

# *The Presbyterian*

## **GUARDIAN**

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The Rev. John J. de Waard died in his sleep in Ottawa, Ontario early on Sunday morning, August 9, 1959. He had gone there by bus on Saturday from his home in Rochester, N. Y. He lodged at the home of a member of the Christian Reformed Church, and it was reported that he seemed to be quite well when he retired. His body was discovered in bed.

Funeral services were held in the Memorial Orthodox Presbyterian Church of Rochester, from whose pastorate he had retired at the first of the present year. The Rev. George J. Willis, pastor of Memorial Church, was in charge of the service. Participating were the Rev. John P. Galbraith, representing the missions committees of the denomination, on which Mr. de Waard had served; the Rev. John P. Clelland, representing the Board of trustees of Westminster Theological Seminary, of which board Mr. de Waard was vice-president; and the Rev. Professor C. Van Til, who represented the faculty of the Seminary.

Mr. de Waard, a charter minister of the Presbyterian Church of America (now the Orthodox Presbyterian Church), had served two pastorates during the thirty-three years of his ministry: first in Cedar Grove, Wisconsin and then in Rochester, New York. His death came in his sixty-seventh year. He is survived by his wife and six children, the youngest of whom is sixteen.

The following address was given at the funeral service by his close personal friend, Dr. C. Van Til.

#### Address at the Funeral

Dear Friends:

Will you listen with me to the words of the Apostle Paul: "For the which cause I also suffer these things; nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12).

When we are called upon to commit unto the Lord the remains of one of his servants the last thing that we would do is to engage in eulogies. Only Jesus Christ, as Saviour, deserves to be praised. He only could say without qualification: Be ye followers of me. Paul, the Apostle, also said: "Be ye followers of me," but

## John J. de Waard Dies Suddenly

he added "as I also am of Christ."

And in the letter to Timothy from which my text is taken Paul urges his "son Timothy" to "endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory."

Paul had preached Jesus Christ and him crucified, Jesus and the resurrection. Together with the other apostles he had cast in his lot with Jesus Christ who said: I am the Way, the Truth and the Life.

#### Opposition

But when Paul preached opposition broke loose; opposition of Jews, opposition of Gentiles and back of all the opposition of men, the opposition of Satan.

Did Paul never fear? Oh yes, he did. But a heavenly vision was given him when he was about to enter Corinth and in this vision the Lord said to him: "Be not afraid, Paul, but speak for I have much people in this city." And now as he, toward the end of his days, looks over his life and labors he speaks with joy and exultation, not of the past as past, but of the past with its fruit for the future.

All his life and all his labors Paul has committed to the name of Jesus. Was the world about to swallow up his effort at the end of his life as the desert swallows up a bucket of water? Not at all! His Saviour had told his followers: Fear not, I have overcome the world. It is the will of the Father to give unto you the kingdom. "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3).

Is Paul afraid that Jesus cannot fulfill these promises to his followers? No, he is not. "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day," he writes.

On what did such positive assurance rest? Was there any partial ful-

fillment of these promises of Christ? Could he prove by reason beyond the word of Christ himself that all power had been given unto him? No, in the last analysis, Paul listened to the words of the self-identifying Christ as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Yes, Paul did show that the wisdom of the world has been made foolishness with God. But he did even this because he knew that if Christ could not be believed then no man can be believed and life is vain.

With what unspeakable joy, as well as dread, did Paul, that great servant of Christ, hear the voice of that Christ: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Since that heavenly vision appeared to him one holy passion filled his frame. From persecuting the followers of Jesus he turned into the most intrepid preacher of that Name by which alone men must be saved.

When, therefore, he said: "Be ye followers of me, as also I am of Christ" he wanted his followers to be as certain as was he that in committing themselves and their labors unto him they would receive their reward by his grace.

#### Following Paul Who Followed Christ

In similar fashion and, as it were afar off, I can hear our departed brother speak. Scarcely can we hear him say, even in imagination: "Be ye followers of me," except he would add loudly, "even as I am of Christ." But his life and labors, he did commit unto Christ and with simple trust and childlike faith he clung to Jesus as his Saviour from sin. The joy of simple faith was his portion.

#### To Cedar Grove

With high determination to know nothing save Christ and him crucified he entered the ministry of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America at Cedar Grove, Wisconsin, in 1925. But in that church modernism had gained the ascendancy. A false Christ was being proclaimed in the church. The biblical truth that Jesus Christ as Son of God and Son of Man died on the cross to bear the wrath of God for his own, that they might not be cast into outer darkness but come into his blessed presence,

was laughed out of court in this church. And those who protested against the preaching of this false Christ were being silenced in the church. De Waard was one of those who protested and whose voice of protest the authorities in the church sought to silence. The Presbytery of Wisconsin voted to dissolve the pastoral relation between himself and his church. Then when he entered a complaint to the Presbytery about this matter his complaint was summarily dismissed. (This was in November 1935; THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN December 2, 1935.)

