



REFORMED

— P A V I L I O N —

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*For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion:
in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;
he shall set me up upon a rock.*

—Psalm 27:5

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From the Ramparts Editor: Dewey Engelsma

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These be the heads of their fathers' houses: The sons of Reuben the firstborn of Israel; Hanoch, and Pallu, Hezron, and Carmi: these be the families of Reuben. And the sons of Simeon; Jemuel, and Jamin, and Ohad, and Jachin, and Zohar, and Shaul the son of a Canaanitish woman: these are the families of Simeon. And these are the names of the sons of Levi according to their generations; Gershon, and Kohath, and Merari: and the years of the life of Levi were an hundred thirty and seven years...And the sons of Kohath; Amram...And Amram took him Jochebed his father's sister to wife; and she bare him Aaron and Moses: and the years of the life of Amram were an hundred and thirty and seven years.... These are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt according to their armies. These are they which spake to Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring out the children of Israel from Egypt: these are that Moses and Aaron.

—Exodus 6:14–16, 18a, 20, 26–27; see also all of Exodus 6:14–27

At first glance, this appears to be a very strange passage.

First, it is not obvious how the information in this passage fits into the main thought of the context. The context is God's charge to Moses and Aaron "to bring the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt" (Ex. 6:13). Moses bewails his uncircumcised lips (vv. 12, 30). Suddenly, in the midst of that charge and that complaint, God inserts this lengthy genealogy of Aaron and Moses. It seems like a parenthesis at best and out of place at worst.

Second, this passage appears to be incomplete. Jacob had twelve sons, but this genealogy only mentions the first three: Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. Of the three, Reuben's descendants and Simeon's descendants are quickly summarized in only a single verse each. Only Levi's descendants are chronicled in much greater detail.

Man thinks the passage is strange, out of place, incomplete, and even unnecessary.

But that is because man is as ignorant as a beast when it comes to the things of God. Seen by faith, the passage—which is the inspired and holy word of God—is a shaft of heavenly light that reveals a most beautiful thing regarding God's salvation of his people.

And what is the beautiful thing that is revealed? It is this: the prophet that God raised up to deliver his people was raised up out of the very midst of the people themselves.

Consider: the purpose of this genealogy is not to tell every descendant of Israel. There are only two descendants that the genealogy is interested in: "These are that Aaron and Moses" (Ex. 6:26). The genealogy tells exactly as much as is necessary in order to trace the lineage of Moses and Aaron. First came Jacob, who was Israel. Then came Israel's sons Reuben, Simeon, and Levi. Then came Levi's sons Gershon, Kohath, and Merari. Then came Kohath's sons Amram, Izhar, Hebron, and Uzziel. Then came Amram's sons Aaron and Moses. And "these are that Aaron and Moses, to whom the LORD said, Bring out the children of Israel from the land of Egypt" (v. 26).

And consider: the genealogy establishes beyond doubt that Moses and Aaron were brethren to all Israel. Though Moses and Aaron were mighty prophets who wielded the rod of God and who spoke with God's voice, Moses and Aaron were not some foreign outsiders to Israel. Moses and Aaron were Israelites! Their line ran back through Amram to Kohath to Levi to Jacob. Moses and Aaron knew the Israelites. Moses and

Aaron were sympathetic to the Israelites. Moses and Aaron were the Israelites' brethren!

And consider: the genealogy of God's prophets is given exactly at that point when those prophets were about to stand before Pharaoh with the word of God that would release God's people. All the preparations were finished. Chapter seven will open with Moses and Aaron's going to Pharaoh to initiate God's plagues upon Egypt. Salvation was at hand! Deliverance was near! Exactly at the point of God's salvation coming to pass, God stops us in our tracks to consider his prophets. These are that Aaron and Moses! They are your brethren!

Why is it so beautiful that God raised up the prophet to deliver his people out of the very midst of the people themselves? Because that prophet is Jesus.

Consider: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15).

And consider: "Both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee" (Heb. 2:11–12).

And consider: "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17).

