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Meditation

Need for Revival

Rev. A.T. Vergunst, Waupun, WI

“He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Luke 3:16b). ***“Turn us again, O God of our salvation, and cause Thine anger toward us to cease. Wilt Thou be angry with us for ever? Wilt Thou draw out Thine anger to all generations? Wilt Thou not revive us again: that Thy people may rejoice in Thee?”*** (Psalm 85:4-6).

A quick survey of all of our own churches shows the need for revival. How many souls were born again among us in recent years? How often did we hear the anguished cry of the distressed conscience, “What must I do to be saved?” How many do we find weeping about being dead in Adam instead of talking about it? How many do we find rejoicing in the gospel of free and sovereign grace after having been led out of bondage?

Even though death in Adam is preached, the glory of the Law is upheld, the beauty of life in Christ is proclaimed, and the work of the Holy Spirit is emphasized, the fruit upon this preaching among us is lean at best. How many of the Lord’s people glory in tribulation, experiencing the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given them? Where are the fresh testimonies such as the one we find in John 1:14b, “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father”?

We need a fresh revival on the pulpits and in the pews. As churches we bear the evidences that God is angry with us. God’s anger is not always revealed in fierce and fiery judgments. More often God’s anger is revealed in His withholding Himself. He withholds the fruit upon the ministry of His Word. When the power of Holy Ghost is missing, multitudes will remain comfortably unconverted and unconcerned. Likewise, God’s own people are not filled with joy and peace in believing the riches of God’s Word through the power of the Holy Ghost. Though they are not strangers of the beginnings of God’s grace, so many of the Lord’s people remain unassured, in doubt, weak in faith, and filled with fear. How can it be that Christ is so hidden to so many who confess themselves no strangers of His grace? Why is the Father not revealing Him to the babes in grace so that they may grow in Him? Why are so few blessed with the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ?

The poet of Psalm 85 also noticed these things. He could not deny that the Lord had shown His undeserved favor to His people in returning them from captivity (verse 1). He even acknowledged the beautiful truth of God’s pardoning grace (verses 2&3). Yet, he sensed all was not right with God’s people. Something was missing. His heart poured out,

“Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” The joy of salvation was not experienced (Psalm 51:12). The love of God was not shed abroad in their hearts (Romans 5:5). They were not rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory (1 Peter 1:8).

Did the poet also observe multitudes coming to church, satisfied with their outward religious habits but devoid of spiritual hunger and thirst after the righteousness in Jesus Christ? Did he also notice that the effects of God’s Word were temporary ripples instead of broken hearts? Did he hear sermons discussed, analyzed, compared and criticized yet not regenerating the lost, not feeding hungry souls, not leading broken sinners to the cross, not sanctifying lives? Did he also miss reflections in his own heart like those expressed by John Newton as he heard George Whitefield preach? Newton said, “The power, experience, warmth with which he preached the Word, I can by no means express though I hope I feel the influence of it. Still, my heart was greatly impressed, and I had little relish either for company or food all day.” Did he also miss what A.A. Hodge shared in one of his memoirs about a woman he knew in his congregation? He wrote, “She seemed to walk upon the verge of heaven. Sometimes when the service was over and the congregation dispersed, she would still be found sitting absorbed in her pew. Then, startled by her pastor’s voice, she cried instantly, ‘Is He not holy? Is He not glorious? Is He not beautiful? Is He not infinite?’”

There is no time for complacency, for the present condition does not only affect us, it also has its fruit in our youth and the future generations: “Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?” There is no greater judgment for a church than having young people grow up into adults without experiencing the power of the Word of God in their hearts and lives. Outward conformity and confession of what we teach is still a world apart from being living members united to Christ, bearing fruit to the glory of God.

As we gather for our prayer services, let it be our conviction as preachers and hearers that nothing is more needed than the baptism with the Holy Spirit and fire. This is a gift the ascended Saviour is willing to give to His Church. Without pretending to understand all that is meant by this baptism with the Spirit and power, we may conclude that it would be something like what was witnessed on the day of Pentecost. The sermons of Peter on that day and the days following were clear evidences that he was baptized with the Spirit. His sermons were Spirit-filled, Christ-exalting, sinner-abasing and flesh-withering. The preaching brought forth conviction of sin. Sinners came to repentance

toward God and received faith in Jesus Christ. Believers grew in grace and in the knowledge of their Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. As the Church grew, God drew multitudes of sinners to bow the knee to Christ and confess His name to the glory of God the Father. The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved (Acts 2:47).

The poet felt God's anger. If God is angry, then there is sin. And there are more sins than we see: covetousness, self-righteousness, complacency, haughtiness, materialism, judgmentalism, hypocrisy, formalism, having a name to live without the power, lukewarmness, spiritual decay, impurity, self-righteousness. Yet worst of all is the mother-sin of those listed: unbelief. Only God's reviving power can move us from preaching or hearing about sin to breaking our hearts away from sin and granting us the gift to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 11:17).

The poet, as well as so many others in the Psalms, took this need in earnest prayer to God. Facing the increasing wicked conditions within our nations and the increasing weakening of the Christian cause, let us despair of our efforts but appeal to God to lift up His hand to save us once more.

The only hope that remains true is expressed in Moses' ancient words, "For the LORD shall judge His people, and repent Himself for His servants, when He seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left" (Deuteronomy 32:36). He remains faithful to His cause and kingdom. Such truth gives ground to sing—despite all the dismal, depressing, and discouraging facts—the words of Psalter 422:1&2:

*My mouth shall sing for aye Thy tender mercies, Lord.
To every age will I Thy faithfulness record;
I know how firm and sure Thy wondrous grace is founded,
Established in the skies by love that is unbounded.
As Thy celestial throne shall never sway, no never,
So shall Thy truth endure forever and forever.*

*"With My own chosen One, even David," God affirmed,
"I've made a covenant, with sacred oath confirmed.
I've sworn in truth to Him, My servant: 'I will surely
Build up Thy lustrous throne through every age securely;
Forever will Thy seed, in spite of degradation,
Endure upon Thy throne through every generation.'" □*

In the Sanctuary of Christ's Suffering

Rev. P. Blok, Dirksland, the Netherlands

"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him"
(Isaiah 53:2b).

The beauty of Christ is a hidden beauty. His appearance must be revealed unto us. The natural man has no knowledge of Him, nor does he have any desire for Him. His visage has been revealed to us in Scripture in many different ways. In Bethlehem He was revealed in a manger. There were, then, very few who had seen Him in truth, and that is also true today.

There are many who speak about Bethlehem, and books have been written about it, but the way to Bethlehem was traveled by a few only, although the way has been shown to many. How terrible it will be when we, with a supposed knowledge of Christ, shall come to the realization that it has been only an acquired or intellectual knowledge.

We should place the question before us every day, "In which way does the Lord lead to the knowledge of Christ?" We must never forget that Christ's work is a substitutionary work.

The only Mediator between God and man

Our forefathers have pointed out very clearly in the Heidelberg Catechism what it is that precedes the knowledge of Christ. First, they instructed the congregation

about their state of death and the necessity of experiencing it in their heart. There are many who write and speak about the riches in Christ, but they forget the state of death in which man is, by nature. Without the regeneration from the state of death and experiencing the same in the heart, whereby the Lord causes all of man's attempts to improve himself to be realized as a vain effort, there can be no going out to Christ. Without experiencing the well-deserved punishment there can be no efforts to escape it.

The Lord always begins at the beginning. When we skip this in the proclamation of the Word and in our personal life, we deceive ourselves for the great eternity. Even if we live on in a careless rest and in an estranged life of faith, we still travel on toward that great meeting with a just and righteous God. Christ in the way of His humiliation may touch our emotions, but He has never become necessary in the light of experiencing the breach between God and our soul, assuming our punishment, having an unpaid guilt, and facing an angry Judge. That is why the glory of Christ is a hidden glory. He has no comeliness, that is, He has no worthiness or significance for mankind. He is hidden for man in his state of nature.

What must a sinful human being do with a Mediator? He is hidden for a legalistic person. What must a person, who has found his life in the works of the law, do with the Fulfiller of the law? What must a hypocrite do with a substitutionary

Surety? He is hidden for a person who has assumed his own salvation. Such a person has as a ground for his salvation an imitated faith. How does such a faith come about?

There can be many reasons for such imitated faith. Unusual circumstances in a family, a death, ways of cross bearing, unrest in one's conscience can all be a cause. The devil is behind it and convinces a person of faith without the experiencing of sin and guilt and the righteous justice of God. He leaps over everything, accepts an imagined Jesus, and is at peace. He is now converted, considers himself one of God's people and attends the Lord's Supper. Instead of becoming a sinner and a wretched person before God, such a one, in one step, has become a converted person. He knows no strife and is assured of heaven.

Yet, a close observer will see that nothing has changed. Such people still live in the world; they dress with the world, and they mock with the separated life of God's children. They have a more liberal view of grace and live on unconcernedly. Woe to the person who dares to doubt their state of grace and their conversion. Very quickly the deadly enmity against the sovereign doctrine of free grace becomes apparent. That the wicked are only justified without the works of the law and that this is experienced when a person is faced with death before God's tribunal, is never accepted by them. Christ has never had any form or comeliness for them. On the other hand, for a person who has reached an end in himself, who must experience his state of death, his wretchedness and his enmity, it becomes a wonder that he can still be saved by Another.

"He has no comeliness."

