in order, that also in this there might be a preparation into God's way unto a closer bond of brotherly communion and ecclesiastical union."

However interesting it would be to relate the various efforts both locally and provincially, aimed at achieving a (re)union, we confine ourselves to mentioning more general endeavours.

From the Acts of the Christian Seceded Synod of 1851 it appears that the Provincial Synod of Utrecht and North Holland decided to write a letter to the Rev. D. Klinkert of Zwolle in which the latter was informed about the forthcoming Synod at Amsterdam. The letter also contained an invitation "to delegate a committee from that Association to this Meeting in order to deal with reunion." The tone of the communication is milder than in 1849. No mention is made of any "intrusion upon the holy ministry" and Synod will now leave the "manner of their sending (= legitimacy of their ordination, VO) their own responsibility," and when they unite with the Christian Seceded, the ministers of those Churches will receive a "sending." "And while thus trying mutually to forgive and to forget what is behind, we hereby at the same time, express our sorrow that already so many years have been spent in alienation from one another."

Although the tone may have been somewhat milder, it is clear that the Reformed Church has to return to the Seceded Churches. Acceding to the above would mean for this church that it acknowledged to have been wrong all the time since 1835 or 1837. That was asking too much.

Yet the Reformed Church in The Netherlands, heartily desiring to see an end to the split, decided at its General Assembly in Apeldoorn in 1851, that they were willing to accept what was said about the sending of their ministers, but that the request for freedom and recognition and taking the name "Christian Seceded" were no secondary matters but "points of such gravity and of such a nature that the Assembly judges that, however much it would love to see the union effected, for the time being it cannot enter into this union unless that freedom be revoked and you continue with us only under the title '*Reformed*.'" A committee was appointed further to discuss the matter of union with a committee of the Christian Seceded Church.

Among the Seceded Churches there was equally great interest in the matter of negotiations with the Reformed Church. Several ministers even accompanied the appointed committee to the General Assembly at Apeldoorn. The reply of Apeldoorn Assembly was benevolent. It declared that they fully agreed with the Reformed doctrine and church government. The manner in which the ministers of the Reformed Church were recognized could also be accepted and no remark was to be made about

that. But they continued to insist on it "that the aforementioned freedom with all things that come with it, be rescinded and withdrawn by you, in order to continue with us under the title of *Reformed*; so that, when that has been done, the union becomes a fact immediately." They further stated that they could not say that they had been wrong in the past, but that they wished to be united with the Seceded on the very same grounds on which they could not go along with them before, and that they by a union definitely do not express "that they are being *received* by you among the Christian Seceded Congregation, as it is expressed in the above mentioned copy and report. It is only to refer to what is named reunion or union, leaving both parties in-so-far as can be done in their rights in accordance with, and agreeably to, the only true standpoint of their Ecclesiastical organization."

No real progress was made until 1860. The General Assembly of the "Cross Churches" of 1860, appointed a committee "to go to the Synod of the Christian Seceded" to talk about the new ordination of their ministers which had been demanded by the Synod of the Seceded Churches of 1854. The Synod of the Seceded Churches decided to receive the delegation. A lengthy discussion ensued, but for the time being the old points of requesting freedom and recognition of the ministers continued to be the obstacles.

Another point, already mentioned before, was the recognition of baptism administered by the ministers of the Reformed Church. This baptism was recognized hesitantly, but anyone joining a Seceded Congregation from that church who was in doubt whether his baptism was a true baptism and therefore considered himself to be an unbaptized person: "he will not be refused baptism among us," declared Synod.

Reunion Achieved

It was not until 1869 before the General Assemblies occupied themselves again with the question of reunion. In the meantime locally contacts continued and in some places a Reformed Congregation under the Cross even joined the Christian Seceded Congregation.

In 1869, the General Assembly of the Reformed Church was held in Rotterdam on June 8, 9, and 10. It was continued on June 24 in Amsterdam.

The Synod of the Christian Seceded Church began on June 16 in Middelburg.

The Synodical Committee of the Seceded Churches "officially invited" the Synod of the Reformed Church "to try to achieve a union of the two ecclesiastical bodies." This invitation was accepted; a committee was appointed which prepared a proposal regarding the manner in which the Christian Seceded Synod should be approached. It was decided that the following conditions should be put before them:

"The Christian Seceded recognize unconditionally the sending of our ministers and the legitimate existence of our congregations.

"The Christian Seceded let go of their present title and manifest themselves towards the outside as well as to the inside, with or without recognition by the state, as

the historical Reformed Church, carrying this title with or without any proper predicate.”

In secondary matters they were to bear with one another fraternally and wherever a merger was not yet feasible, the congregations were to continue their separate existence alongside each other. This having been approved, a committee was appointed to go to Middelburg to discuss these matters. As a result the General Assembly was reconvened in Amsterdam on June 24th. At this meeting the committee reported on their discussions and that they had received the following communication from the Synod of the Seceded Church.

“The Assembly informs you that:

1. It desires union with all persons and associations or denominations which are united with our church in the doctrine and government of the Reformed Church.

2. With a view to the condition of the Christian Church in general, it can nor wants to ignore existing situations; neither does it wish to judge how in this case these situations have come into existence and have been sustained till this present moment.

3. In its judgment, there is at the moment no ground whatsoever which according to our Reformed doctrine or Church government would justify our continued separate existence.

4. When the union can be effected on the above grounds, the Assembly by this very union gives to your ministers a sending among our ecclesiastical communion.”

“As for the straightening out of local difficulties, further discussions could take place.”

To this submission of the Seceded Synod a reply was drafted by the committee of the Reformed Church. Their conditions for reunion were formulated as follows:

“That by your church the present title of Christian Seceded be abolished, and that it manifests itself outwardly and inwardly, with or without permissible recognition by the state, as the historical Reformed Church, carrying this title with or rather without any proper predicate.

“That it be firmly declared by you as well as by us that in preaching, Church government, and education (higher as well as lower) the doctrine, ministry, and discipline of the Reformed Church, expressed in God’s Holy Word, the confessions and liturgy of the Reformed Church and the Church Order of Dordrecht of the year 1618/19 forms the basis and continue to be faithfully and seriously maintained and applied.

“Regarding point 2, in connection with point 4, whose agreement seems doubtful to the committee, it informs your Reverend Assembly that we are not permitted to enter into the desired union except on this condition: that your Synod recognize *unconditionally* the sending of our ministers and the legitimacy of the existence of our congregations.

“Regarding the concluding part of your submission:

a. When for local, financial, or other circumstances it cannot be well done that the mutual congregations merge in order to prevent difficulties, the separate existence of the congregation is to be respected.

b. That in secondary matters which do not conflict with God’s Word, Confession, Liturgy or Church Order of

Dordrecht, we mutually bear brotherly with one another.”

Thereafter the committee went to the Synod of the Seceded Church to discuss the above conditions.

The first point on which agreement was reached was the recognition of the legitimacy of the ministers’ ordination. The solution was that “when the union comes about, there shall be a mutual recognition of ministers and congregations.”

Concerning doctrine and church government no controversy remained. It was “decided to come to a union without going into that which is past and to mutually declare: that together from now on we shall subject ourselves in doctrine, discipline and ministry in accordance with the Three Forms of Unity of the Reformed Church, liturgy and Church Order of 1618/19.”

How was the question of the name solved? Various names had been proposed: Free Reformed Church, Restored Reformed Church, Reformed Church, Old Reformed Church or “a name such as Synod shall judge most appropriate.” The Faculty of the Theological School suggested “Christian Reformed Church.” Thereby it was expressed that the united Churches were the Christian Church and that they were the legitimate continuation of the old Reformed Church. This suggestion was adopted and this was to be the name. “Synod does not want to be considered by this change of name to do anything which would in any way fail to appreciate the secession according to Art. 28 of our Confession.”

Further it was decided that if any administrative difficulties should arise, separate congregations would not have to change their name immediately.

The committee reports further:

“Art. 24.