### The Whole Church

But de Waard's fight in the Presbytery of Wisconsin was a part of a struggle in the church as a whole. A "momentous decision" had to be made at the Syracuse General Assembly in 1936.

At that Assembly the "great betrayal" took place. Here the authority of the church was placed above the authority of the Bible. And "the most important non-judicial case" at this Assembly "was that of the Rev. J. J. de Waard of Cedar Grove, whose pastoral relations had been dissolved by the Presbytery of Milwaukee when he refused to promise *not to criticize the official boards*" (From a report of the Assembly by H. McAllister Griffiths; see THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN June 22, 1936). Said Dr. J. Gresham Machen: "We look with sadness upon the tragedy of a church that has dethroned the Lord Jesus Christ as its King and head" (*Ibid*).

But Christ must be preached. Said Mr. de Waard: "In Cedar Grove, where it has been my privilege to preach the gospel for eleven years, we have moved to higher ground" (THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN December 12, 1936). Yes, the new church in Cedar Grove did stand on higher ground physically. But what the preacher primarily meant was that he was now free to preach the grand particularities of the gospel, the whole counsel of God. With deep sympathy and sadness of heart for those who stayed behind, misguided by church authorities as they were, did the pastor join his flock in the building of the church "on higher ground" both physically and spiritually. "The task before us is more difficult than that which the Lord has thus far done

through us. We will have to educate our people in the specific doctrines of the Reformed Faith, beginning with our children."

By the "grand particularities of the gospel" he meant the truth of God's sovereign grace and power to bring unto salvation those whom he would.

The new church at Cedar Grove was dedicated on January 20, 1937, (Cf. THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN February 13, 1937). The new program of preaching and teaching the Christ of the gospel was, again, a part of the program of the church as a whole.

### The Presbyterian Church of America

Was it all to be easy now? Was there to be no further struggle? Far from it. At the third General Assembly of the new church, *The Presbyterian Church of America*, it appeared most clearly that some in the church had not the courage of their conviction with respect to the preaching of the whole counsel of God. There were those who wished to place the "American Presbyterian tradition" on a par with Scripture. And Dr. Machen had on January 1, 1937, passed to his home above.

It was then that others, not blind followers of Machen, but those who with him wanted to preach the Christ of the Word alone, took the lead and under their guidance the church went forward.

As moderator of that 1937 Assembly, de Waard was among the foremost of these men. On his return homeward he compared the work of the church to that of the children of Israel as they were confronted with the Red Sea on their passageway to the promised land. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward." "To go forward is the Lord's command but there are different excuses for disobedience to it" (THE PRESBYTERIAN GUARDIAN September 1937). "We have come a long way. It would not be surprising if some were tempted now to discontinue moving forward. We are not yet in the land of rest and will not be for a long time" (*Ibid*).

### Cedar Grove and Rochester

It was with that resolute purpose to go forward that our brother spent the rest of his days in the two con-

gregations that he served — Cedar Grove and Rochester Memorial.

### Westminster Seminary

For many years de Waard was the vice-president of the board of trustees of Westminster Theological Seminary. The importance of training young men for the ministry he ever kept in view. In his student days at Princeton Seminary he greatly admired Dr. Geerhardus Vos as well as others of the teachers there. Students must learn many things, but above all else they must learn to find the meaning of Scripture as the infallible Word of God. With that ideal in mind he worked for the development of Westminster Seminary since 1929.

### Retirement

At the conclusion of 1958 he retired from the active ministry. But he was still going forward. He was reading widely in the theological literature of the day to observe the movement not only of the church-machine of the United Presbyterian Church U. S. A. but to observe the apostasy of the church of Christ as a whole. And with what joy did he study the new works of sound preachers of the faith in order that with the help of them he might the better preach here and there to the people of God.

### The Last and First Sabbath

It was Saturday night, August 8, 1959, that he went to sleep in Ottawa in order on the next day once again to preach the gospel. But this time he went to sleep in Jesus. He went to "higher ground." He went forward because by his Saviour he was taken upward into his presence. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them" (Rev. 14:13).

Not to be idle, not merely to gaze upon the face of the Saviour but to serve and worship that Saviour without the terrible burden of sin and all its entail, that is his portion now.

You who remain behind of his family quite properly mourn your loss. But your mourning will be turned to joy if you follow him as he followed Christ. You may cherish the memory of your departed one, yes, as a simple-minded, kind-hearted and

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## De Waard Funeral Address

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ever-patient husband and father. How he loved and enjoyed his family! But you will remember him, beyond that, as one whose life was absorbed in the service of his Saviour. And what holds for the family and the relatives holds for the congregations of Cedar Grove and the Memorial Church. It holds for all of us who have known the departed in any capacity. Let us follow him as he followed his Saviour and Lord lest his life and labor testify against us in the day of days.