Did He have no comeliness? Certainly, He has comeliness. He is the express image of God's face. He is the Son of God, the Beloved of the Father. Everything that is of Him is most desirable, but when we look upon Him, He has no comeliness. Man does not see it, for he is totally blind to the comeliness of Christ. That is why the Lord must open the eyes to see Him. During His time here upon earth He asked His disciples, "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" You know the answer. When Jesus asks, "But whom say ye that I am?" Then the Apostle Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Truly, flesh and blood had not revealed that unto them, but it was revealed to them by the Father.

How terrible is the state of fallen mankind. Oh, that we would be taught through the operation of the Holy Spirit. If we would see Him, there would be no comeliness that we would have desired Him. Natural eyes have seen Him. Many in Israel have walked with Him but have never seen

His hidden person and His work. They have seen Him in the performance of the miracles. They have seen Him upon Gabbatha; they have seen Him on the cursed cross and yet not desired Him. That is a proof that their lives were vested in something else other than in Christ.

The multitude had made their desire very clear when Pilate asked, "What must I then do with Jesus?" They called out, "Away with Him, Crucify Him." He was an obstacle for them in their religious lives. They had made a decision that whoever confessed Him would be cast out of the synagogue. It is true now, as it was then, the suffering of Christ is a hidden suffering. Who saw Him as the Servant of the Father and Zion's Saviour? It is because He had no comeliness that they chose Barabbas. When the question was asked, "Whom wilt thou that I release unto thee?" they, goaded on by their religious leaders, cried, "Release unto us Barabbas." You know that Barabbas was a murderer. They chose death above life because they had never visualized and owned their own punishment of death.

Yet, there is a people upon earth who have been allowed to behold Him. The Holy Spirit opened their eyes so that they could see Him as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. In their hearts there arose a pure desire to possess Him. He who has heard it and learned it from the Father will come unto Me. Christ has become precious, necessary, and suitable for His people. The Holy Spirit taught them, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:3&4).

Then Christ was pointed out as One who came under the law to deliver those who were subject to the law. A hearty desire is born in His people to possess Him. They have no rest for the sole of their foot before they receive Him as a gift from the Father. Through Him they are reconciled with God and receive a right to eternal life. He satisfied the demands of God's attributes and delivered them with an eternal deliverance. They come to desire Him more and more. They become conformed to His image. They follow Him in the way of His humiliation and in the way of His exaltation. In an ongoing, dying life, He receives ever more worthiness. In the further discovery of their deep fall, He becomes all the more desirable. They are quenched at the fountain of His blood and are purified of all their transgressions. Soon they will see Him in perfect righteousness, and being satisfied with His image they shall praise Him eternally who has bought them with the price of His precious blood. Then they will be with Him eternally. □

An unbeliever has a double condemnation: one from the law which he has transgressed, and the other from the gospel which he has despised.

—Thomas Watson



Biblical Exegesis

The Angel of the LORD (2)

Rev. C. Hogchem, Genemuiden, the Netherlands

In this article there are several examples of how the Angel of the LORD has revealed Himself:

Unto Abraham as a Traveler

In the heat of the day, Abraham is sitting in the door of his tent in the sheltering shade. When he looks up, he is surprised to see three travelers standing close by. They, quite naturally, long for shade, rest, and some nourishment. Is one of them the most important, the one having with Him two servants? That is how it appears. Abraham does not know that it is the Angel of the LORD, accompanied by two other angels. It is only later on in the visit that he comes to the realization that the Son of God has come to him in the likeness of a man and that the two men who accompany Him are angels.

- Here, Genesis 18 speaks about angels for the second time, approximately two thousand years later. The first time that we read about angels is in Genesis 3:24, of the cherubs who kept the way to the tree of life.
- The Angel and the two angels came unto Abraham in the likeness of men. The idea that these were a semblance or an illusion of human beings is not true. They were real bodies—the three men ate of the meal which Abraham had prepared for them (Genesis 18:8; Luke 24:41&42).
- Did God's Son and the two angels with their assumed bodies belong to the human race? Certainly not, these bodies were not flesh of our flesh or bone of our bone. They were created bodies (Calvin) which after the completion of their assignment would sink away into nothingness along with their clothing.
- The Angel of the LORD who came unto Abraham as a Man revealed Himself years later in a recognizable voice. The moment that Abraham stretched out his hand to slay his son, the Angel of the LORD called unto him and said; "Abraham, Abraham (...) lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou anything to him" (Genesis 22:11&12; Genesis 21:17).

To Jacob—the Angel who hast delivered me

At the end of his life, Jacob blessed the two sons of Joseph—Ephraim and Manasseh—and said, "God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long until this day, The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads" (Genesis 48:15&16).

The old patriarch gave the honor to God and confessed that the God of Abraham and Isaac was also his covenant

God, who had fed him all the days of his life. How did He feed him? By means of the hand of God's Son, the Angel of the LORD. Jacob speaks of Him when he says "The Angel who hast delivered me from all evil." It is as if he says, "He is my Shepherd—I have lacked nothing. From what I was until this day, He has led me and fed me, protected me and spared me. He has taken me for His account from eternity to eternity. To Him be all praise given."

At one time Jacob called out, "All these things are against me" (Genesis 42:36). Now, however, he confesses, "... the Angel who hast delivered me from all evil." Just a few more steps, and God will wipe away all tears from his eyes; then all the former things are passed away (Revelation 21:4c).

Who shall ascend the mountain of the LORD? Who shall stand in His holy place? That is Jacob. Certainly, that is Jacob, for from eternity he has shared in the love of the Father. He was saved by grace (Psalm 24:3&6; Ephesians 2:8).

To Jacob—by means of dreams and as a Man

The Angel of the LORD has always been Jacob's guide, from day to day and in all circumstances of life, but, it is only a few times that He revealed Himself to Jacob during the one hundred forty-seven years of his life.

- The first time the Angel of the LORD revealed Himself to Jacob was at Bethel in a dream. "And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set upon the earth, the top of which reached to heaven, and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (Genesis 28:12).
- The second time was approximately twenty-one years later, again in a dream. Jacob was then ninety-eight years old. He said to Leah and Rachel, "The God of my fathers has been with me." "And the Angel of the LORD said to me in a dream, Jacob." And I said, "Here I am." (...) and He said (...) "I have seen all what Laban doeth unto thee. I am the God of Bethel." What a wonder it is that the Lord returned to His own work.
- The third time was not long after that at the brook Jabbok where a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. Jacob called the name of the place Peniel as a rejoicing confession, for he said, "I have seen God face to face, and my soul is spared" (Genesis 32:24-30). The Man, the writers of the marginal notes state, was the Son of God who revealed Himself to Jacob in bodily form. They point to Hosea 12:3 in this regard, "He took his brother by the heel in the womb, and by his strength he had power with God."
- We read of two earlier revelations in Genesis 35:1 and 46:2.

It is remarkable that the Lord appeared to the holiest of saints just one time, let alone several times. Jacob could also count the revelations upon one hand. In the meantime, it had always been true: “The God who fed me until this day, the Angel who hast delivered me from all evil.”

It will have made an indelible impression upon Ephraim and Manasseh; such a grandfather, yea, such a God and Angel of the LORD! “Walk before Me and be thou perfect!”

Moses, Joshua, and Gideon

The Angel of the LORD also appeared unto:

- Moses, from out of a burning bush, that notable sight in the desert (Exodus 3:2; Acts 7:38).
- Joshua, as a Man with a drawn sword, as the captain of the host of the LORD (Joshua 5:13&14).

- Gideon, as a tired Traveler (Judges 6:11&12) who Gideon addressed as “lord.” He did not know the Man. If He had not revealed Himself unto Gideon, Gideon would never have known that it was God’s Son in human form. That is how it is with God’s children. If He does not reveal Himself, they do not know that it is the Lord (John 21:4).

In these ways He revealed Himself, always at His time and always in a wonderfully fitting manner. That is still true when He reveals Himself (through faith) to His tried and often wretched people, but then the wonder becomes the greatest and is to the praise of His name. Then it is heard, “The Lord has appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love.” John says to Peter when the net is full of fishes, “It is the LORD.” ◻

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

Why the Unconverted Must Pray

Ralph Erskine (1685-1752)

(Taken from The Banner of Truth, July 1990)

I apprehend, say you, that I am an unconverted person, and you know that it is only the prayer of the upright that is His delight; of the righteous that availeth much, but the prayer of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, and they that are in the flesh cannot please God; and why should we do that which is a high provocation to God?

I answer: (1) These expressions only denote the misery of the sinner’s present condition but not his freedom from an obligation to pray; for this is a duty bound upon him, both by natural and supernatural bonds. The meaning then of these Scriptures is, that while the wicked man continues in his natural state, neither his person nor his performances are acceptable to God. They are out of Christ, in whom alone God is well-pleased, and till they be in Him, God can never be pleased with their persons or duties.

(2) Is this intimated to them to discourage them from praying? Is it their duty to lie in that miserable state and never seek union to Christ? Nay, it is rather to drive them to pray for escape from this misery and for union to the Son of God in whom their prayer may be acceptable to God. Who was viler than Simon Magus? He was in the gall of bitterness, yet the apostle calls him to pray to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven him. This says that prayer is a means required even of the wicked in order to their obtaining grace; hence, after God had promised a new heart and new spirit in Ezekiel 36:26, he adds verse 37, “For this will I be inquired of.”