“The complete union thereupon takes place: the brothers hold out to each other the right hand of communion and welcome each other with the most profound joy, and with the wish that this union may tend to the glorification of the Lord and the flourishing and growth of the congregation.

“The moving and unforgettable hours when the chism which kept them separated was filled by God’s all-governing love and unimpeachable faithfulness for His Church, and the brother hand was held out in the way ordained by God, which made a deep impression on all those present, also the brothers from Scotland, were concluded with heartfelt thanksgiving by the chairman of the Synod, after which Psalm 134:3 was sung.”

However important these events may have been, it was “only” a union in which a committee of the Reformed Church was involved. Would its General Assembly approve of its committee’s dealings? Yes, the Synod came to the following conclusion:

“All the delegates declare that they are very content with the actions of the committee; they desire to be deemed worthy to rejoice in the Lord because of His deeds and to go on towards the future with a prayerful heart.” This event was even occasion for the taking of a picture, a rare event in those days.

— To be continued.

A New Dutch Rhyming of the Psalms

It is with great hesitation that I write a few remarks on the *Rapport van de Deputatie voor de Psalmberijming* which report is to serve at the forthcoming General Synod of our Netherlands sister Churches. It is a book of 383 pages, and has been printed by Vijlbrief in Haarlem. Nothing but praise for the neat printing and the clear type. I have not been looking for printer's errors, but have not seen any. Perhaps I have not scrutinized it closely enough. Now that the time for the Synod of Heemse is coming closer, I do not wish to postpone my evaluation any longer.

The reason for my great hesitation is in the first place that my absence from The Netherlands for more than thirty-one years has prevented me from following the development and "growth" of the language. For this reason I have to be very careful. The reason is in the second place that I might add coals to the fire, for whoever has followed the discussions in the Dutch press will have discovered that the battle has not ended by far. And I am the more thankful for the rather smooth way in which our *Book of Praise* has been introduced into the Churches, judged by the Churches and accepted at the latest General Synod, the Synod of Cloverdale. We had, of course, the advantage that we did not have to "fight" to have an existing rhyming replaced in its entirety; we had to start from scratch and have benefited from that. Our sister Churches are at a disadvantage as far as this goes and, besides, various efforts have been underway during the past decades to come with a rhyming that was to replace the one of 1776. Then you get this, that the one prefers this collection of rhymings, the other prefers a completely different one. The one is of the opinion that an "inter-church" Psalter should not be used and that exclusively rhymings from within the circle of the Reformed Churches are to be chosen; the other is convinced that unnecessary isolation should be avoided and that, where such an "inter-church" rhyming is available as an acceptable alternative, it should be used.

Enough about this point. I just wished to show you some of the difficulties which our brothers and sisters in The Netherlands are facing. They face more difficulties and questions than we had to struggle with, although their manpower as far as both rhymers and musicologists are concerned is many multiples of what we could count on. That this has its draw-

backs on the other hand, will be readily seen.

I do not know whether these remarks will come to the attention of our brothers and sisters across the ocean, but I do wish to give proof of it that I have read the report attentively and also have found a few suggestions which I have my questions about.

On page 16, deputies write that the remark has been made that Psalm 119 should have 66 stanzas in order to do justice to all the elements of the unrhymed text. Yet they opted for 44 stanzas. Personally I find this a step back. The 88 in the old rhyming was a little too much, I should say, but I think that our 66 stanzas do more justice to the text.

I find it an impoverishment that Psalm 2 begins with the word "What" instead of "Why." The original has very clearly "Why" have the nations . . . etc. I do not know how to change this in the Dutch rhyming, but something like this could be considered: "Waarom, o volken, woelig opgestaan?"

It may be an omission of the printer, but stanza 4 of Psalm 8 should have a question mark at the end.

It gave me great joy to see the accidentals in Psalm 23 omitted. It gives far more strength to the melody when in the fourth line the naturals are sung.

In the 9th stanza of Psalm 25, 7th line, the word "hun" could cause misunderstanding and be taken as referring to the sins. I would rather read the 7th and 8th lines as follows, "Zie hoe groot het aantal is van wie my boosaardig haten."

With great joy I read specifically the third stanza of Psalm 27.

In my opinion, a slight change should be made in the first stanza of Psalm 68. The 7th and 8th lines now read, "U drijft de goddelozen heen, dan stuiven zij als rook uiteen." To me it sounds better to read, "Drijft U de goddelozen heen, dan stuiven zij als rook uiteen," or "U drijft de goddelozen heen: daar stuiven zij als rook uiteen."

It is to be deplored that verses 14 and 23 of the unrhymed Psalm have disappeared in the rhyming.

Apparently the rhymers have taken the beginning of Psalm 73 as reading: "For Israel," whereas I am convinced that it should read, "For the upright." Anyone consulting our own rhyming will see that there "in Israel" still has a place, but has been given a modest place in the third line.

The wording "Dan zou door mijn

hand 's vijands tegenstand *wijken voor mijn zegen*" in Psalm 81:10, I find a little strange. Would "door mijn zegen" not have been better?

The lines "Ik zou nog liever bij uw woning slechts aan de drempel blijven staan dan bij de bozen binnengaan" are definitely wrong, for Psalm 84:10 (unrhymed) does not speak of entering into the dwellings of the unrighteous but about dwelling in the tents of wickedness.

The word "uw" in Psalm 89:6, second line, appears superfluous, since the light which the Lord sends from above is apparently His light. I would rather read, "Het wandelt in *het* licht, dat U van boven zendt."

As Psalm 89:18 speaks of "The Holy One of Israel," I would read the last line of stanza 7 rather as follows: "De Heil'ge Israels heeft ons die vorst gegeven." I know that the rhymers have endeavoured to avoid contractions, but this reading would be more in accordance with the unrhymed text.

The rhyming of Psalm 103:6 is extremely flat and insufficient. The unrhymed text has, "For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love towards those who fear Him." Can you find this back in "Zo hoog Gods troon is boven deze aarde, zo groot is wat de HERE openbaarde aan wie Hem vrezden en zijn wegen gaan.?"

How can you say that a prayer is "standing" before the LORD's countenance? Listen: "Mijn gebed met smekende handen sta voor uw heilig aangezicht . . ." Besides, I think that the prosody is not correct here. It is a difficult rhythm, but it is more difficult in English than in Dutch to accommodate the rhythm, as in Dutch the feminine endings are far more frequent and usual than in English.

Psalm 150 has been reduced to two stanzas, something which I more or less consider a step back.

In the above I have given only a few remarks about a giant undertaking. From experience I know a little about the work involved in providing the Churches with a book containing the rhymings of all the Psalms. It is to honour those who gave their time and gifts for this work that I considered it my duty to show that due attention has been paid to the product of their labours. May also the forthcoming General Synod of our Dutch sister Churches receive wisdom and guidance when scrutinizing the fruits of the Committee's work of love and dedication.

VO



No, this is not going to be a very long medley. The number of bulletins which I have available at the moment to quote from or to comment on is rather small. There are no wedding anniversaries that I am aware of, and which should be mentioned here. The only longer piece I am going to quote might have been more in place in the School Crossing, if it had not come from a foreign country. Now I shall venture to insert it in our medley.

However, we first pass on the meagre news from the Churches.

Beginning in Burlington West, we read from the hand of the Rev. Mulder the following information regarding the manse.

"We can inform you, however, that as to the building of the manse, council has declared itself in principle in favour of the plans presented and discussed in the congregational meeting of last Monday. But, council also decided that this week the committee of administration and building committee should invite contractors and builders in the congregation to meet with them to hear and consider their suggestions and possible alternatives mentioned in the congregational meeting. If drastic changes are necessary, the committee will come back to the consistory. If not, an application for a building permit will be made."

Rev. Mulder wrote these lines in lieu of a Consistory report, since such a report could not be ready before the deadline for the bulletin. We may, therefore, repeat ourselves somewhat a following time when the official communication from the Consistory has reached the Congregation, but we know already that wide consultation will be beneficial to building such a manse that indeed all needs are filled and the best possible arrangement is obtained.