I heard him preach the funeral service of his mother-in-law, Mrs. Smitter, in Plainfield, Michigan. He was deeply moved. With all his natural eloquence he pleaded with her children and grandchildren to follow her, in following her faith in her Saviour.

In the solemn silence of death now and therefore with far greater eloquence and with deeper concern does he plead with you, not to follow him as a model man, but to follow him in his faith in Jesus, and in his service of that Name through which alone we must be saved. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."

### Recent Preaching

In a sermon on Jeremiah 3:12-13 which he had with him in Ottawa where he was to have preached on that last Sunday he speaks of the day when "no man shall ask for the ark of the covenant of the Lord." Jeremiah saw the vision of the city of God which John on lonely Patmos Isle also saw. In the new Jerusalem which John the Apostle saw, there was no temple. For the Lord God is the temple thereof. Wrote *John de Waard*: "No one will ask about the church, all will be church. And in those days all will be the word of God, without any element of human speculation of the natural wisdom of man." Then will be fulfilled the words of the Lord: "I will not look upon you in anger."

"My God how wonderful thou art

Thy majesty how bright!  
How beautiful thy mercy-seat

In depths of burning light."

He also had a sermon dated for August 9, 1959, on I Thess. 3:13. It begins as follows: "I am talking to you, beloved congregation, in our Lord Jesus Christ, about the coming of our Lord and Saviour: the Christian longs for the day. Often he sings quietly to himself:

'My knowledge of that life is small  
The eyes of faith grows dim.  
But 'tis enough that Christ knows all  
And I shall be like Him.'

"Faith anticipates this coming. Faith makes it possible to celebrate this event and so prepares us for the day when with him, we shall be seen in great glory." In conclusion he used these words: "You live in a world which seems to be mad and is going to its own destruction. Russia, America, but let me cease naming the troubles that beset us. In the midst of death we live by the hope of his coming. God grant you all a solid faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whom belongs the victory . . ."

In Williamsport, Ontario (June 7, 1959) he preached on Phil. 3:20. The topic of his sermon was *Expectation*. And the last section of it dealt with: *Expectation and our Glorification*. Christ is coming. He will "change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according

to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself (Phil. 3:21). We cannot understand. In speaking of our glorified body we must mostly speak in negative terms. Our glorified bodies *will not* be under the power of sin, etc. But though we do not understand we do believe because Christ has told us that our bodies shall be like his glorified body."

In his last sermons de Waard was obviously pre-occupied with the idea of Christ as the deeply sympathizing Saviour who spoke of the many mansions in his Father's house where he wants his followers to be in his presence. But it was ever that same Christ, the self-identifying Christ, that was the subject of his preaching. In the face of the opposition of a false church, at the deathbed of the saints of God, as the great expectation of his life he spoke of that Christ, without whom is everlasting death, and with whom is everlasting joy.

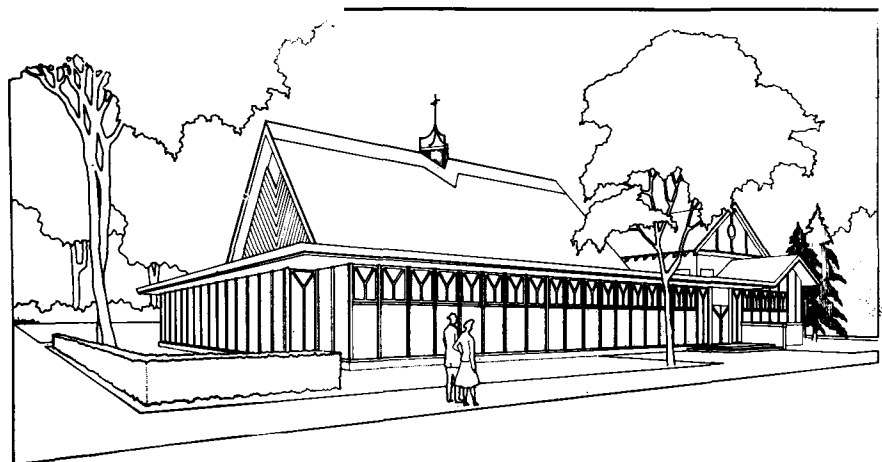
May we be followers of him in his signal Christian virtues, the chief of which may well have been that he never complained to his friends about injustice done to him by those who opposed his program of work. But may we, above all, be followers of him as he was of Christ.

## Calvary Schenectady Plans New Sanctuary

Plans were announced this summer for a new sanctuary and fellowship hall to be built at Rugby Road and Glenwood Boulevard, adjacent to the present Calvary Church building. The sanctuary is to accommodate some

250 persons, including the choir, according to the Rev. Raymond W. Meiners, pastor.

The new building, of contemporary design with traces of the traditional, will have a high pitched gable roof



Architect's sketch of new building planned for Calvary Church of Schenectady