(3) There is a difference between one sinner and another. Some sinners are secure and presumptuous; others are convinced and awakened and under a mighty concern about salvation. Some pretend to pray, yet secretly resolve to continue in sin; they look upon their verbal confessions and petitions as a kind of atonement for, and payment of, their former debts, and are thence encouraged to return afresh to the commission of them. Or they make use of prayer as a cloak or cover for their secret wickedness, that they may go on in it without any suspicion from others, as our Saviour tells us of the Pharisees—that for a pretence they made long prayers. Such prayers as these cannot but be an abomination to the Lord. We do not bid the thief to pray that he may prosper in his theft or the wicked man to pray that he may indulge himself in wickedness, for this is not properly praying but a mocking of God’s holy majesty. They ask, and have not, because they ask amiss, that they may consume their lusts. There is a great difference between these wicked prayers, which are the breathings of depraved nature, and such prayers as are the effects of the Spirit’s influences, though in a common degree. As far as they are influenced by the divine Spirit, so far are they pleasing to God.

I will tell you three ways wherein God may be said to be pleased with the duties and endeavors even of men not yet translated from death to life—though they are looking with nature’s eye, with weeping and supplication towards God,

and being a little anointed with the common operations of the Spirit—I say in these three respects He may be said to be pleased with them, namely positively, comparatively, and relatively.

(1) Positively, because as to the matter and substance these duties are good and agreeable to the rule, though as to the manner and way of performance, they are defective; thus, God was not displeased with the humiliation of a wicked Ahab.

(2) Comparatively, because certainly, God is better pleased with such approaches to Him than with a turning from Him; such endeavors are more agreeable to the will of God than the omission of them.

(3) Relatively, as a means which God has appointed to be a way of conveying grace, and which is insofar acceptable because God usually makes them reach the end; thus, faith cometh by hearing and why not by praying? Cornelius was praying, and behold a messenger from heaven was sent to him to show him what he should do (Acts 10:30).

Though God be not tied to means, nor can be obliged by our best endeavors, yet He has bound us to the means. “Seek the Lord while He is to be found, and call on Him while He is near.” Outside of His own way we cannot expect to meet with Him. In a word, the

state of unconverted sinners is very deplorable, a state not to be rested in, for until a sanctifying change pass upon them, they are under the unhappy necessity of sinning more or less in whatever they do. The plowing of the wicked is sin. They need, therefore, to pray and wrestle as they can to be freed from this state. Surely the performance of this duty will lay them under less guilt than the total neglect of it will bring them under. Who would dare say that it is not the duty of the wicked to pray to God, to pray for faith, to pray for an interest in Christ? I am sure it can never be your duty to go on in the way to hell and damnation. Oh, thou whose trade has been to destroy yourself in departing from God, all ye who are strangers to this heavenly employment of speaking to your Maker, I have a glad message to you today. Whatever have been your past sins or whatever be your present fears, look up to Him by prayer whom you have so often provoked, and there may be hope in Israel concerning you.

Do not argue yourselves out of your duty. Is it not your duty to bemoan your condition before the Lord? Is not grace lovely and desirable, and is not Christ worth seeking after? Have you not the command of God for your warrant? Are there not many sad threatenings against prayerless persons and families? Is not prayer a converting ordinance and not only the means but the first fruit of conversion? Have you not many encouragements to set you to work? May not the least probability of success be a cord to draw you near to God? Are not His bowels open and His arms stretched forth to embrace you in ordinances? Have you

not His call and invitation, His counsels and exhortations, yes, His solemn protestation that He delighteth not in the death of sinners? If the King of glory invites traitors to come and seek His pardon, what should discourage you? Has God appointed this ordinance of prayer in vain?

Alas, if I be a wicked man, how can I lay hold on a promise for audience and success, for I have no right to any promise while I am in a natural state?

Answer: (1) Though a wicked man can lay claim to no qualified or conditional promise—because he wants the condition which the promise supposes in him to whom the promise is made—yet there are absolute promises which he is to plead in prayer. By conditional promises I mean the promises that are made to grace; thus, there are promises made to the grace of faith, to the grace of love, to the grace of humility. Now an unconverted man cannot plead the promises that are made to graces because as yet he lacks true grace, but then, by the absolute promises, I mean the promises that are made of grace. There is a promise of grace, a promise of a new heart, a promise of faith: God has promised to quicken the dead, to write His laws upon our hearts, and the like. Now who knows that he is not under the absolute promise? Who dares to say: You are not the

man, or the woman, to whom the promise of grace is made, and in whom the promise shall be accomplished, especially if thou art panting after the Lord and wrestling at the throne by prayer?

(2) The promises, for the most part, are conceived in such general terms, without any qualification, that you may not question or dispute about your interest in them, and to

show that there is room enough left for you to come and write down your name. “Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters.”

(3) God’s call and command has a promise in it. God does not compliment you when He calls you to come to Him. Nay, if you come, you shall be welcome, for “him that cometh He will in nowise cast out.”

(4) All the promises are yea and amen in Christ, and this blessed Lord and Saviour is offered to you in this everlasting gospel. Therefore, if you doubt your right to the promise as a foundation of prayer, let your prayer be a coming to Christ, and then you have all the promises in Him. And indeed, this is all that I desire to drive at in the whole of this subject, that you may come to Christ by prayer. When I call you to pray, I call you to seek Jesus of Nazareth in this duty of prayer. I call you to seek Him who came to seek and save you.

Many, when they pray, seek themselves; they seek their own applause; they seek their credit; they seek to have a name; they seek only to ease their natural conscience; they seek to establish a righteousness of their own, but woe to you if you never have a better errand in prayer, for it is to seek Christ that I call you to pray. Seek His person; seek

Do not argue yourselves out of your duty. Is it not your duty to bemoan your condition before the Lord? Is not grace lovely and desirable, and is not Christ worth seeking after? Have you not the command of God for your warrant?

His righteousness; seek His Spirit; seek His grace; seek His love; seek His heart. And, indeed, if Christ were not to be found in this duty, I should never have insisted so long upon it. Oh, is there none here that see their need of Christ, that they may seek Him in secret and family prayer? Do we not all need His merit to justify us, His Spirit to sanctify us, His blood to wash us? We need Him to procure daily pardon for us and to convey daily supplies of grace to us. We need Him when we are in bondage, to relieve us; when we are dead, to quicken us; when we are in the dark, to enlighten us; when we are in doubts, to resolve us; when we are in fears, to encourage us; when we are fallen, to raise us; when we are straitened, to enlarge us; when we are sad, to comfort us; when we are tempted, to succor us; when we are weak, to strengthen us; when we are wandering, to restore us. None but Christ can do all this and a thousand times more than all this. Therefore, seek Him in prayer; cast away all your objections as Bartimaeus did his garments when Christ called him.

Do not dispute away the market-day, nor let the golden opportunity slip; as you would not weep and wail for ever

for losing such an occasion, and as you would not grieve the Spirit of Christ by your enmity and unbelief. Oh, that there were a seeking and searching after the Lord among us; and a running to him as Jerome did; an ancient father who said, "If my father were weeping on his knees before me, and my mother hanging about my neck behind me, my brother, sister, and kinsfolk wailing on every side of me to retain me in a sinful course, I would run over my father, I would fling my mother to the ground and trample all my kindred under my feet, that I might run to Christ." Oh, that there were such a seeking of Christ over all objections and impediments. Oh, lay aside the weight and earth that easily beset you, and turn to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ upon the knees of your heart, and say, I am not worthy to be called Thy son, and when He sees you yet afar off, He may meet you and fall on your neck and kiss you. Thus, He hath dealt with such prodigals, and will He not also welcome you? There is none in earth or in hell that can say that they took this course, constantly pursued it, and yet were rejected of God. None who continued instant in prayer ever met with a repulse. □



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

Is there a difference between an encouragement and a visit of the Lord? (2)

As promised, I would like to answer this question from last month with a bit more detail. Questions like this are important and are often asked. Last time we focused on pitfalls on both sides of the question. Let us remember that in the saving work of the Lord, God's Spirit does not sow doubts or uncertainties. Sometimes the impression can be given that the work of the Lord is merely shrouded in doubt and uncertainty. The opposite is true. Of course, it is quite another matter that man's understanding is so miserably darkened that we need light upon light to see the light.

Regarding this matter I found some very wise and pastoral guidance by J.C. Philpot in a sermon on 2 Peter 1:19: "*We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.*" In this sermon Philpot describes the steps in faith as related to taking heed, a light that shines in a dark place, as well as the day dawning and the daystar arising in the heart. You can read this entire sermon in volume ten of his

sermon series. Permit me to summarize his explanation as follows:

1. Only a quickened soul truly gives heed, that is, gives true and real attention to the things that are set before us in the Word. Mary sat at Jesus' feet and heard His Word. Lydia attended unto the things which were spoken by Paul. Can a quickened soul take heed without faith? The taking heed springs out of faith—it is the offspring of faith, the child of faith, the fruit of faith. Philpot compares this faith to a sick man giving heed to his sickness, a wounded man his wound, and a man with a broken bone his fracture. For such a person it is *not a choice* whether or not to take heed. He has no choice but to take heed; it is forced upon him. The painful feeling causes his attention. The painful feeling is the means by which he takes heed. Not to give heed would be foolish although this is often done ...

(Allow me to insert an observation here. I do not think a spiritually troubled soul must ask: "Am I saved? Am I now converted? Am I now a child of God?" Such a soul needs help and is in need. Mark, also, that the object in true

conviction is the Word of God. Convictions from the Word are never granted or intended to be doubtful or uncertain; *it is a sure Word of prophecy!* The point is this: a soul under conviction is *more burdened with his sins* and the *need for reconciliation* than the question of whether his convictions are real.)