From the Fergus Church we can mention some good news about an organ. No, definitive decisions have not been made, for the Congregational Meeting where everything will be discussed and where the Congregation will be asked for its judgment has not yet been held and is, at the moment of this writing, still a thing of the future. As for the Consistory, however, the proposals of the Committee of Administration have been accepted and will be presented at this Congregational Meeting. Before the Committee came with the proposals to the Consistory, they investigated all sorts of possibilities, and also benefited greatly from the expert advice of our brother Dirk Jansz. Zwart who happened to be here at this crucial time. As soon as more definite decisions have been made and published, I can tell you more. At the moment I have to confine myself to these few lines. My personal conviction is that it will be a great thing if we can decide definitively to purchase an instrument such as has been proposed.

As for Ontario, we have to leave it at this.

The bulletins from Calgary mention more than once the desire to have a minister of their own again. Lately some families have left, and this does not make it any easier, as we all can see. During the visit of one of the Alberta ministers, "advice was sought and positively received on . . . of course mainly our desire and intention, also our procedure and approach to calling a minister."

The latest Classis Alberta/Manitoba was approached. The report on the Consistory meeting tells us: "Another thing of the past is the first session of Classis, which dealt with Calgary's future: A request for advice in the matter of calling a minister of the Word in the light of our substantial deficit. Clas-

sis appeared very supportive (as has been shown in the past) of the idea that Calgary should have its own minister. To make a responsible decision in the fall, Classis needed more insight into the financial burden the churches of the classis are carrying."

I can well understand the classical decision, for it should not become so — as was expressed at one of our Classes here in Ontario North — that there are Churches that cannot call a minister of their own because of the contributions they have to make towards sister Churches to enable the latter to have their own minister. Our Lord has taught us that we first should calculate the costs of things before we start building a tower.

On the other hand, the isolated position of the various Churches in the Alberta/Manitoba region make it more mandatory to do whatever is possible to enable all Churches to have their own minister. I certainly hope that a solution can be found.

Something which made my mouth water was the following sentence from a piece by the Ladies' Aid or Ladies' Auxiliary (sorry if the name is wrong!): "We also have about sixteen dozen croquettes for sale at 20¢ each." This apparently is the remnant from a bazaar they held at which they raised quite a bit of money. It is too bad that we are living so far away, for I think that it is a bargain. They won't have had to advertise extensively to sell them all, I am sure.

In a previous medley I mentioned as my conviction that it would be wrong solely to leave it up to individual churchmembers to subscribe to the magazine *Evangel*, as I consider that to be too shaky a basis to work on and to continue on. In my opinion, the only way in which this magazine can appear regularly and in sufficient quantities is when home mission committees take out a certain number of subscriptions and also pay for them, of course. That I add, "and also pay for them" is not my invention, but something I found in the Consistory report of Houston. As follows: "With respect to the magazine *Evangel* it is decided to order and pay for 40 subscriptions. These will be handed out to each family who can pass them on after having read them."

I would not have expected that a Consistory takes out subscriptions and does *not* pay for them, but it is nice to know that they will do the right thing.

In the manner of taking out so many subscriptions a more solid basis is put under this periodical and the Task Force does not have to worry about writing to all persons who took out a subscription and forgot to pay their subscription fee.

These are the days when, in most Churches, there is a changing of the guard, so to speak: new office-bearers are elected and part of the present office-bearers see their term of office come to a close. Few non-office-bearers are aware of the enormously large amount of time that office-bearers spend in taking care of the flock that has been entrusted to them. And: the visits that are brought are not the only aspect of the work. Many brethren lie awake for some time after a visit or after a meeting of the Consistory, reliving in their mind the most important parts and thinking about it how they could have done things better, how they might have avoided this outburst, how they should have reacted to this remark, and so on.

It appears, therefore, proper to thank all the brothers whose term of office has come to an end for all the work they did. Much was unknown to most other members; much was done with many weaknesses and stumblings, and everything was impure because of sins. But our Father who sees in se-

cret will reward openly what His children have done by His grace and strength. May for all of you the period of rest be beneficial and, if you are called again to serve in the office, may the wisdom and insight gained previously enable you to serve better and thus to prepare the Bride of Christ more ably for the moment when she will meet the Bridegroom.

In the beginning I mentioned a piece which might have been more fitting in a School Crossing, but I do not think that our brother Vandoooren receives the *Mission News* of the West. For this reason I fear little competition and do not fear his wrath at all.

The Rev. Geertsema writes in the March 23, 1984, *Mission News* about developments in Brazil. They concern the school this time. It may be best to pass it on in its entirety. I cannot help it that the brothers and sisters in the West have read it already. If we had a combined *Mission News* we all would have known.

A Christian School in São José da Coroa Grande

"When a team of three brothers visited the mission field in North-Eastern Brazil 2½ years ago, also the matter of a Christian School of their own for São José was discussed with the mission workers. "Brazil" and "Canada" realized the need for a Reformed school education on the mission field. A school society had been set up already, although it had not become very active. The possibility for realizing such an institution was not seen at that time.

"I do not have to say much about the need and the benefit of an own Christian School. It will be clear to every Reformed church member that a Reformed school would greatly benefit the mission work. The children would receive a Christian education not only during a few hours per week at Catechism, at the youth club, and on Sunday in the church, but they also would have Christian education during a number of hours every day. Moreover, they would not be under the constant daily influence of the public school and of an environment that breaks down what is taught in and by the church and in the homes. A good Reformed school education would greatly help in building up the young congregation. He who has the youth, has the future. That is why the communists pay so much attention to the (communist) education of its youth. That is why the Roman Catholic Church often established schools before they built churches.

"Therefore the need for a school of their own was clearly seen. But the big question was: how can we materialize this wish? We need teachers. We need good material. We need funds. In Irian Jaya the Mission in the broader sense of the word, including what we call Mission Aid, has schools besides the Church. Church and school work in the same building with the same personnel. The evangelist-teacher instructs a (future) congregation on Sunday in the church, and from Monday through Friday he instructs the children in the same building, but then as a school teacher. We asked ourselves the question: can we sent someone to São José who can set up a Reformed school there; who can guide and help and instruct Brazilian teachers, and perhaps be involved also in the mission work? No, we did not have in mind to set up a Canadian school with Canadian standards, but a Brazilian school in the Brazilian situation, with Brazilian teachers, but led by Reformed principles. However, we did not see the possibility yet, also not financially.

But what has happened? The school society in São José received new life. It also became active. Rev. Boersema talked for many hours with the authorities and was told, not only that the government of the State of Pernambuco had no objections, but also that it was willing even to support such a school financially. The school society planned to set up a fully parental school and for the time being to make use of the church building.

"In October, when Rev. Meijer was in Canada, Rev. Boersema wrote that things suddenly were so far that they planned to open the school on January 1. Later on this appeared to be impossible. The opening had to be postponed for a month. But since February 1, the school is off the ground, even though the financial support from the government has not been received yet. The school has a kindergarten and the first four grades. About thirty-five to forty children from São José attend the school.

"The teachers are, in the first place Teresa Vieira, who was in Canada for about a year-and-a-half and who received some additional instruction here. Her Brazilian education qualifies her as a teacher. Further, Isabel and Bethania are helping. They followed a Bible course at a Presbyterian Bible School, but are not qualified teachers.

"In the meantime, the parents of the 'congregation' in Maragogi became interested. They liked their children to go to the Christian School in São José, too. While they hope to be able to begin their own parental Christian School in Maragogi next year, they now have their children attend the school in São José. Every school day the Mission Volkswagen Combi transports twenty-five children from Maragogi to São José, and back. The distance is about twenty kilometers. We received the information that so far the children enjoy it. Lyn Metzlar does much of the driving.

"There are some uncertainties yet. Nevertheless our prayer is that our God may bless this work and make it a blessing."

So far the piece by the Rev. Geertsema.

And this is all I have to say this time.