—AL

FROM THE EDITOR

A warm welcome to the twenty-sixth issue of *Reformed Pavilion*. God has given our little magazine its place for half a year already, even though the editors, supporters, and readers of *Reformed Pavilion* are the poor, the sinners, the dumb, the lame, the slain, and the dead of this world. How remarkable, mysterious, wonderful, and glorious are the ways of God, who raises the dead, saves sinners, and makes the dumb to speak and the lame to walk. Ebenezer: hitherto hath the Lord helped us. May God give us the truth for twenty-six more issues and then for many volumes, according to his will and good pleasure.

This issue contains another sound contribution from Mrs. Connie Meyer. Mrs. Meyer sent a letter to her daughter, Mrs. Christina Overway, after Mrs. Overway sent out her document of September 3, which document was published

in the previous issue of *Reformed Pavilion*.¹ Mrs. Meyer copied some family members and the undersigned in her reply. Although Mrs. Meyer's original intent was not to publish her letter, the letter is profitable for a wider audience, and Mrs. Meyer graciously agreed to allow *Reformed Pavilion* to publish her letter as a contribution in this issue. The letter is published exactly as Mrs. Meyer sent it, with the addition by the writer of one footnote. Mrs. Meyer's letter was written and sent before the undersigned's editorial last week, in case any reader is interested in the chronology of these publications. Mrs. Meyer's contribution is published here with the prayer that God will use her soft answer to turn away any wrath that some readers may have and with the prayer that God will use Mrs. Meyer's sound theology for the instruction, admonition, edification, and comfort of the readers.

—AL

¹ Christina Overway, "Singing with Christ," *Reformed Pavilion* 1, no. 25 (September 30, 2023): 6–14.

REFORMATION DAY LECTURE

THE GOOD LAW & THE GLORIOUS GOSPEL

OCTOBER 31, 2023
7:30PM

The distinction between the law and the gospel is the most important distinction in the Christian faith.

Martin Luther: "Distinguishing between the law and the gospel is the highest art in Christendom, one who every person who values the name Christian ought to recognize, know, and possess."

The distinction between the law and the gospel is of great comfort for the child of God. "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17).

For these reasons, the distinction between the law and the gospel is the most heavily assaulted doctrine in the Christian faith. This Reformation Day, join us for an explanation and defense of the great distinction between God's good law and God's glorious gospel.

HOST

Remnant Reformed
Church

SPEAKER

Rev. Andrew Lanning

FORMAT

Lecture followed by
Q&A and refreshments

VENUE

The Pinnacle Center, 3330 Highland Drive, Hudsonville, MI 49426

Questions can be submitted either before or after the lecture via the Contact page of our website

www.remnantreformedchurch.org

Dear Chris,

9/20/2023

Thank you for your letter of love and concern. If we truly believed that our fellowship with God depended on whether or not we sing only the 150 psalms of the book of Psalms in worship, I'd be concerned too. But we believe no such thing. This has been read into our stand on exclusive psalmody in worship. There is no dependance whatsoever on our singing those psalms in order to have fellowship with God or to be "singing with Christ." The statement cannot be found in any RR material. The RPC has merely assigned that meaning to the words that Rev. Lanning has said, but that assigned meaning is not at all correct. I hope this letter is able to alleviate you of that concern.

In your letter you state "I contend the 'rub' is the teaching that '*when we sing psalms we sing with Jesus, and only when we sing psalms do we sing with Jesus*'" (page 3). The RPC has a problem with that statement because the RPC reinterprets that statement to mean, as you also state, "Rev. Lanning clearly teaches 'singing with Christ' depends on the song choice of the worshiper" (page 4). But this is incorrect. What the worshiper sings has nothing to do with it. Any unbeliever can sing the psalms just as well as any believer can. The words of a psalm can come forth out of one's mouth in beautiful tones and trills no matter if one is a believer or not. Does singing that psalm make the one singing that psalm to be singing with Jesus? Of course, not. No one would say so. Singing a psalm does not and will not bring me into the presence of God. You are entirely correct that only the blood of Jesus Christ brings us into the presence of God. We have never believed anything else brings us into the presence of God except Jesus Christ himself. Nor has Rev. Lanning taught anything else than that. "When we sing psalms we sing with Jesus, and only when we sing psalms do

we sing with Jesus" is not at all a conditional statement.