2. It is the shining of the light into the dark place of the heart that the soul is brought to take heed. It never took heed before; all warnings were slighted, but this has changed. The soul is now given to heed the sure Word of prophecy.
3. The day dawning refers to a *larger measure of light in the soul*. It may refer to general manifestations of the mercy of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Yes, it is of Christ, but the Person of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, is hidden. He needs to be revealed. Philpot writes: “These streaks of dawn in the sky bring indeed no personal assurance, no individual testimony of our own acceptance, but they shed abroad a sweet and blessed feeling that there is mercy to be found by every one that seeks it.” What an encouraging step this is, nonetheless.
4. Peter then mentions the rising of the daystar. Previously hidden, but a sure harbinger of day, when arisen, the sun will follow. Philpot refers to this as the “application of some sweet promise, the dropping into the heart of some token of love from the fountain of love, a gentle whisper from Jesus to the soul encouraging it to wait.” Now, is this a visit or merely an encouragement? I would say it is both. Does it really matter to know the difference? Samuel Rutherford writes somewhere

that “faith is thus pregnant as to draw saving conclusions from hard principles, and to extract the spirit of the promises.”

Also, what I alluded to earlier applies here: the soul is divinely impressed with what God in Christ reveals, and this causes the soul to hope in the Lord for the dawning of the day. The measure of faith also determines the encouragement from the visit. The nature of the promise is subservient to its comfort and assurance. The Lord is free in what He is pleased to reveal and teach. Only the revelation of the Sun of Righteousness, the blessed Lord Jesus Christ, brighter than the daystar, brings with it its own assurance and evidence. It is accompanied with its own sure and certain seal. Only the personal revelation of Christ, the individual manifestation of Jesus to the soul, brings rest and causes the soul to embrace the salvation of God. When this blessed application of Jesus Christ is taken into serious account, the following well-meant warning is not out of place. I would advise that there is *a danger in seeking to analyze too much as to whether something is saving or common*. Remember, this can also be done in unbelief. Therefore, use the Scriptures diligently and prayerfully so that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit you may learn the difference. The Lord’s Word does not deceive a sinner and is well-meaning in its proclamation of peace and pardon. Remember, not man but God gives grace and glory unto His own work. □

Please send your questions to Rev. H. Hofman, 112 Pratt Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49001, or hofman@premieronline.net.

A Brief Account of Faith

Faith in Christ, Sir, implies not only a *hearty belief* of the Saviour’s doctrines but a *whole dependence* on the Saviour’s Person as our Prophet, Priest, and King. It requires a careful use of the means of grace but forbids all trusting in the means. I must read the Word of God with care yet not rely upon my own ability to make me wise unto salvation but *wholly* trust in Jesus as my Prophet to open my dark understanding and direct me by His Spirit into all saving truth. I must watch against sin and pray against it too, yet not rely upon my own strength to conquer it but *wholly* trust in Jesus as my King to subdue my will, my tempers, and my affections by His Spirit; to write His holy law upon my heart and influence my conduct to His glory. I must be zealous of good works, as zealous to perform them as if my pardon and a crown of glory could be purchased by them, yet *wholly* trust in Jesus as my Priest to wash my guilty conscience in His purple fountain and clothe my naked soul in His glorious righteousness, thereby receiving all my pardon and my title to eternal life.

The life of faith is thus expressed by Paul: Run with patience the race set before you looking unto Jesus, looking unto Him with a single eye continually, looking by prayer and faith so as to receive supplies for every want. Faith is the master-key to the treasury of Jesus. It opens all the doors and bring out every store. A heart well-nurtured in this precious grace finds the gospel rest. In time of danger, sickness, or temptation, it flutters not nor struggles hard to help itself but *standeth still and sees the Lord’s salvation*. The eye is singly fixed on Jesus, the heart is calmly waiting for Him, and Jesus brings relief. Faith calls and Jesus answers, “Here I am to save thee.”

— J. Berridge



Church History

Selcart (27)

(An historical account of the persecution of the Churches Under the Cross)

W.J.D. van Dijk

Guilty of death

It was the eighteenth of November, a few weeks after the death of Mrs. Selcart, at approximately ten o'clock in the morning when one could have seen a small, sad procession passing over the market place. As was usually the case, the procession was surrounded by a number of people, of which the majority were young boys belonging to street gangs. Every once in a while, a cry would be heard, "away with the Protestant" and "to the execution place, away with the rebel." Cabbage roots and other garbage items were thrown at the procession by rascals from the rear of the crowd.

When we take a close-up view, we see at the head of the procession the already well-known officer, Frank Van Mojalen, who leads the procession with a chain about his neck to show off his authority. He is followed immediately by four heavily-armed men carrying sharp swords. They are the servants of the officer who, instead of carrying a club, an item well known by the street boys of the Hague, on this occasion, is carrying a sword. In their midst, a man drags himself forward with great difficulty, a man who at first glance is not familiar to us. It is no wonder since he has been in prison for many months in moist cellars, and time and again has been subject to extreme, cruel mistreatment which has broken down his former strong body; he has become bent over and thin. The head which formerly he carried upright is now bowed down. A heavy iron chain binds his right arm to his right foot which makes walking difficult while his left foot, which was broken during the last "torture examination" has barely healed, so every step is painful.

Suddenly, a stone thrown by one of the followers of the procession hits the bound prisoner in the face. As he wipes away the blood, he lifts his head, and we can see that it is Cors Stevens who is being led away as the greatest criminal and is the object of disdain and scorn. Fortunately, not everyone is cruel. Now and then one sees a sympathetic person put monetary alms in a container carried by one of the officer's helpers, money which is given for the benefit of the prisoner. When Cors hears the sound of the coin being cast into the tin, he lifts up his head and acknowledges the gift.

As quickly as the condition of the prisoner allows, the procession moves forward, past the city hall and the St. Jacob's Church. On the next corner stands a building known as the "Poor Sister House," which for more than thirty years has served as the court of justice for the Inquisition. The procession stops at this cloister, and after

the officer makes known their arrival, the doors are opened, and the prisoner and those accompanying him are let inside. No one else is allowed to enter since the proceedings of this court are closed to the public. Most of those who had followed the procession lose interest and leave the area.

It should be noted that a strict warning had been issued that as a result of previous escapes from the prison, the jailer would be severely punished should this happen again, a certain proof that the jailer had benefitted monetarily on several occasions when prisoners had "escaped." We also note in the letter that the governor had encouraged the Inquisition to more quickly move the judicial proceedings against heretics and those accused of rebellion or the destruction of images.

We may well surmise that Brechtje was not the first person to escape the clutches of the Inquisition and that the niece of the jailer had assisted others in escaping without being suspected of her involvement. It is for this reason that the Inquisition had decided to move forward with the case of Cors Stevens. Representatives of the national and local courts had been invited to attend this formal hearing. Even the sixty-nine-year-old Mayor of Scheveningen was invited since it concerned a criminal matter for which he would be reimbursed quite liberally. The appropriate papers had been sent to all of the government agencies and approved by them, and now followed the weighty day in which a decision regarding the life or death of Cors Stevens would be decided.

Cors himself is fully aware of the gravity of this judicial sitting. When the messenger brought him a copy of the decision the day before the hearing, he knew that this was the first step in the process to remove him from this earthly vale of tears, and a time where he would not be in a small circle but in a large gathering to testify of the hope of salvation which Christ had granted unto him.

Cors is sitting in a small room, supporting his head with his hand. The soldiers are standing around talking and laughing. They have already brought many to this "Poor Sister House," so they are not very inquisitive or concerned with what is about to happen. Who would pay much attention to a heretic anyway as he sits there with his coarse beard, unkempt, long hair, and worn-out jacket?

Suddenly, a door opens. Cors stands up, and followed by the soldiers he walks toward the hall of the court. The great doors of the hall are opened wide, and Cors walks into the room as quickly as his bruised body allows him to move. ◻

(To be continued)



For Young and Old

Man of the Earth Earthy (6)

Author Unknown (translated from Dutch)

A fifth room was added to the house where the resident was to be instructed in Christian patience. This virtue, which is characterized by goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering is of benefit to every Christian because of all the types of oppression which each Christian has as his portion, whether it be bodily or spiritual; whether it be in the trying of one's faith, or whether it be in persecution because of righteousness as is written about Job's patience in James 5:11, Matthew 5:10 and 1 Peter 1:7. In this room he would receive instruction in the exercising of the soul regarding the painful unpleasantness of oppression which God Himself will send upon him for his wellbeing. It is to this end that he may endure it with patience and with silence so that it may yield a good outcome, wherefore it is called "the patience of hope" (1 Thessalonians 1:3).

There was yet a sixth floor added. It was set apart for instruction in the true religion. It is an attribute whereby man serves God in everything that is proved acceptable, not just in outward appearance but inwardly and outwardly in truth and righteousness both toward God and our neighbor. Because the homeowner already had been a partaker of true godliness since the onset of his new life, the instruction here would consist of how a man should conduct himself in the receiving of more strength and a greater measure of godliness.