VO

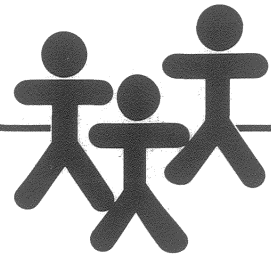


EASTER

Rise, heart; thy Lord is risen. Sing His praise
Without delays,
Who takes thee by the hand, that thou likewise
With Him mayst rise:
That, as His death calcined thee to dust,
His life may make thee gold, and much more, just.
Awake, my lute, and struggle for thy part
With all thy art.
The crosse taught all wood to resound His name
Who bore the same.
His stretched sinews taught all strings, what key
Is best to celebrate this most high day.
Consort both heart and lute, and twist a song
Pleasant and long:
Or since all musick is but three parts vied
And multiplied;
O let Thy blessed Spirit bear a part,
And make up our defects with His sweet art.

George Herbert, 1593-1633





A. To examine or not to examine

A few months ago, School Crossing dealt with the issue of government examinations and private schools. This controversy, which faces our schools in Alberta and British Columbia, raises the question whether it is the government or the parents who control a child's education. At least, that is my perception of this issue. Will the introduction of compulsory, province-wide diploma examinations force our schools to compromise their convictions? A difference of opinion seems to exist with regard to this question. The lack of proximity to the situation prevents me from making additional comments. Therefore, the following three contributions have been printed for your information.

i In 1979, the Edmonton Society for Christian Education, submitted a brief to the government which stated that because of the convictions which motivated Christian education, the schools were opposed to attempts to monitor the quality of education via general, compulsory examinations at any grade level. Such a monitoring system would of necessity shape both the curriculum and methodology of every school. Universal examinations require universal content and methodology, which in turn assume a universal conviction or values structure. Therefore, according to ESCE, any universally compulsory examination used to determine (in whole or in part) the grades of students, will automatically interfere with the fundamental goals of any schooling community which diverges from the basic convictions developed through the Department of Education's curricula.

In 1983, ESCE presented another brief to the Minister of Education. The disagreements about compulsory examinations were repeated. The Minister was also asked to consider ways in which schools with alternate views of education, could be protected from the bias of universal examinations based on one particular set of convictions about education. In the same brief, the Minister was urged to retain achievement tests since they provided the means by which schooling could be monitored and by which levels of

student achievement could be ascertained.

In other words, the reinstatement of compulsory examinations will pressure ESCE schools and teachers to use prescribed textbooks and other resources on which examinations will be based. Such pressure may cause a loss of freedom in book and resource selection, which complement Christian convictions about education. The Diploma examinations would discourage teacher development or curricula, consistent with their convictions and encourage a compromise of these convictions.

(from: *Edmonton Society for Christian Education Bulletin*, February, 1984)

ii In your article (Jan. 27/84) you mention that "In Alberta as well, there is the threat of compulsory province-wide examinations which may force our schools to compromise their Biblical convictions." Perhaps I am being naive, but I welcome the reinstatement of province-wide examinations. Alberta had the policy that every student in Grade 9 and Grade 12 wrote departmental examinations in the core subjects. These examinations were discontinued in 1972. Some strange things have happened since. For example, the English 30 (Grade 12 matriculation course) average mark was in the 60-65% range while departmental examinations were written. In 1982, the average province-wide English 30 mark had risen to 75%. At the same time, some authorities claim that as much as 60% of the graduating students are functionally illiterate. It seems impossible for English marks and illiteracy rates to increase simultaneously. The conclusion drawn by many, including the Minister of Education, is that by abolishing departmental examinations, an effective means of monitoring the educational system was lost. When one person, the teacher, becomes totally responsible for evaluating the performance of his students, he being only human, has a vested interest to grade on the high side. Higher than average marks for his students, would indicate a better than average teacher. Dave King,

the Minister of Education, stresses that compulsory examinations do not only evaluate the student but also the teacher, the program, the school and the system.

Good manufacturing practice rules for the chemical products industry state that the quality control of the manufactured product, must be carried out by the quality control department which is entirely independent from the manufacturing department. The reason is obvious and this provision makes good sense. The manufacturing department has a vested interest in moving out products and may be inclined to release slightly substandard materials. The quality control department does not have the same interest. I think the same quality control principles ought to apply to our educational systems, and province-wide departmental examinations seem to be a fair and equitable way of achieving this. Having written departmental examinations myself, I have no doubts that the advantages of compulsory province-wide examinations outweigh the possible (feared) disadvantages.

(from: Dr. P. VanBostelen
— Edmonton)

iii I am writing in response to what you wrote in School Crossing under the heading "Government and Private Schools" in the *Clarion* dated Jan. 27, 1984. You state what is at stake in BC, is whether it is the government or the parents who control a child's education. You seem to come to this statement because, by imposing compulsory, province-wide diploma examinations, the government seems to be saying that it has the right to tell private schools exactly what is to be taught and how students are to be graded. You conclude that our right to existence is based on a government's tolerance and at the mercy of provincial politicians.

It is difficult for me to judge whether this would be an accurate description for other provinces, but this certainly is not the situation in BC. With the passing of the Independent School Support Act in Sept. 1977, the parents have received the right to educate their children in their own schools in

accordance with their own philosophies and wishes. Therefore, the existence of our schools is no longer based on government tolerance, but has been accepted by this Act. Furthermore, by this Act, schools may receive government funding if they meet certain criteria, one being that they adhere to the prescribed curriculum. Therefore, at bottom, the controversy in the independent schools in BC is a financial one, for only Group Two independent schools must have their students write government examinations or they may lose their Group Two status. Group One and nonfunded schools may write the exams but do not have to.

In my opinion, the issue in BC is not whether it is the government or the parents who control a child's education, but whether independent schools, by allowing their students to write government exams, lose the ability to teach their students in accordance with God's Word and Confessions. Our schools in the Fraser Valley have, from their beginning, decided to adhere to the prescribed curriculum because we are in the world, although not of it, and our children must be in the position to be able to continue their studies in the public universities and colleges if they are able and willing. Therefore, when the Independent School Support Act was passed, our schools applied for, and received, Group Two status and funding without having to make any substantial changes in the curriculum. Even now, with the imposition of government exams, the only change that has to be made is that more emphasis will have to be given to twentieth century history.

The issue is not whether the government has the right to impose a basic, or for that matter, detailed curriculum, and test students to see whether that has been done adequately or not (that may be an interesting topic to discuss at a political study club) but whether we, as school society, must oppose the exams per se because they are against God's Word. What we must do is be on guard that we do not let the curriculum requirements and/or government exams determine *how* this material will be taught in our schools.

(from: Mr. P. Vanderpol
— British Columbia)

B. Why bother going to school?

The coming of Spring usually means more study, preparation for examinations, and to some extent, decisions about the next school year. Statistics show that *far* too many of our young people leave

school before graduating with a diploma, or make choices regarding their education which are totally out of line with their ability. It is difficult (and sometimes dangerous) to generalize, but I feel that the *home* bears a large amount of responsibility in either fostering a positive or negative attitude towards school. If the parents belittle education by citing what *they* have accomplished in life without a high school or college education, what can be expected from the children? If the parents do not stress to their children that the Lord demands that they use their talents to the best of their ability, also when it comes to the training of the mind, how can a teacher make a big impact on a student in this respect?

Obviously, the home's task is not an easy one. To many teenagers, a job means money, "freedom," and a vehicle with oversized tires and lots of power under the hood. A choice between a job and hours of study becomes painfully obvious. Unless there is a lot of parental authority, or other pressing factors, the school will lose out. Years later, many dropouts deeply regret their lack of education. Although there are evening and correspondence courses, the success rate in this respect is very small.

In our secular world, we need Christians who have been trained to *think*, who have specialized, and who can offer an alternative way. We need leaders, not only in Church and school, but also in political, economic, and social areas of life. Education should not be seen as a help, or a hindrance, to making lots of money. It should be viewed as a God-given tool, where one can make the best use of his/her talents. For some this might mean Grade 8; for others, the completion of high school; for others, a college or university degree. It is in *that* constant guiding, urging and prodding, where the home has such an influential role.