Rather, the statement is a clear statement of fact. Assuming that I am an elect child of God, I am singing with Jesus when I sing the 150 psalms in worship. That is a fact. Why is that a fact? Because of what I chose to sing? Not at all. It is a fact because of what Jesus sings in worship. My singing with Jesus does not depend on me whatsoever, but it *does* depend on Jesus. And depending on Jesus means it also depends on what Jesus does—and he sings the psalms in worship. That statement means nothing more than what it says. It is simply a fact. That is why Rev. Lanning said that *what Jesus sings* is the point. This isn't about what we sing. It's about what Jesus sings. What Jesus sings is the crux of the matter (see his actual quotes in your letter under A. 2. on page 4).

And that is where we do indeed differ. What does Jesus sing in worship and therefore what do we sing *in him* in worship? That is where the real question comes in. What does *Jesus* sing? There are different ideas about that. As far as I can tell, the RPC says that Jesus sings anything that is biblical. Songs for worship can come from any passage of the Bible then because all of Scripture is God's Word, and therefore, all of Scripture constitutes the words of Christ which Christ would sing. So according to the RPC we can sing any of that in worship as well. But the RPC does not limit songs for worship strictly to the wording of Scripture, either. That is why a hymn such as "Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow" can be used as a doxology for worship. The RPC classis had to admit that the words of that doxology cannot be construed to be a versification of any psalm or Bible passage, but generally speaking it is nevertheless an expression of biblical ideas, so it can be sung in worship.

The RR view does not allow for such a hymn, biblical or not. Why? Because we believe that Jesus doesn't lead us in singing such songs. We believe that Christ leads us to sing only the 150 psalms in worship. And we worship God only in Christ. He is, indeed, our only access to God including our only access to praising God in his house of worship. So the RR concern is only for what Christ does and what Christ sings because what he does is what we do in him. So what he does is all that matters. That the RR view is that Christ sings only the 150 psalms in official worship is another subject to be argued and defended, but as far as what RR members will sing in worship goes, that is why we sing only the 150 psalms.

The RP member claims that Christ is *always* with them no matter what, so then Christ sings anything with them that they happen to be singing. Yes, both the RPC and RR members believe that, being in Christ, all of us as his elect are all always with Christ and Christ is always with us no matter what we do or sing or sin. But that truth of unconditional fellowship is being perverted if we use it to say that I can sing anything I want to in worship. That Christ never leaves me doesn't mean I can do as I please—yes, that's a charge of antinomianism. As much as antinomianism is falsely thrown at those who truly hold to grace alone, there is still such a thing as real antinomianism. An RPC says Jesus is with us no matter what, so let us sing as we please. The RRC says Jesus is with us no matter what, so let us sing only as he pleases. The freedom we have within the RR view is to be privileged to sing the songs of Zion with our Lord Jesus Christ who is singing in the lead. As far as I can tell, the RP view allows for the license to sing pretty much anything as long as it is deemed by some authority somewhere to be biblical, and opinions can differ widely on what is biblical and what is not.

The RP view leads to an open can of worms that can never in the end be contained. Today's generation may be confident that it is safe to sing *mostly* psalms in order to remain biblical in

singing. Next year's generation, or maybe even next month's, is free to add a few more hymns to that though, if they can agree that the songs are indeed biblical. The standard then becomes man's judgment concerning what constitutes a biblical song and what does not, which is a subjective judgment. The RRC has no such judgments to make. The matter is completely, objectively, and simply laid out. Sing the 150 psalms. Done. And it's beautiful.