The seventh room which was placed above room number six was the place where the privileged homeowner would be encouraged in the exercising of love between spiritual brothers and sisters and all those who had learned to know God as their Father in Christ and who had been ordained to eternal life in the adoption as children in Christ Jesus, which had given them the right, in this time state, to be called the children of God (1 John 1). They are also loved, kept, and cared for as children of God and will hereafter be named heirs of heaven and salvation. This brotherly love consisted herein: those who were united in this faith embraced the same confession and had been gathered in one and the selfsame purpose (sharing the same passions, having the same love, and being one with each other). Among them was found a mutual relationship so that whenever one of them was in need, they as brothers, would have compassion on such a one and come to his help; they would be far from dissension and not have hard feelings; this would avoid disagreements and disunity among each other. This also applied to our homeowner so that he may

have the appearance of the early Christian Church whereof it is written "that they were of one heart and soul" (Acts 4). Paul also praised the faith of Philemon in his relationship with the Lord and toward all of the saints. This seventh room, therefore, was highly recommended to our homeowner so that brotherly love would be maintained.

In a secluded area an eighth room was added which because of its height and the many windows facing in all directions, had a beautiful and pleasant view and served to instill in our homeowner the desire to exercise love not only in word but also in deeds. This did not apply only to spiritual brotherly love but love also toward those known and unknown, yea, even to his enemies. Although one may love one more than another, a Christian should show his love to all people without distinction according to the word of the Apostle in Galatians 6:10 where he writes, "Let us do good unto all men, but especially those of the household of faith." This is also Jesus' command in John 15:12, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you," as a debt which can never be paid, and in which our homeowner should persevere so as to increase therein more and more.

Finally, the roof was placed upon the house, a task which was performed by many of the tradesmen who had contributed to the education of our homeowner in the building of all the rooms or the lessons used. It was performed to such an extent that he now had the assurance and peace of mind regarding the permanence and strength of this new building so that our *Man of the Earth Earthy* (now being heavenly minded), believed that this house had not been built upon sandy soil but upon a rock. Because of that it would remain standing even if the winds would blow and the rainstorms should come down upon it. He no more needed to fear that the house would cave in or be destroyed no matter what would come against it since its Builder and Maker was God, and it rested upon a godly base and foundation, made without hands, "to be a temple of the Lord eternally, and a dwelling place of the Almighty."

We have concluded this allegory. He who could find himself therein, let him thank God, and may he by renewal be bound to Him. If this is strange language which you do not yet understand, flee to Jesus, for it may soon be too late. This I wish for you, that the Saviour's own Father may teach you. If He already drew you, may He draw your soul still closer. □



Doctrinal Studies

The Five Points of Calvinism (4)

Rev. A.A. Brugge, Lethbridge, AB

3. Limited Atonement

Introduction

Limited atonement (or definite atonement or particular redemption) is particularly associated with the Reformed tradition and is one of the five points of Calvinism. The doctrine states that though the death of Jesus Christ is sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world, it was the intention of God the Father that the atonement of Christ's death would work itself out in the elect only, thereby leading them without fail to salvation. According to limited atonement, Christ died for the sins of the elect alone, and no atonement was provided for the reprobate.

This is in contrast to a belief that God's prevenient grace (or enabling grace) enables all to respond to the salvation offered by God in Jesus Christ so that it is each person's decision and response to God's grace that determines whether Christ's atonement will be effective to that individual.

History

The elements of the doctrine to be known as limited atonement were held by Gottschalk of Orbais (c. 808-867), Thomas Bradwardine (c. 1290-1349), and Gregory of Rimini (c. 1300-1358). The Synod of Dordt was convened in 1618 in order to decide a controversy between the followers of Jacobus Arminius (Arminians) and other Calvinists. One of the issues involved had to do with the reason for the limitation of the efficacy of Christ's satisfaction for sin (roughly, atonement). Both sides of the controversy agreed that this efficacy was limited to the elect. The disagreement had to do with the grounds for this limitation. For Arminius, the ground was the free choice of people to believe, fore-known by God, with God predestining people based on this foreseen faith. For the opponents of Arminius, whose views are represented in the Canons of Dordt, this efficacy was limited based on God's predestination, without any foreknowledge of human choice. Calvin clearly taught this second view, and it is also the view of Reformed theologians following the Synod of Dordt.

The doctrine of limited atonement also includes the claim that the purpose for which Jesus gave His life was limited to the elect—the atonement is limited in its purpose. For this reason, for instance, the 17th century English Puritan, Richard Baxter, rejected the doctrine of limited atonement and instead believed that the atonement is available to all who will believe in Christ. They also argue that it was never endorsed by Calvin or the Synod of Dordt. They refer to both Calvin's claim that "It is also a fact, without controversy,

that Christ came to atone for the sins of the whole world" and to Canons II, 2 which states that, "This death of God's Son is the only and entirely complete sacrifice and satisfaction for sins; it is of infinite value and worth, more than sufficient to atone for the sins of the whole world."

With regard to the limited purpose or intent of the atonement to save only the elect, another argument was put forth later in the 17th century. Moses Amyraut and several others (Amyraldists) proposed a system called hypothetical universalism, which taught that in God's decree for Christ to be a sufficient atonement for all sin, His intention was to save all on condition that they believe. This decree was prior to His decree to elect some people for whom the atonement was to be efficacious, and so the efficacy of the atonement was still limited to the elect. Most of the Reformed rejected this view because it envisioned a decree of God (the conditional decree to save all) that was intentionally not realized.

Theology

The doctrine of the limited scope (or extent) of the atonement is intimately tied up with the doctrine of the nature of the atonement. It also has much to do with the general Calvinist view of predestination. Calvinists advocate the satisfaction theory of the atonement, which developed in the writings of Anselm of Canterbury and Thomas Aquinas. In brief, the Calvinistic refinement of this theory, known as penal substitution, states that the atonement of Christ pays the penalty incurred by the sins of men—that is, Christ receives the wrath of God for sins and thereby receives in Himself the penalty of the sins of men (2 Corinthians 5:21 and Romans 8:3b).

The Calvinist view of predestination teaches that God created Adam in a state of original righteousness, but he fell into sin and all humanity in him as their federal head. Those elected to salvation were chosen without a view to their faith or good works but by the sovereign will of God.

Limited atonement is likely the most controversial (and misunderstood) aspect of Reformed Theology. Atonement refers to the forgiveness of our sins by means of Jesus' sinless life and sacrificial death. Christ atoned, or paid for, sins on the cross (1 Peter 3:18). So far, so good; this much is agreed upon by just about everyone who would consider himself to be Christian. Calvinism is distinctive in that it teaches Jesus' death on the cross did not merely make salvation possible for those who choose to receive it, but it made salvation definite for those who have been elected by God. For this reason, many prefer to refer to this doctrine

as definite atonement as there is nothing limited about the power or effectiveness of Christ's atoning sacrifice. His sacrifice is completely sufficient to save sinners, but it is made definite only for those who God has chosen.

When looking at this doctrine, it is important to note that all theological frameworks "limit" the atonement in some respect (aside from Universalism which falsely teaches that all will be saved). Either Jesus' death was intended for absolutely everyone but is unable to save any but those who respond in faith (limited in its effectiveness), or His death was completely effective in atoning for the sins

of those whom it was intended for (and so the atonement is limited in its intended recipients). Stated another way, either Christ's atoning death was meant for the salvation of all but is limited in its ability to accomplish this, or the intent of the atonement was 'limited' to fully redeeming all of God's elect.

The latter is the Reformed position as articulated by Calvinism. This view is reflected in Acts 13:48 where we see that "and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed." Believers are those who were appointed to eternal life by God. □

(To be continued)

Curatorium Announcement

If all is well, the Curatorium of the Netherlands Reformed Theological School hopes to meet in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on June 5, 2019. At that time both of our current theological students are scheduled to receive their exams, and Student H. de Leeuw, who will have come to the end of his fourth year of studies, will deliver his final trial sermon. We wish both of them and their instructors all that is necessary in these last months of the school year. At the same time, we invite anyone who has received an attest from his consistory to tell about the dealings of the Lord in his heart with respect to himself and the sacred ministry.

Paul writes in Hebrews 5, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." The disciples did not run of themselves but were called by the Lord Himself. When we view Him by the sea, calling unlearned fishermen as Peter, Andrew, James and John, then we observe that He sovereignly calls and uses the most unlikely persons for this special work. He Himself gives them heavenly lessons to make them fit for that work. By His dealings He strips them of all human wisdom and power. We read, "Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing" (Luke 5:5). They did not realize it, but the Creator of heaven and earth by His wise providence directed the very fish of the sea in order to break down all the wisdom and experience of men so that they have to give up all their own labours. Oh, what a way that is! Our flesh does not appreciate this, to be sure.

Moreover, it is the Lord alone who is able to keep the rebellion of our hearts from breaking out into the open, but the Lord will teach His servants from where the blessings must come. They will not be found in man or in his efforts but in the work of the Lord alone. When the nets go down by the simple command of Christ, rather than by the ingenuity of man, then the dependence is no longer upon man, but there is a looking for a miracle from heaven only. It is in this way that there is to be found a blessing too great to be received by man. When the Lord reveals Himself to His people, they, as the disciples, receive everything from the Lord in one moment. Then they go from nothing to everything, from the miry pit to the Rock, from hell to heaven. Everything is received by faith in Christ. He is so full. We read, "and the net brake." Solomon swooned and said, "Stay me with flagons, comfort me with apples: for I am sick of love. His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me" (Song of Solomon 2:5-6).

The disciples had to learn these lessons for the sake of His Church so that they may be able to declare from the housetops what takes place in the inner chambers. May the Lord grant us such men, instructed by the Lord Himself in these divine and mysterious lessons so that the Church of God may be gathered and fed.