The school, however, is not far behind the home in terms of responsibility. John Holt, in his best-seller *How Children Fail* summarizes his feelings in the following way:

Most children in school fail. For a great many, this failure is avowed and absolute. Close to 40% of those who begin high school drop out before they finish. For colleges, the figure is one in three.

Many others fail in fact if not in name. They complete their schooling only because we have agreed to push them up through the grades and out of the schools, whether they know anything or not. There are many more such children than we think. If we raise our standards much higher, we would find out very soon just how many there are. Our classrooms would bulge with kids who can't pass the test to get into the next class.

But there is a more important sense in which almost all children fail. Except

for a handful, who may or may not be good students, they fail to develop more than a tiny part of the tremendous capacity for learning, understanding and creating with which they were born and of which they made full use during the first two or three years of their lives.

John Holt then lists the reasons why this is so, as far as he is concerned:

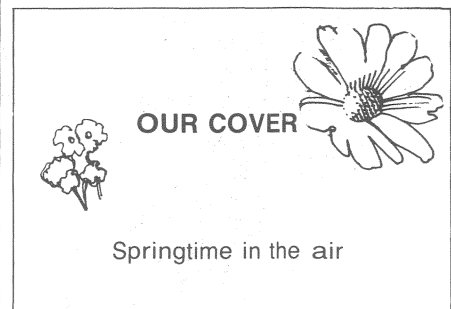
They fail because they are afraid, bored and confused. They are afraid above all else, of failing, of disappointing or displeasing the many anxious adults around them. They are bored because the things they are given to do in school are so trivial, so dull, and places such limitless and narrow demands on the wide spectrum of their intelligence, capabilities and talents.

They are confused because most of the torrent of words that pours over them in school makes little or no sense. It often flatly contradicts other things they have been told and hardly ever has any relation to what they really know to be the rough model of reality that they carry around in their minds.

So much for Holt's critique. Despite the fact that we could easily find fault with some of his statements and his own brand of educational philosophy, he has hit at some "tender spots" as far as schools are concerned. Our teaching techniques are not always what they should be. The material which we teach is not always so relevant. The code of conduct tends sometimes to be overly restrictive. It is the responsibility of a staff to foster a positive climate of learning in the school. This can be done without sacrificing our philosophy of discipline or lowering our expectations. This is not easy — it takes dedicated teachers and a lot of hard work. However, it is a goal that each school should strive for!

May we at *home* and at *school* seek the best for our children. May we serve as instruments in providing the proper background, so that our students some day, may be able to take a positive Christian role of leadership in our secular society!

Until next month, D.V.!
NICK VANDOOREN
John Calvin School
607 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON





GOD'S SURE HELP IN SORROW

Leave all to God,
Forsaken one, and stay thy tears;
For the Highest knows thy pain,
Sees thy sufferings and thy fears;
Thou shalt not wait his help in vain;
Leave all to God!

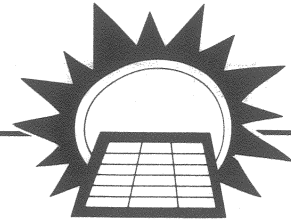
Be still and trust!
For his strokes are strokes of love,
Thou must for thy profit bear;
He thy filial fear would move,
Trust thy Father's loving care,
Be still and trust!

Know, God is near!
Though thou think him far away,
Though his mercy long have slept,
He will come and not delay,
When his child enough hath wept,
For God is near!

Oh, teach him not
When and how to hear thy prayers;
Never doth our God forget;
He the cross who longest bears
Finds his sorrows' bounds are set;
Then teach him not!

If thou love him,
Walking truly in his ways,
Then no trouble, cross, or death
E'er shall silence faith and praise;
All things serve thee here beneath,
If thou love God.

From the German of
ANTON ULRICH, DUKE OF BRUNSWICK, 1667
Translation of CATHERINE WINKWORTH, 1855



"And they remembered His words." Luke 24:8

During the three years the disciples had followed the Lord Jesus, He had thoroughly trained them. When we read the gospel of Luke we are made aware of how thoroughly they were trained; and, how well prepared they were for the fact that the Son of Man had to suffer and die.

The disciples watched Jesus perform many miracles: unclean spirits obeyed him, (4:33) the fish of the sea appeared upon his command (5:6), sickness was cured, (5:13) and, dead people were raised (7:14).

Further, we can read in this gospel how the Lord Jesus taught the disciples how to discern. An example of David, how he acted under certain circumstances, is given (5:3, 4).

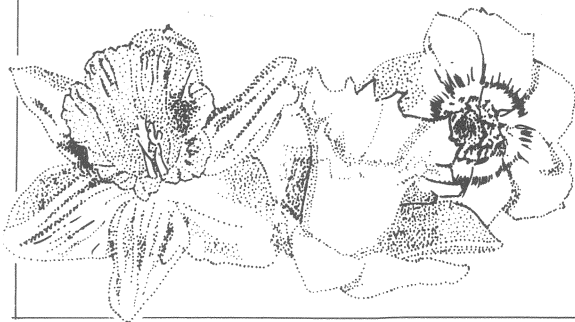
Jesus taught them not to be timid (6:1-11); he also taught them how to pray, "and all night He (the Lord Jesus) continued in prayer to God." (Luke 11:1-5 and 12:1)

Chapter six and seven contain messages of advice followed by examples of compassion. The Lord Jesus taught the disciples to think and act positively. For every negative thought or action he contrasted positive ideas and advice. He showed them how to: love, to be humble, to forgive; to have faith, to have courage. Most important he taught them to rely on the Scriptures; for therein the will of God was revealed. The disciples were trained thoroughly — they were trained to serve. The Lord Jesus even emphasized to them that all they were required to say after serving the Lord was, "we are unworthy servants, we have only done what was our duty" (17:10).

The Lord Jesus prepared His disciples that He would have to suffer and die. "The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." They knew all this would happen and still, in their grief, they were blind to the fact that this was fulfillment of prophecy, until the Lord opened and illuminated their minds and, "they remembered."

We may derive great comfort from this verse, "and they remembered His Word." No word of Scripture is wasted. At the Lord's own time He will cause His children to remember.

Let us remember to pray with perseverance. (Luke 18:1-9)



PRIDE

It seems to me that a man's a MAN
If he's humble enough to say
He's sorry for some wrong he's done
To someone along the way

He'll never know, if he never asks
Just how gladly folks will forgive
And he'll never know, till the guilt is gone
How sweet it can be to live

And look the world in the eye again
And walk in the paths he knew
Then do the things with those he loves,
In the way he used to do.

But the way is sad for the man too proud
To admit that he was wrong
He's just one step from happiness
But PRIDE makes that step — SO LONG!



From our mailbox:

Mr. Leen Overbeeke wrote us that his mother thoroughly enjoyed all the cards and letters she received for her birthday. She especially enjoyed the ones that she received from friends who had lived in Winnipeg or Portage la Prairie.

Mrs. Overbeeke has been in the hospital since October 1983. She is paralyzed by a tumor. She can move her arms, but she cannot read anymore. Her mind is good and she enjoyed the messages her son had to read to her.

Thank you brothers and sisters for bringing some cheer to this elderly sister.

From Mrs. Homan's letter I quote the following, "It was heartwarming to see so many cards sent out on and after Grace's birthday. The mailman was busy for about two weeks. Thank you brothers and sisters!"

Send your requests to:

Mrs. J.K. Riemersma
380 St. Andrew Street East
Fergus, ON N1M 1R1

Mission and evangelism

The Bible Course₃

PRAYER: DOES IT HELP?

The Bible Course, Een Geschenk Uit De Hemel (A Gift from Heaven), produced by our Dutch sister churches has been revised and translated by the Reformed Evangelism Taskforce.

What really is prayer?

Prayer means asking, pleading. You ask something from someone. Prayer is asking God for something. Of course you will have to believe that there is a God, that He really and truly does exist. You will also have to believe that God will listen to you and can do what you ask of Him.

Many people say that prayer is nonsense. No wonder, if you don't believe that God exists. Prayer is nonsense, too, if you believe that there is a being called God, but you refuse to believe that He concerns Himself with man.