Another question that has been brought up is what actually constitutes the means of grace in official worship? If the chief means of grace (to use creedal language) includes only the preaching of the gospel and the administration of the sacraments, can the other elements of worship be included as means at all? Should they be included? Or should they be excluded? I do not feel qualified to give a thorough and definitive answer on that, but there are some things we can note. First, preaching is the chief means of grace even over and above the sacraments. There is an order even in those two chief means. The sacraments cannot be properly administered without the preaching of the gospel being there for them to confirm. And then the question must be asked: why is the preaching first? Because it is the Word. The Spirit, who applies all grace to us and works all faith in us, never works apart from the Word, the scriptures. And Jesus Christ is the Word, too. So things are getting deep. Who can fully fathom this thing called the means of grace? If the RP view has not in fact completely excluded all other worship elements from the means of grace besides the preaching and the sacraments, it seems very close to doing so. I cannot do that. I can see the order continuing down the line with preaching being the #1 means and the sacraments being very close under that. Below those in significance would come the other elements of worship in an order I could not place, but singing would have to have a very important place wherever it fell. Singing, especially the singing of psalms in worship, has everything to do with the presence of the Word being there in worship too, along with the

preaching and the sacraments. The power is in the Word. The grace is in the Word. The truth is in the Word. To be able to take the words of the sweet psalmist of Israel on our lips in worship is surely a gift of grace to us! Prayer is a gift of grace to us. To be able to give alms is a gift of grace to us. What in worship is not a gift of grace to us? Why would one want to belittle the singing that is done in worship, if it has indeed been belittled by the RPC?

I can think of one reason. If one wants to add hymns, manmade songs however biblical they may appear to be, to the official worship of God, one might want to minimize the significance of that element of worship. If singing really is a means of grace in worship, even a lesser means than the preaching and sacraments, then we ought to tremble when it comes to what we are to sing in worship. Shall we sing the book of Psalms, written and compiled as a songbook for the church by the Holy Spirit of Jesus Christ himself, or...something else? The question begs no thought. We shall sing the psalms.

And what about other scriptural songs? What about other compositions by supposedly godly men who have taken the ideas of Scripture as they understand them (usually not with Reformed understanding) and put them together in some pleasing verses and tunes? Can such songs compare with the book of Psalms at all? They cannot. I need not go into the reasons why they cannot. I would hope no one would argue that point. And the excuse cannot be made that some other songs really are the words of Scripture. I agree that there are such songs. But there is still no containing the open can of worms even if one starts with such songs. There can be no objective limit at that point. The rankest Arminian hymn can also be argued to be a suitable scriptural song for worship in some slight way or form. And that is more than possible. Given the nature of all men everywhere, that is guaranteed. If the can is opened.

And that leads us to the regulative principle for worship, meaning that we must worship God only as he has commanded. That's the containment of our can, to put it crudely. But we are pretty crude creatures. And that principle comes straight from Scripture and the creeds.¹ Who are we to know how to worship God as he pleases and as we ought? We don't know. Even with the Holy Spirit in our hearts, we need the Word to know. As noted earlier, the Spirit never works apart from the Word. Certainly, no worship acceptable to God will ever be apart from the Word. That means we don't make our own songs up. I know the arguments there. But the minister makes up the congregational prayers! The minister makes up the sermons! Well, not really. Is not an ordained minister an ambassador of Jesus Christ? The relationship is mysterious because no minister on this earth is infallible. Nevertheless, we hear Christ's voice in all true preaching. Christ intercedes for us in all true prayer. And Christ sings in the midst of the congregation. That means we are all singing together with him. In the office of believer, we sing what Christ sings in official worship. Really, that's all I need to know in order to know what to sing in worship.

I make a prediction that does not involve me sticking my neck out very far. I've heard rumors of it already. The doors will be thrown wide open in the RPC to many, many hymns and other songs besides the psalms. If the rule is "mostly" psalms, the rule is subjective and open to every man's interpretation. "Mostly" is a very relative term. We are accused of being legalistic about what we sing in worship. We are not being legalistic, but we do love God's law when it comes to worship. True grace loves the truth of God and the law of God. We delight to sing only from Psalms in worship and we are deposed and cast out as being legalistic Pharisees for that delight. We'd all be put under discipline and excommunicated if we'd stayed long enough. The RPC

¹ Lord's Day 35, Q&A 96 explicitly teaches the regulative principle of worship, as does Belgic Confession, article 32. These creeds get their proof for this teaching directly from Deut. 12:32: "What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it."

might argue that we were cast out for making up a law, but we did no such thing. We delighted in a true law of God. And we continue to delight in that law. The RPC claims that we “robbed” them of a certain manmade hymn. The RPC would rob us of the 150 psalms of David if we stayed. (Yes, that’s true. Rob us of one psalm to be used as a doxology and all will be lost.