If a consistory is given freedom to grant an attest to one of their members, they should notify the clerk of the Curatorium, who will forward a request for information. The applicant should also forward his own request to the clerk, asking to be heard at the Curatorium meeting in June. Vacant congregations should seek the help of their moderator in these matters, and all information should be submitted as soon as possible.

On behalf of the Curatorium,
Rev. J. den Hoed, *chairman*
Rev. H.D. den Hollander, *clerk*

Address of the clerk of the Curatorium:
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Current Events

On August 29, 2017, the Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, published a document now known as the “Nashville Statement.” It is a statement of faith relating to human sexuality and gender roles authored by the Council on Biblical Manhood and Womanhood. The entire statement, containing a preamble and fourteen articles, can be viewed online. The document generally follows the biblical position on both sexuality and marriage. When published, it met with only a modest amount of opposition in the United States; translated into Dutch, however, the statement provoked strong negative comments in the Netherlands. Threats have been made to have the Public Prosecution Service evaluate whether the publication is punishable under criminal law. This shows how strong and aggressive the LGBT lobby has become, even to the exclusion of Christians publicizing a statement of faith.

In Open Doors’ annual report on the persecution of Christians, Open Doors’ director, Martin Dees, noted that worldwide persecution is becoming more intense and more gruesome. It is estimated that one-in-nine Christians worldwide is being persecuted compared to one-in-eleven two years ago. In the fifty countries included in the list, there are more than 245 million people being persecuted because of their faith. More than 4,000 Christians lost their lives in 2018. Nigeria had the greatest number of such deaths at approximately 3700 persons. North Korea leads the list as the most brutal regime, followed by Afghanistan and Somalia. It was further noted that there has been increased persecution of Christians in China and India. In most of the countries, Islam is the reason for the oppression/persecution.

—*Open Doors Annual Report*

Before and after Christmas, the Islamic Republic of Iran unleashed yet another crackdown on the country’s struggling Christian minority, prompting international calls for help and for much tougher action against the repressive regime. Arrests were made on alleged charges of affiliation with Christian Zionists and recruitment of Muslims to home churches. Mass arrests are meant to intimidate Christians into not spreading their faith during the Christmas period. Christianity may be the fastest growing religion in Iran, a trend that worries a regime fanatical about its ability to enforce a rigid conformity. The fact that so many Iranians are turning from Islam to Christianity means the regime’s efforts to create an ideal Islamic society have failed. It is estimated that there are 350,000 Christians in Iran, a number that is increasing as more Muslims convert to Christianity.

—*FoxNews.com*

In Iowa, a law banning a woman from obtaining an abortion once a fetus’s heartbeat is detected was legally challenged by abortion providers Planned Parenthood of the Heartland and the Emma Goldman Clinic. Fetal heartbeats can be detected as early as six weeks into a pregnancy, meaning the Iowa law would have been the most restrictive anti-abortion measure in the U.S. Recently, this pro-life law was struck down by Judge Michael Huppert.

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, who had signed the bill into law last May said, “I am incredibly disappointed in today’s court ruling because I believe that if death is determined when a heart stops beating, then a beating heart indicates life.” Republican Representative Sandy Salmon, the main sponsor of the bill in the House, said she hopes the state appeals the ruling to the Iowa Supreme Court. She suspects Republicans will work on further legislation “to make corrections to what the courts have struck down.”

—*FoxNews.com*

Recently, the state of New York shocked the nation by passing an abortion law that allows pregnant women to terminate their pregnancies up until their due dates. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo said he supports the new state law which legalizes abortion up to the moment of birth. “With the signing of this bill, we are sending a clear message that whatever happens in Washington, women in New York will always have the fundamental right to control their own body,” he said. Catholic Bishops have voiced their disappointment with Cuomo, who is also Catholic. Tennessee Bishop Rick Stika of Knoxville tweeted: “This vote is so hideous and vile that it warrants the act of excommunication.” However, Cuomo said in a radio interview that he does not “represent” the church. “The Catholic Church doesn’t believe in a woman’s right to choose ... I understand their religious view,” he said. “I am not here to represent a religion.”

—*ChristianHeadlines.com*

When Governor Murphy signed supportive legislation, New Jersey became the second state, after California, to mandate inclusion of the “accomplishments” of members of the LGBT community in the school curriculum. The legislation at this time only applies to public schools. May we be spared from this intrusion in the educational programs in our Christian schools. Information which was provided at the hearings that the law in California resulted in hearsay and conjecture in the classroom about the lives and sexual orientation of historical citizens was not considered to be pertinent in the rush by our New Jersey legislators to cater to a vocal minority of our citizenry.

—*Local NJ News*

Benjamin Franklin served as one of the foremost architects in structuring the Constitution, and while most of the founders were congratulating one another on their remarkable charter of liberty, Benjamin Franklin injected this note of prophetic insight. “I agree to this Constitution ... and I believe, further, that this is likely to be well administered for a course of years and can only end in despotism as other forms have done before it when the people shall become so corrupted as to need despotic government, being incapable of any other.” All of this went along with Franklin’s basic philosophy of sound government, namely, that no people can remain free if they become wicked and immoral. When a society decays to the point where people begin to fear for their lives and their property, the demands for a police state have always been inevitable.

—*“Strong Warnings from the Founders,” National Center for Constitutional Studies*



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

Spring Time, God's Creation and Faithfulness

A. v.d. Weerd-v.d. Maten

(Translated from the February 14, 1984 issue of *Daniel*)

“And God saw everything that He had made, and behold it was very good” (Genesis 1:31a).

Everything that is beautiful, everything that is wonderful, everything which cannot be understood—God has created it all out of nothing.

A small seed germinates in the earth and grows into a plant. A small fruit grows in the mother's womb and in a wonderful manner is born in God's time. The smallest creatures which we cannot even see, such as bacteria, particles of matter, the life cycles of nature—everything is predetermined, everything fits together. “O LORD, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches.”

Over against these small, insignificant substances, there is the great universe: the clouds, the air, and the winds. “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained; What is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou visitest him?”

What indeed is man? Men can do inexpressibly many, many things. Yet, they are and remain dependent upon God their Creator and Keeper. “He takes away their breath, and they die.” We cannot add one cubit to our stature; Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount. We cannot make one blade of grass to come forth out of the earth. Just look around you. God is faithful, for He has promised that seed time and harvest, cold or heat, summer or winter, day and night will not cease. Also, after this dark winter with its storms and rain, with its cold snow and hail, comes the spring. Here and there we can see bulbs sprouting up out of the cold, dark earth. The bare branches of the trees are swelling and the buds are again seen. Soon the leaves with their fresh green color will appear. A timid sparrow tries to sing its first song. The time of singing is near; the heavy storms are again behind us.

Do we also see it? Do *you* personally see it? Do we acknowledge God in His Creation, in His keeping?

When I comprehend this wonder, my thoughts within me become quiet with awe.

How much responsibility is laid upon man's shoulders, for God causes man to have dominion over the works of His hands. God has set all things under man's feet. When we realize that God has created everything and it was very good, how we should be deeply ashamed. How we have made a mess of everything and misused it. Instead of living for God and serving Him, we have appropriated everything to ourselves and have been disobedient to God's commands. That is why at times it can be so dark in our lives. How the storms can rage, how cold our hearts can be, yea, it can sometimes be so dead in our lives. Everything is destroyed and empty; our voices are silent and our singing disappears. Just as in Creation and after the winter, God's Spirit must come to make things alive. The time of singing returns, and the young fruits are again seen. Then God opens our lips by His power in order that we may proclaim His praise.

Do we see that? Do *you* also see it?

One day, summer and winter will cease; one day there will be no more night. One day it will always be spring, and it will always be a time of praise.

Do we also realize and know that? May we believe that personally? What is impossible with man is possible with God. “Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.”

*The world established stands
On its foundation broad;
His throne is fixed, He reigns supreme,
The everlasting God.*

*Thy testimonies Lord,
In faithfulness excel,
And holy must Thy servants be
Who in Thy temple dwell.*

—Psalter 252: 2&3



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Story of Joseph (8)

(Genesis 44&45:1-15)

Following the meal with Joseph, the brothers began the return journey to their home. Their sacks were again filled with food to feed their families. They were very happy with the way things had turned out for them; Simeon was with them again, and Benjamin was safe with his brothers. They had been treated very well and thought within themselves that father Jacob need not have been worried.

Suddenly they noticed a man, a servant of the governor coming up behind them. What did he want? He called out to them, "Men, men, why have you been so rude to the governor? You have rewarded him evil for good."

Joseph's brothers asked, "What have we done?"

"One of you has taken the governor's silver cup."

"No," the brothers said, "we would never do such a thing. We even brought back the money that was in our bags after our first visit. That will show you that we are honest men. Please look in our bags, and if you find the cup in one of our bags, let that man be killed, and the rest of us will be your slaves."

These were terrible words. The man proceeded to open each bag. He started with Reuben, no cup. Then Simeon, again no cup. Finally, he came to Benjamin's sack, and ... there was the silver cup. No, not Benjamin! The brothers were crushed. If Benjamin were to be killed, what would happen to father Jacob? They would not let the man take only Benjamin, but they all returned to stand before Joseph. Can you imagine how afraid these brothers were to stand before the governor, or how angry Joseph would be?

When they stood before the governor, he said to them, "What have you done? Did you think that I would not find out these things?"