Believing in God and believing that He listens to YOU are not matters of course. Difficulties come to mind. How can He understand so many prayers in so many different languages? How can He possibly keep each of them separate with its own content, problems and questions? Truly, if you believe that God can hear all of these different prayers at once, you will have to believe in a God who is all-powerful and in a God who is all-knowing.

In addition to asking and pleading, prayer is also an acknowledgment that you need help. You can no longer go it alone. You are unable to stand on your own feet; you can't look after your own interests. You are no longer your own boss. Prayer means that you recognize yourself to be dependent.

Many people are unwilling to admit this, with the result that they no longer pray. And then there are others too, who do not believe that God will hear, will help, and can help. They cannot pray either.

Can God help?

If a man is in trouble, if he is sick and he prays, does that help? For an answer we should turn to the Bible, for it has much to say about prayer. It speaks about supplicants whose prayers were heard and who received what they asked for. It

also speaks about those whose prayers were not answered and who, as a result, did not receive what they asked for.

Are we to conclude from this that sometimes prayer helps and sometimes it doesn't? Read what it says in Luke 11:6-13. There Jesus Christ speaks about prayer, and in the process He makes some rather remarkable statements. "Ask, and it will be given you." Everyone who prays, receives. What you ask for, you get. Now, that seems to contradict the facts. Most of the time prayer does not seem to amount to much. You are sick and you ask for health. Does it always happen? You pray for work. Do you then get a job the next day? If you do not get an answer to your prayer, did God not hear you? What if you get a job, was that a result of your prayer?

Prayer, does it help? It appears that this question does not lend itself to a simple and ready answer. Rather, let us listen to what the Bible says about prayer.

No doubting

James, probably a brother of Jesus, and a leader of the Christian Church at Jerusalem, writing about prayer in James 1:5-8, says, that we must pray in faith without doubting. What shouldn't we doubt? The existence of God in the first place. "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him." In the second place, do not doubt that God will hear you. God always listens, even if you consider yourself to be thoroughly bad.

Do not think either: prayer may do no good, but it doesn't hurt either. Prayer with such a thought in the back of your mind, is not real prayer. We have to believe firmly, to know surely, that God listens, that He hears every prayer. We should not doubt that He can and will help.

In this regard read Isaiah 40. There the prophet is speaking to the Israelites. They complain that God does not hear them. They say: "God does not see us. Our way is hid from the Lord and He does not do anything about the injustices we have suffered." Isaiah points out to them that God's might and help are given to those who wait for Him, that is to say, those who trust in Him.



Perseverance

The Bible says that we should not become disheartened too soon. We have to pray and seek God continuously. In Matt. 7:1-12 Jesus compares praying with seeking and with knocking on a door. He means continuous seeking, and continuous, persistent knocking. Seeking till you find, knocking till the door is opened. Jesus tells a story, a parable, as the Bible calls it, and He concludes by saying: "If a wicked, unrighteous judge finally listens, surely God, who is merciful and righteous, will listen to you."

Answers to prayer

In the Bible you can also read about miraculous answers to prayer. To cite an example, in the time of Elijah, an Old Testament prophet, the Israelites served an idol called Baal, a god whom they thought would bring fruitfulness. Elijah's task was to bring the people back to God. So he prays for a drought. It would teach Israel that only God the Lord, the Creator of heaven and earth can give fruitfulness. Elijah bases his prayer on God's earlier warnings (Deut. 28:11-14, I Kings 8:35-40).

And do you know what? God hears Elijah's prayer. The rains cease and drought devastates the land. As a result, the people come again to the awareness that only the Lord is God. They choose for Him again. So Elijah prays once more, only this time he prays for rain. And his prayer is heard. You can read this story in I Kings 17:1-18:46. Compare it with James 5:16-18. In dealing with the power of prayer, James cites the example of Elijah.

Prayers not answered

The Bible also speaks about prayers that are not answered, even though God hears them. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, writes about a prayer that is not answered. He has had a tremendous experience, he has been in heavenly paradise. He does not know whether it happened in reality or in a vision. He heard words that he may not pass on. It is all something to be proud of. Yet to keep him humble he receives a "thorn in the flesh."

He does not say exactly what that is. The believers in Corinth knew what that was. It may have had something to do with his eyes. Three times Paul prays to God asking Him to take "the thorn" away. It does not happen. God says to him: "My grace is sufficient for you." That means God's love, God's mercy, God's favour has to be enough.

Moses, a leader in Old Testament times, experienced something similar. You can read about it in Deut. 3:23-28 and in Num. 20:7-13. Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land, because he had disobeyed God. He thought that was terrible. That is why he asks God to be allowed to enter. But God says: "Do not speak about this matter anymore." God heard Moses' prayer, but He does not do what Moses asks.

Sometimes God says beforehand that He will not grant a certain prayer. He even forbids it. Read Jer. 14:7-12 and 15:1.

Prayer in the Bible

Prayer, does it help? Maybe the question is wrong. If you pray as a means to bend God's will to your will, it will not be heard. Prayer does not help either, if

you see it as something you might give a try.

There are many prayers in the Bible. If you read them carefully you will notice a number of things. Let us look at Psalm 25 as an example. Its heading reads: "Prayer for guidance and protection." This heading was inserted by the translators, but it is a good summary of the Psalm. The author prays for guidance and protection, but he does not begin with that. He begins by voicing his trust in God, to whom he "lifts up his soul" (vv. 2, 3). After that he asks that he may learn to know God (vv. 4, 5). Then he confesses his sin and asks for forgiveness in the full confidence that God will grant him this forgiveness (vv. 16-18). Only after he has praised God for His faithfulness does the writer ask for help.

Apparently there is something that frightens the author far more than the hatred of his enemies. His own guilt, his own sinfulness oppresses him. Sin, that is not doing what God says and doing exactly what He forbids. That is why his prayer for forgiveness comes first. Even though he is fully convinced that God will hear his prayer, he does not consider it

a matter of course. Does God listen to sinful men? Can you, with all the evil you do, ask for God's help with a free conscience?

Jesus Christ tells us to pray in His name (John 16:23-28). What does that mean? And then we read it again, "ask, and you will receive." Before answering the question: "Prayer, does it help?", other questions must be answered first. Questions such as: "How should we pray? Why and for what should we pray? May we pray for everything? Do we receive everything we pray for? Is prayer a mere request, or is it more than that?"

In the following lessons we shall not avoid these questions. Together we will search for answers. Answers from the Bible.

Questions:

1. Do you have to use many words when you pray? (cf. Matt. 6:5-8)
2. In Matt. 6:9-13 Jesus teaches His followers a prayer. What is it called? Examine its structure.
3. If you really want to pray, what do you have to pray for above all?

— To be continued.

OUR LITTLE MAGAZINE



Decoration by Busy Beaver
Felicia Viersen

Hello Busy Beavers,

Busy Beaver *Janina Barendregt* has sent in this poem for you to enjoy:

SPRING

Blow your trumpets, daffodils,
For spring is coming now,
Shake out your pretty golden frills,
And make a little bow!
Small heralds of the spring are you
Dressed in suits of gold,
Dancing gaily all day through
In breezes cold. ~
Boom, Boom! The trumpets sound
True and sweet and clear
Daffies curtsy to the ground
For spring, yes, spring is here.



GREATEST DAY, NOVEMBER 15

On Tuesday, November 15, I came home from school. My Dad was there. (He isn't there usually.) Then my Mom told me that my Aunt Corrie was coming. Which reminded me that my Aunt Corrie was coming when my Mom was in the hospital with the new baby. She came about two minutes later, and my Mom and Dad left. About 4 or 5 hours after we had a phone call. My sister Aimee answered the phone. It was my Dad. He said I had a new sister. Right away my Aunt Corrie congratulated me and my brothers and sisters. We had really hoped for a boy because we have 2 boys and 3 girls, but now 4. My Mom's room-mate across the aisle had a boy and hoped for a girl. But so what. As long as it is healthy. We named her "Ashlea Lorraine."