They all go together.) Which victim do you think I have sympathy for? I pray that God may make all of these things clear to us all.

With much love,
Mom

—Connie L. Meyer

HERMAN HOEKSEMA’S *BANNER* ARTICLES

The Banner

March 27, 1919

(p. 200)

Our Doctrine by Rev. H. Hoeksema

Article XXVI. The Fallen King and His Kingdom (continued)

It surely cannot be an object of dispute that the chief element in that fundamental prophecy of Gen. 3:15 is the announcement of enmity. The prevalent conception that in this first of all prophecies we have the direct and definite promise of the Messiah has often blinded us to this fact. The general and popular idea is that in these words we have the promise of the Messiah, the Great Seed of the woman. And of course it may be readily admitted that the announcement of the great Messiah is actually implied. And in the light of subsequent history we can understand without any difficulty that the realization of the prophecy given in paradise finds its culmination in Christ Jesus. He is the Great Seed of the woman here mentioned, and without Him there never would have been a “woman’s seed.” But this does not alter the fact in the first place, that the words as they are there do not mention a personal Deliverer at all, but rather in general speak of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. And in the second place, we may also remark, that the promise of this seed does not receive the emphasis, occurs much rather incidentally, while all the emphasis is placed on the fact that God

will put enmity. God will put enmity. An enmity that will exist first of all between the devil and the woman, but that will also perpetuate itself in their seed, throughout their generations, till either one of the opposing parties shall have gained the complete victory. That the woman is mentioned here and not the man stands to reason and appears entirely natural. It does not imply surely that henceforth she will be the chief factor in the history of the world and is as such acknowledged by God. Still less does it warrant the conclusion that the same enmity will not exist between Adam and the devil. But it must be remembered that the transaction that resulted in the fall of man and the breaking of the covenant had taken place between the woman and the devil. And it is between these same two that the separation and enmity is naturally first of all announced. Eve herself shall hate the devil and she is to give birth to a race that shall hate him and his seed.

Now why should we desire to emphasize this evident fact that the main element in the promise is that of enmity? For the simple reason that it immediately calls to our mind the entire covenant relationship that existed between God and

man, that has been violated and broken by man, that is maintained and restored by the Almighty. In a former connection we saw that the essential idea of the covenant is that of friendship between God and His free moral creature. God places man over against Himself as His friend. And since from the beginning the devil appeared as the enemy of God he was at the same time the enemy of man. Man could not be friend of both. He could not be God's party and the devil's. He could not listen to both. God and the devil are irreconcilable enemies. It was up to man to make a choice. Surely, he was made God's party positively. He was not created in an entirely indifferent attitude to both. But he was positively friend and party of God, representing Him in the world. But he was such in covenant-relation, and therefore, freely. By way of faithful obedience the covenant could be strengthened and established, but by faithless disloyalty he could also break that same covenant. And the latter had actually been accomplished. Man had despised the word of his covenant-God and had preferred the word of the devil. He had chosen against God and for the devil. He had become the friend of satan and enemy of God. And this not in such a way, that at any moment he could change the relation again, break his alliance with the devil and swear allegiance to his Sovereign God once more, but, so, that in very fact, according to his inmost spiritual condition he would hate God, and remain an enemy of the Almighty. The king of the world, the viceroy of God had become ally of satan and because of this alliance his kingdom had become the dominion of the Prince of Darkness. But now God arrives on the scene with the definite promise that He will Himself revert this entire relation. He will put enmity. He will by an act of His grace break the alliance that had been formed between man and the devil. For after all this enmity in the heart of man against the devil is nothing less than the new principle of life instilled in his soul by the regenerating power of God's Spirit. Adam and Eve were regenerated, and the promise of Gen. 3:15 is chiefly the breaking thru of the light of revelation with regard to the covenant of grace. The idea also of this

covenant is that of friendship between God and man in Christ. But this positive principle of friendship will reveal itself over against the devil and his seed as enmity.