Then Judah spoke for all the brothers and said, "Oh my lord, let thy servant speak, and please do not be angry with us. God has found out the iniquity of thy servants. Behold, we are thy lord's servants, all of us including the little one."

Then Joseph said, "God forbid that I would do that, but he in whose sack the cup was found, he shall be

my servant, and the rest of you can return to your own land."

Then Judah began to speak. "Sir," he said, "you asked us about our father and whether we had any other brothers. We were told that we should bring our youngest brother if we wanted to buy food again. Our father did not want to let him go, and he said that if anything happened to our little brother, it would cause him to die. If we do not bring our youngest brother home again our father will die. I will be your servant instead of Benjamin."

Then something strange happened. Joseph commanded all of the Egyptians to leave the room, and he began to cry. When Joseph was alone with his brothers, he cried out, "I am Joseph, is my father still alive?"

The brothers looked at each other, and they became very afraid. Joseph? And he is next to Pharaoh in the land of Egypt? What will now happen to us?

Joseph saw that his brothers were very afraid. "Do not fear," he said, "God has determined that I should be here so that your lives would be spared. There are still five more years of famine coming, so hurry and bring my father; tell him that I am lord over all of Egypt and that God has determined that I may provide for all of you during these difficult years."



Illustration by Peter von Cornelius of Joseph revealing himself to his brothers



Bible Quiz

Boldness

Dear Boys and Girls,

Mark scuffed the dirt around with the toe of his shoe and glanced furtively out of the corner of his eye at his friends. They were looking at him expectantly. Mark gulped. His friends had asked him to sneak onto an old neighbor's private property. The old man had expressly forbidden them to enter because the boys had wrecked his chicken wire fencing in many places. However, this only made the boys want to go there more than ever. There were wonderful trees to climb, and there was a large overgrown area where many old glass bottles could be dug up from long ago. The boys' eyes gleamed. The thought was too enticing. Mark hesitated. He did not want to go, but he did not want his friends to know this. He gave a quick nod. He would go just this once ...

However, Mark did not go just once. He had such fun that he wanted to go again. It was much easier the second time; by the third time, he did not even think of the old neighbor anymore. Boldly, Mark and his friends marched past the bright orange "private property" sign, feeling confident that the darkness would hide them. What did it matter if they were doing wrong? No one would catch them.

When our puppies were about three months old, they took a liking to chasing and catching our chickens. The first time, they waited till we were not home and it was dark. It almost appeared to have happened by mistake, as though they initially tried to herd a stray chicken to the coop and caught it instead. The second time, it was dark but we were home. The third time, it was in broad daylight in the middle of the day. How bold they had become in a short time.

It is often that way with sin. The first time we do something wrong, our heart is pounding, and a voice in our head is warning us loudly to turn back. The problem is that when we have done it once, we become bolder, and our conscience becomes quieter. It is not long before we do not hear the warning voice anymore, and the sin does not bother us. How easily we have convinced ourselves that it is not so bad, and how quickly we begin to enjoy the wrongdoing. We must never even agree to do something "just this once." It will already be wrong, and it will only lead to more wrong. We soon no longer consider

what God forbids us and boldly do it again. The Bible says of this: "*There is no fear of God before their eyes*" (Romans 3:18).

Our heart is bent toward sin and doing what we like. When the Lord gives someone a new heart, this behavior changes. The person who has been made new is not bold. He is timid. He wonders, "Will such a great God hear me? Will He want to listen to me even though I have so often sinned against Him while He has been so good to me? It would be just and right if He never does." Through His Word, God tells him that he may come to the throne of grace and beg for what he needs. What a wonder when such a heart is encouraged. He fears that he deserves to be cast away. At the same time, he receives a love to God and also begins to hold back from temptation. He does not hold back from sin because of fear of punishment—not like Pharaoh, whose heart was as hard as a stone while he said, "*I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you.*" He only wanted the punishment to stop, but it is different for a sinner whose heart has been made alive by God. He says what Joseph said, "*How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?*" He loves God as Joseph did and does not want to grieve Him.

We have an older dog named Bella. She is very eager to please. If I call her, she turns back instantly. If I scold her, she wrinkles up her face and crouches or rolls over, telling me she is sorry. She hardly dares come forward until I speak kindly to her and reassure her. However, when danger threatens those she loves because strangers are on the property, she becomes bold and brave. She has fearlessly chased a few of my egg customers from the driveway because she thought they did not belong there.

In a similar way, those timid, repentant people of the Lord whose hearts have been renewed can become very bold. Sometimes, they feel they must do what is right even if that will be difficult and others will laugh or become angry. If the Lord's name or God's honor is threatened or mocked, those people sometimes cannot remain quiet. They say, "*I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people, that have set themselves against me round about.*" Also, if they think that they must or can say something that might be to the good of others' souls, they cannot keep still.

Then those fearful people become bold. The Lord gives them this strength and boldness. Such were Peter and John, who preached even though they had been threatened to keep quiet. They knew they would be put in prison, beaten, or even killed, but they said, *“Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”*

Wicked Boldness of Sinners

Take the words from the box at right of the maze puzzle to fill in the blanks. Find the words along your path as you travel through the maze.

1. “He deviseth mischief upon his _____; he setteth himself in a way that is not good; he abhorreth not evil.”
2. “Draw me not away with the wicked, and with the workers of iniquity, which speak _____ to their neighbours, but mischief is in their hearts.”
3. “There is no fear of God before their _____.”
4. “Put ye in the sickle, for the harvest is ripe: come, get you down; for the _____ is full, the fates overflow; for their wickedness is great.”
5. “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his _____ was only evil continually.”

6. “A wicked man hardeneth his _____: but as for the upright, he directeth his way.”
7. “Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall _____ into mischief.”
8. “He, that being often reprovved hardeneth his _____, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.”
9. “Then Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron in _____; and he said, I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you.”

Unworthiness and Carefulness of God’s Children

10. Who said “There is none greater in this house than I; neither hath he kept back any thing from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” _____
11. Who said “What is thy servant, that thou shouldst look upon such a dead dog as I am?” _____
12. Take your answers from #10 and #11 and place them in the boxes.

Use the letters in the shaded boxes to finish the answer to this question: Who was an example of someone who feels timid and unworthy?

__ R __ D __ G A L __ _ N

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END

BED

PRESS

EYES

FACE

NECK

FALL

PEACE

HEART

HASTE

For the Older Children – Boldness of God’s Children

In the box you will find the reasons which the Bible gives for the holy boldness of those that spoke and preached in the name of Jesus. Use the reasons to complete the texts.

waxing confident by my bonds
perfect love casteth out fear
in the name of the Lord Jesus
grant unto Thy servants
filled with the Holy Ghost
they had been with Jesus
The Lord is my Helper

13. “So that we may boldly say, _____,
and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.”
(Hebrews)

14. “There is no fear in love; but
_____.” (1 John)

15. “And he spake boldly _____, and
disputed against the Grecians: but they went about
to slay him.” (Acts)

16. “Now when they saw the boldness of Peter
and John, and perceived that they were unlearned
and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took
knowledge of them, that _____.” (Acts)

17. “And when they had prayed, the place was
shaken where they were assembled together; and
they were all _____, and they spake
the word of God with boldness.” (Acts)

18. “And many of the brethren in the Lord,
_____, are much more bold to speak
the word without fear.” (Phillipians)

19. “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings:
and _____, that with all boldness they
may speak Thy word.” (Acts)

For the Younger Children – Confidence in God

Find where these verses are found.

20. “In God I will praise His word, in God I have
put my trust; I will not fear what flesh can do unto
me.” (Psalm 56:___)

21. “The LORD is on my side; I will not fear: what
can man do unto me?” (Psalm 118:___)

22. “So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my
helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto
me.” (Hebrews 13:___)

23. “I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people,
that have set themselves against me round about.”
(Psalm 3:___)

24. “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and
not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and
my song; He also is become my salvation.” (Isaiah 12:___)

Answers to last month’s “Caves” quiz:

1–9. Elijah, Midianites, Lot, burying place, Joshua,
Philistines, Adullam, Saul, Obadiah

10. I am Legion

11. Three

12. Cliffs

13. Holes

14. Forts

15. Dens

16. Christ

17. Lazarus

18. in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains

1 Chronicles 11:15

Job 30:6

Isaiah 2:19

Ezekiel 33:27

Hebrews 11:38

Answers to previous quizzes were received in
December from:

Janice Aleman (5)

Susanna Aleman (6)

Alicia Baum

Alaina Baum (3)

Alicia Baum (3)

Julie Baum (3)

Anabelle Berkenbush (2)

William Berkenbush (2)

Marissa Blom

Riley Blom

Hayley Bosch

Derek Brouwer (2)

Maya Chase (2)

Aleah Dale (2)

Nathan Dale (2)

Bryce De Bleeck

Kendra De Bleeck

Cody Driesen (2)

Kacie Driesen (2)

Sam Driesen (2)

Toby Driesen (2)

Weston Ekema

Geralyn Engelen

Kariena Engelen

Shawn Engelen

Trevor Engelen

Anika Engelsma

Kayla Engelsma

Garrett Hoogendoorn (2)

Kate Hoogendoorn (2)

Luke Hoogendoorn (2)

Weston Hoogendoorn (2)

Alia Kelderman

Christa Kerkhoff

Derik Keurhorst (2)

Dwayne Keurhorst

Stephanie Keurhorst (2)