Story: by Busy Beaver *Debbie Jagt*

Pretend you're an illustrator.
Here is space for you to make your own spring picture of the daffodils!



From the Mailbox

Welcome to the Busy Beaver Club, *Alice Blom*.

We are happy to have you join us. I see you are a real Busy Beaver, and a good detective, too, finding out about that coloured snow! Write again soon.

And a big welcome to you, too, *Katherine Lodder*. Thank you for your pretty letter. I really like your colourful design. Bye for now, *Katherine*.

I'm glad you had such a nice birthday, *Yolanda Van Spronsen*. And special company, too! I think your grandparents enjoyed your music, am I right? Thanks for the big puzzle, *Yolanda*.

How was your birthday, *Sylvia Van Bodegom*? Have fun playing your favourites on the piano! Thanks for the big puzzle, *Sylvia*. That should keep the Busy Beavers going for a while.

You're right, *Pearl Vandeburgt*. Spring is beautiful. It's great to see all the flowers starting to grow again. Do what your dentist tells you about your braces, *Pearl*. You'd be surprised how soon it starts to help! What do you think *Pearl*, will your dog have puppies this spring?

Sounds to me as if you had a really good birthday, *Sylvia Leffers*. I guess the swimming helped wake you all up after such a night, no? Thanks for the puzzle and the riddles, *Sylvia*. Keep up the good work!

SNOW MYSTERY CLEARED UP!

Busy Beaver *Alice Blom* will tell you:

"Sometimes snow may look green or red, but it isn't really. What makes snow look these colours are (microscopic = very small) red and green plants that grow under the snow. These plants give the snow a red or green colour."

Maybe you're wondering where you would find this "red" and "green" snow?

To see it you would have to travel to Greenland or some other Arctic places!

RIDDLES FOR YOU

from Busy Beaver *Cindy Oosterveld*

1. What two items help men get up in the world?
2. What is red, has bumps, and rides a horse?
3. Why do you forget a tooth after it's pulled?
4. What is green and lives in salt water?
5. How come cows have bells?
6. Why does a good golfer take along two pairs of pants?
7. What is white, has one horn, and gives us milk?

Answers: 1. Alarm clock and elevator 2. Lone Raspberry 3. Because it goes right out of your head 4. Moby Pickle 5. Their horns don't work! 6. He might get a hole in one 7. A milk truck.

With great joy and thankfulness to the LORD who made all things well, we announce the birth of our first child, a daughter:

CAROLYN DAWN

Born: March 14, 1984

Fred and Ann Beintema
(nee VandenBos)

8149 English Church Road
Mount Hope, ON L0R 1W0

With joy and thankfulness to the LORD, the Creator of life, we announce the birth of our second daughter:

JOANNE ERIKA

Born: March 31, 1984

A sister for: *Alana*

Matt and Ruby VanderMooren
(nee Harke)

712 Drury Lane
Burlington, ON L7R 2X7

With thankfulness to the LORD who made all things well, we are happy to announce the birth of our second child, a daughter. We named her:

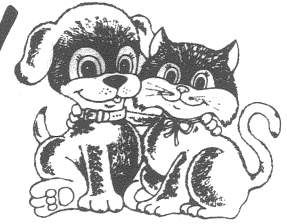
JENNIFER LYNN

Born: March 31, 1984

A sister for *Kevin*

Harold and Joanne Bultena
(nee Vanoene)
RR 3, Arthur, ON N0G 1A0

Quiz Time!



Code Quiz

by Busy Beaver
Janina Barendregt

A-26	J-17	S-8
B-25	K-16	T-7
C-24	L-15	U-6
D-23	M-14	V-5
E-22	N-13	W-4
F-21	O-12	X-3
G-20	P-11	Y-2
H-19	Q-10	Z-1
I-18	R-9	

7	19	22	21	22	26	9	12	21				
7	19	22	13	12	9	23	18	8				
7	19	22	25	22	20	18	13	13	18	13	20	
12	21	4	18	8	23	12	14	26	15	15		
4	19	12	21	12	15	15	12	4	19	18	8	
11	9	22	24	22	11	7	8	19	26	5	22	
20	12	12	23									
6	13	23	22	9	8	7	26	13	23	18	13	20

Can you unscramble these Bible Book Names?

1. mAso _____
2. uTsti _____
3. honJ _____
4. nesGsie _____
5. tRuh _____
6. bJo _____
7. gsKin _____
8. tvinReelao _____
9. atthMwe _____
10. adiabOh _____
11. ImuleSa _____
12. Pvoesrr _____

By Busy Beaver *Pearl Vandeburgt*

(Answers next time.)

Just a reminder, Busy Beavers.

Have you sent in your entries for our Spring Contest?

And how about your Easter quiz?

Bye for now!

Hope to "see" you all next time!

Love,
Aunt Betty

*Commit your work to the LORD, and
your plans will be established.
Proverbs 16:3*

Engaged:

CAROLYN VAN DIJK
and
ERIC VANDERVEEN

April 6, 1984
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Engaged:

JANE DRIEGEN
and
DAN LINDE

March 10, 1984
Smithville, ON

With thankfulness to the LORD who
brought us together, we announce
our engagement:

PETRA JANSEN VAN t'LAND
and
ALBERT RIEMERSMA

April 1, 1984
590 Dynes Road
Burlington, ON L7N 2V2

Mr. and Mrs. Simon Wildeboer are pleased to announce
the forthcoming marriage of their son:

PAUL RICHARD
to

NADIA ANGELINA

daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Danilo Porcellato

The ceremony will take place, D.V., on Saturday, May
12, 1984, at two o'clock p.m. in the Christian Reformed
Church at Guelph.

Rev. G. VanDooren officiating

Future address:

830 Westlock Road, Unit 12A
Missasauga, ON

1949 — May 6 — 1984

With great joy and thankfulness we hope, the Lord will-
ing, to celebrate the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our
dear parents and grandparents:

SYBE MEERSTRA

and

MARTJE EKE MEERSTRA (nee Bulthuis)

Their thankful children and grandchildren:

Cloverdale, BC: Ben and Nancy Meerstra
*Shona, Chandra, Alexander,
Colin, Sharon*

Smithers, BC: Dick and Zina VandeVelde
*Marilyn, Derek, Steven, Glen,
Rosina, Christina*

Surrey, BC: Fred

Cloverdale, BC: Albert

Aldergrove, BC: Henry and Joyce Meerstra
Brian

19893 44th Avenue, Langley, BC V3A 3A3

Drachten 1939 — May 26 — Grand Rapids 1984

Exodus 10:23b

With thankfulness to the Lord we hope to celebrate the
45th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents:

ALBERT VANDERSLUIS
and

RITA VANDERSLUIS (nee Veenstra)

May 26, 1984

John and Grace Buitenbos
Mike and Henni VanderSluis
Harry and Kathy Veldman
Ted and Hennie van Gorkum

and 21 grandchildren

1096 Brownell S.E.
Grand Rapids, MI 49508

1954 — April 30 — 1984

With gratitude to the Lord we wish to announce the 30th
Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grand-
parents:

PETER LINDE

and

ZWANY LINDE (nee Buitenhuis)

*The LORD is faithful in all His words, and gracious in all
His deeds. Psalm 145:13b*

Smithville, ON: Arno and Alice Linde
*Merika, Peter, Brandon,
Kay Leigh*

Fred and Evelyn Vandervelde
Freddy, Suzanne, Peter, Felicia
John and Grace Schutten
*Stacy, Serena, Johnny,
Cameron, Chantelle*

Hamilton, ON: Ron and Debbie Vanderzwaag
Benny, Sarah, Peter

Smithville, ON: Ralph and Wendy Linde
Jeremy, Jessica

Burlington, ON: Tom and Sandra Linde
Timothy

Smithville, ON: Dan Linde and Jane Driegen

RR1, Smithville, ON LOR 2A0

1959 — April 17 — 1984

With thankfulness to the Lord we wish to announce the
25th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grand-
parents:

KEES SELLES
and

JEAN SELLES (nee Kippers)