But this is not all. A twofold seed is announced. As we have remarked already, enmity is announced not merely between the devil and the woman, but also between the seed both shall have in the future. In regard to the seed of the woman here mentioned we may remark in the first place that it surely must not be limited to the Person of the Great Deliverer that would ultimately crush the serpent and his seed. As we have mentioned before this is the popular conception of this text, and in song and speech the idea is perpetuated that in paradise the Messiah was first promised. And as we have also stated this surely is implied in the phrase "seed of the woman." But it cannot be limited to Christ exclusively. After all the seed of the woman taken in the literal sense of the phrase denoted most naturally her posterity. The children that shall be born from her, the race that shall proceed from her, humanity, is naturally the seed of the woman. It is true, to this seed also belonged the Christ. As to His human nature Jesus was the son of Eve and, therefore, belonged to her seed. But that this does not exhaust the meaning of the phrase is plain from the contrast. If "the seed of the woman" refers to just one particular person, namely, to the Christ, it is natural to apply the same interpretation to the seed of the serpent. But if the latter phrase is to be taken in the definite personal sense of the word it is difficult to point out historically to whom, to what particular person the seed of the devil refers. If the text read: "I will put enmity between thee and this woman and between thee and her seed" there would be no difficulty, and the whole matter might be applied to the tremendous personal conflict between Christ and the devil. But this is not the case. Enmity is announced between the woman and the serpent. And these latter evidently must be explained both in the same manner. If the seed of the woman is just one person, the same must apply to the seed of the serpent. But this is plainly impossible. And, therefore,

we proceed from the most natural conception, that the seed of the woman, in the widest sense embraces all her posterity, the entire race that issued forth from her as mother.

However, it is also plain that the phrase is not to be interpreted in this unlimited manner. That not every individual of Eve's natural posterity is implied in "her seed" is plain from the further announcement that also the devil shall have a seed. This cannot, of course, be taken in the natural sense of the word, for the simple reason that the devil is a spirit and, therefore, has no posterity. In no sense is this announcement of the seed of the devil to be applied to the evil spirits that with Satan rebelled against the Holy One. And, therefore, the term "seed" is to be taken in the spiritual sense. The devil had succeeded to instill the principle of enmity against God, his own principle into the heart of man. From the spiritual point of view of this principle he would have seed among the human race, also in the future. In a number of human beings it would become evident that the principle of sin actually perpetuated itself. They would follow the devil and in every relation of life reveal and develop the principle of sin as instilled by Satan into the root of the human organism. And, therefore, if this is the meaning of the seed of the serpent, if it refers to his spiritual seed among men, to those that will in the future acknowledge the devil as their king, it is plain that the "seed of the woman" cannot embrace all the natural posterity of the mother of mankind. On the contrary, even as the seed of the serpent refers to men viewed from the angle of their spiritual relation to and solidarity with the devil, so the seed of the woman refers to

children of Eve viewed from their spiritual relation to Christ, the Great Seed, in whom the seed of the woman will reach its culmination.

If thus explained all will be clear. Eve is the natural mother of all the human race. But that human race will consist of two peoples, spiritually radically different from each other, spiritually characterized as the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent. The power, naturally, that determines this incision and separation is that of election and reprobation, according to which the human organism is to be saved in Christ, even though many individual branches are to be cut off. Naturally, therefore, Eve is the mother of two peoples. But from a spiritual point of view she is the mother of Christ and His people. In these latter that same principle of enmity against the serpent and his race that was implanted in her heart will become manifest. The result will be a terrible struggle; throughout the history of the human race the enmity between the two peoples will reveal itself and the battle will rage. The serpent shall not leave the woman a moment's rest, the seed of the serpent shall cause the seed of the woman continual trouble. But never will they succeed in doing more than what is indicated in the prophecy. The heel of the woman's seed shall be crushed. Keen pain shall the subjects of the devil be allowed to inflict upon the followers of the Great Seed all thru history and the progress of the latter will be greatly impeded. But the ultimate outcome will be that the kingdom of light thru the Seed of the Woman shall have the victory and shall forevermore crush the serpent's head.

—Holland, Mich.