Their thankful children and grandchild:

Salem, ON: Barry and Sylvia Post
Leo

Abbotsford, BC: Bill and Irene Selles

Matsqui, BC: Kerry
Juliet

32857 West Harris Road
RR 1, Matsqui, BC VOX 1S0

1949 — April 21 — 1984

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

Psalm 91:1, 2

With gratitude to the LORD we hope to celebrate the 35th Wedding Anniversary of our parents and grandparents:

JOHN WILLEM VAN DIEREN
and

JACOBA VAN DIEREN (nee Van Hutten)

Their thankful children:

Lethbridge, AB: Grace and George Wemekamp
Bradley, Melissa, Jodi

Orangeville, ON: Minnie and Jake Kamphuis
Kimberly, Jonathan, Jocelyn,
and Kristin

Kathy and Richard Kamphuis
Sharlene

Box 493, Coaldale, AB T0K 0L0

1954 — May 3 — 1984

With joy and thankfulness to the Lord, we gratefully announce the 30th Wedding Anniversary of our dear parents and grandparents:

SIEBREN and ALICE STIKSMA (nee van Raalte)

Orangeville, ON: Hendrix and Betty Bouwers
Scott, Brenda, Barry

Langley, BC: Rick Stiksma and Lisa Terpstra
Winterburn, AB: Fred and Jenette Klaver

Michelle, Denise

Edmonton, AB: Al and Arlene Stiksma
Shirley, Bradley

Edmonton, AB: Jim and Ruth Stiksma
Ryan

Surrey, BC: Bonita Stiksma and
Keith Doesburg

Edmonton, AB: Gordon Stiksma and
Carrie Marissen
John Stiksma
Mark Stiksma

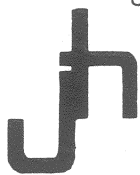
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The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forever more. Psalm 121:8

On Monday, March 19, 1984, the Lord took unto Himself our dear mother and grandmother:

CORNELIA POLDERMAN (nee Zuurdeeg)

born January 31, 1915 in Leiden, The Netherlands.
Burlington, ON: Bill and Evelyn Horsman

Connie and John;

Martin and Joy; Bill, Andrew

Kelowna, BC: Brian and Dorothy Polderman
Kenneth, Beverley

Elmira, ON: Glenn and Trudie Steinacker
Paul, Debbie, Julie, Michael

2189 Mountaingrove Avenue, Burlington, ON L7P 2H8

It has pleased the LORD to take unto Himself our beloved sister:

CORNELIA POLDERMAN

The Lord is my strength and my song; He has become my salvation. Psalm 118:14

From the Choir "Sing and Praise the Lord"

Quelph, ON

On March 19, 1984, after a brief illness, the LORD took unto Himself our faithful fellow member:

CORNELIA POLDERMAN

If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord, so then whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. Romans 14:8

Women's Society "Watch and Pray"

Quelph, ON

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Dr. Wytse van Dijk, Acting Dean

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Hamilton, ON L8H 6W8

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A GRADE TWO TEACHER

Duties to commence September, 1984.

For information contact the principal:

Mr. P.H. Torenvliet

School: (416) 957-3161

Res.: (416) 957-2188

Applications should be sent to:

Mr. H.J. Homan, Secretary
Canadian Reformed School Society
of Smithville/Lincoln
RR 1, Wellandport, ON L0R 2J0

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or contact:

Mr. W. Kanis
Phone: (604) 847-3492

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The Board of the Ebenezer School Society of Chatham, Ontario is still in need of **one** Grade 7 through 10, Math and Science teacher with the options of Arts, Typing and/or Business Practise. If this vacancy is not filled, it could very well mean that we will have to discontinue the operation of our Grade 9 and 10. We urge those who feel qualified to send their applications to:

Mr. R. Smeding

Education committee of the
Ebenezer Canadian Reformed School
1525 Gordon Street West
Wallaceburg, ON N8A 4N7

For more information contact the principal:

Mr. J.A. Roukema

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C. Meliefste

Box 1098 Carman, MB R0G 0J0

Phone: (204) 745-2663

Please send applications to:

F. Dewit

Box 27 Carman, MB R0G 0J0

Phone: (204) 745-3270

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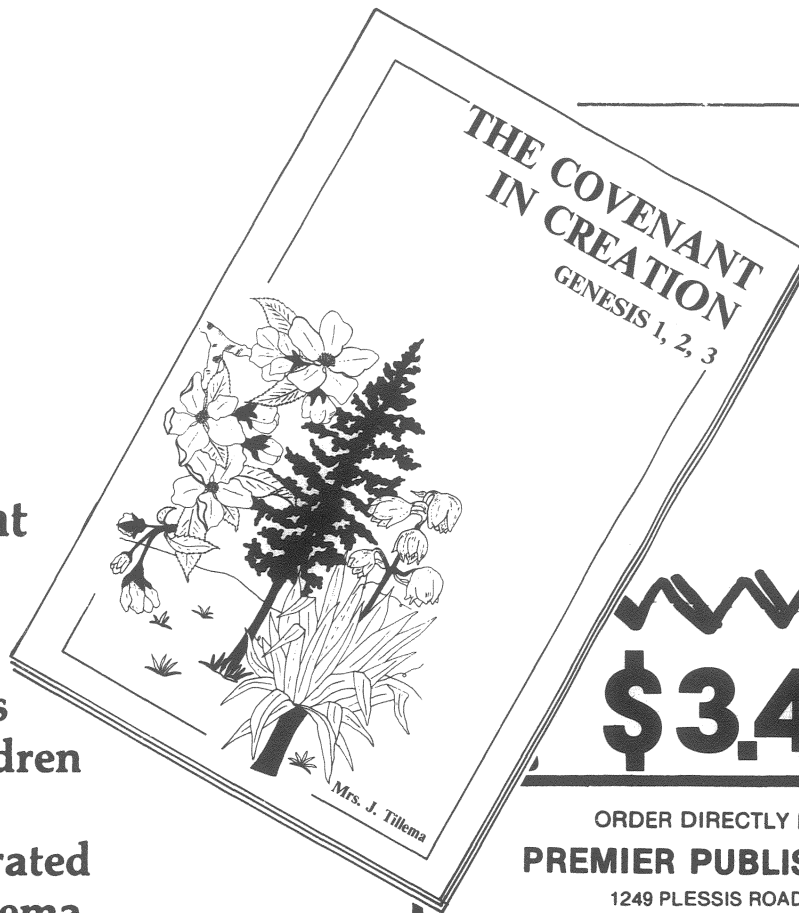
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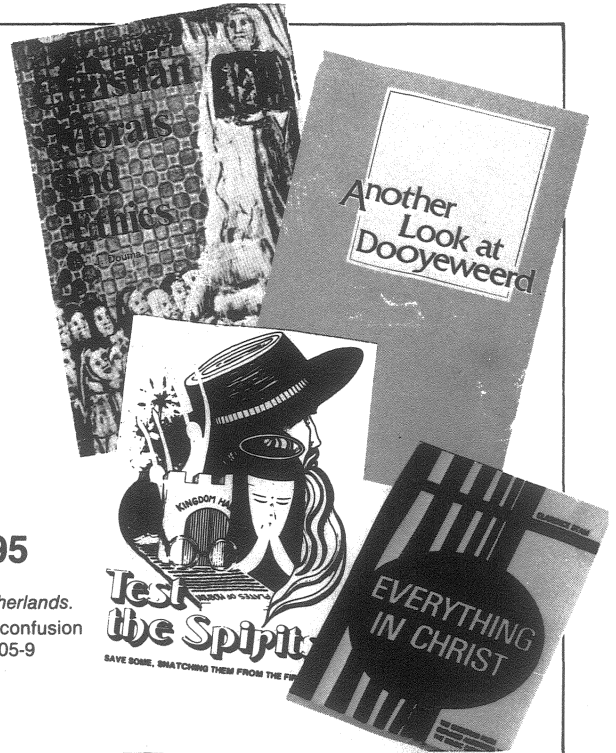
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