Ashley Knibbe

Courtney Knibbe

Lindsey Knibbe

Whitney Knibbe

Ella Koedam

Kendan Maassen

Lydia Mol

Olivia Mol

Rachel Mol

Teddy Mol

Deanna Okken (2)

Justin Okken (2)

Kirstin Okken

Alec Post

Hunter Post

Nate Post

Nicolas Post

Gavin Spaans (2)

Jacob Spaans (2)

Tucker Spaans (2)

Amara Stam (2)

Isaac Stam

Hailey Stoutjesdyk

Nigel Stoutjesdyk

Colin Ten Hove

Aaliyah Timmer

Drake Timmer

Maurice Van Garderen (2)

Thirza Van Garderen (2)

Emmalyn Van Garderen (2)

Lydia Van Manen

Rosalee Van Manen

Jennifer VandeBruinhorst (2)

Alivia Vande Hoef

Leah Vande Hoef

Micah Vande Hoef

Joshua Vande Lagemaat (2)

Cornell Vande Stroet (3)

Jessa Vande Stroet (3)

Lydia Vande Stroet (3)

Raelene Vande Stroet

Gerrit Vanden Broek

Ian Vanden Broek

Treena Vanden Broek

Art Vander Waal

Elaina Vander Waal

Ross Vander Waal

Arianna Verhoef

Caleb Vogelaar (2)

Matthew Vogelaar (2)

Jonathan Wesdyk

Laura Wesdyk

Rebekah Wesdyk

Arthur Wisse (2)

Gertrude Wisse (2)

Joanna Wisse (2)

Lane Wisse (2)

Leah Wisse (2)

Neveah Wisse (2)

Tonia Wisse (2)

Bethany Ymker

Carissa Ymker (4)

Heidi Ymker

Jacalyn Ymker

Janna Ymker (5)

Marceil Ymker

Paxton Ymker

Quentin Ymker

Shauntae Ymker



Letters to My Young Readers

Welcome to our new members:
Andrew Baum, Nathan & Aleah Dale,
Alia Kelderman, Ella Koedam, Justin Okken,
Amara Stam, Raelene Vande Stroet, and
Tonia Wisse.

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth



Thank you ...

I love receiving your drawings – thank you, Nathan and Aleah, and what a good drawing of David and Saul, Emmalyn.

Amara Stam

Welcome to our quiz page, Amara. I'm glad you joined your brother. I know you have been doing them for a little while now, right? I hope they may be a blessing to your heart. Do you like Grade 2? What is your favorite subject?



Isaac Stam

Thanks for your answers and note, Isaac. I totally understand when answers come in bunches and sometimes are forgotten. I'm happy that you do each puzzle! How are you doing at school? Which grade are you in now?

Please send your answers to the
address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth

180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435

E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com

Not Satisfied with Any Religion

The Lord's people who are taught by His blessed Spirit and know what poor, guilty, ruined, and condemned sinners they are in themselves—people who have found the Lord Jesus Christ precious to their soul—are not satisfied with any religion (however great the profession of it may be) unless there is something of the bright side experienced as well as the dark side and something of comfort as well as sorrow; such professors have been wounded and distressed on account of sin and have also had fresh testimonies of the love of God to their souls.

I have much greater hope of those persons being in the right way who mourn over their darkness and are in trouble about their souls than of those persons who are always boasting of their faith and talking of their enjoyments. Many are so satisfied and comfortable with their religion; they say they are always in the light and always happy; if you question the genuineness of their faith and say they are presumptuous characters and that it is not right to call such as preach in this way the ministers of God, such persons would soon be offended by you and accuse you of being very uncharitable. Let such as those who have this kind of religion and talk so largely, come to be tried, sifted, and exercised, and it will soon be evident that the greater part or all of their religion arises from the pride of their heart and is one of the devices of Satan. There is a greater confidence to be placed in the standing of those who are tried and cast down, who are sorrowful and mourning on account of sin, and who are crying out, "What ever will become of us?" than of those who are full of pride and presumption. I have a greater opinion of those who are thus humbled and brought down, seeing themselves sinners in God's sight and feeling their lost and ruined state, than of those who are always talking about the greatness of their faith.

So that what we contend for is this: There must be sorrow as well as joy; there must be wounding as well as healing. God's children are lost as well as found. They are pulled down and they are built up. They are stripped and they are clothed. They are condemned in their own sight and brought to mourn over their sin and sinfulness, yet, at times, are enabled to rejoice on account of what Christ has done for them.

— William Tiptaft

News & Announcements

Church News

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Accepted:

By Rev. A.A. Brugge of Lethbridge, Alberta, to the congregation of Doetinchem, the Netherlands.

Obituaries

SCHELLING, WILMA (nee Vander Schaaf) – Age 88, January 24, 2019; Hull, Iowa; Husband – Gilbert; Children – Shirley & Abe den Hoed, Robert & Sharon Schelling, Lois & Enno Haan, Marvin & Kathy Schelling, Karen & Bud Kuiken; Siblings – Milton & Joan Vander Schaaf, Herlon & Joan Vander Schaaf, Henrietta Vander Broek, June & Harold Driessen, Audrey & Ken Van Grouw, Delbert Vander Schaaf, Roger & Charlotte Vander Schaaf, Helen & Don Statema, Arlys Zomermaand; Sisters-in-law – Betty & Sharon Vander Schaaf; 25 grandchildren, 55 great-grandchildren; predeceased by brothers Jim and Wayne Vander Schaaf, brothers-in-law Bud Vander Broek and Ed Zomermaand, and sister-in-law Elda Vander Schaaf. (Rev. H. Hofman, Isaiah 66:13.)

New Clerk

Franklin Lakes NRC

Mr. Richard Nieuwenhuis
231 County Rd. 519
Belvidere, NJ 07823
973-703-4315
e-mail: scenicvalleyrn@gmail.com

Hope Bay Bible Camp

The Chilliwack NRC hopes to host the annual young adults' retreat on Pender Island, British Columbia, on May 23-25, 2019, D.V. We welcome all post-secondary young adults to attend for a time of learning, fellowship, and exploration of the beauty of Pender Island. Pastor Van Ruitenburg and other speaker(s) yet to be determined will provide topics and Bible studies. Registration is open until May 6, 2019. The cost is \$115/single and \$165/married couple to be paid online at the time of registration. Accommodations for the following weekend can be arranged for out-of-town guests. For further information and registration, go to www.bnrcyouth.com/registration.

Bèka Community Inclusion Program Employment Opportunity

Bèka Community Inclusion Program (Chilliwack, British Columbia) is a program for adults with special needs. The goal is to provide integrated daily activities in the church, school, and wider communities, with emphasis on biblical lifestyle and our Reformed doctrine. We are looking for someone to take the full-time lead role in developing and running this program.

Required qualifications:

- Be a confessing member in good standing of the NRC or RCNA
- Degree/Diploma/Certificate in the Community Social Service field or equivalent education and training
- Direct support experience of individuals with developmental disabilities
- Strong interpersonal, organization, time management, and computer literacy skills

If you are interested, please contact Marianne Luteyn (kmluteyn@telus.net), or Jacoline Klaassen (jacobaklaassen@gmail.com).

60th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

John & Evelyn Fluit

hope to commemorate their
60th wedding anniversary
on March 31, 2019.

"The days of our life are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10).

7607 18th Place
Rock Valley, Iowa 51247

60th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

William (Bill) & Rina Stoutjesdyk

hope to commemorate their
60th wedding anniversary
on April 2, 2019.

"But by love serve one another"
(Galatians 5:13b).

May the Lord be mindful of them.

6651 School Lane
Chilliwack, BC V2R 2C7

Education

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COALHURST, ALBERTA, is in urgent need of a grade 3 homeroom teacher, beginning January 2019. Applications are also requested for the following positions for the 2018-19 school year:

- Elementary teachers
- High school teachers (especially in English language arts, mathematics, and history, though other specialties are also invited)
- Shop teachers (construction, cabinetry, welding, mechanics)

We would be grateful to welcome applications from competent, versatile, and dedicated teachers of any grade/age level who also have a love for the truth which is according to godliness and who are members of the NRC or a closely related denomination. All applicants must be eligible for Alberta certification. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter with your résumé or CV to office@ccschool.ca. For more information about the vacancies, available immigration supports, or the application process, please contact the principal, Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca.

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, would like to receive applications for a full-time, multi-grade, elementary teaching position for the 2019-2020 school year. We are a very small school with limited enrollment. The ability to instruct and interact with children across a range of ages throughout the school day and to work independently without daily oversight (the schoolboard acts as principal), as well as good organizational and interpersonal skills, will help the successful applicant experience the special task of teaching in our small school. Interested applicants are asked to contact Andy VanStelle at 920-452-1967 or 920-946-1711 or amvanstelle@excel.net.

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA— We ask that those who are interested in teaching consider MCCA. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCA Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America, which is based on the KJV and the Three Forms of Unity. Wages vary depending upon experience and post-secondary education. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mcca.ca.

Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca, and to the board secretary, Mr. Eric Van Maren, at ericv@vanmarengroup.com or mail it to 48988 Yale Road East, Chilliwack, BC V4Z 0B2.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CORSICA, SOUTH DAKOTA, is seeking applicants to fill a full-time teaching position for grades 3-5 starting in August 2019. The applicant should be highly self-motivated, versatile, and a member of the NRC who loves the old truths and paths. For more information on this position please contact the school board president, Mr. Ken Van Brenk, at 605-732-4296. Applications should be sent to 26684 390th Avenue, Stickney, South Dakota 57375.

NETHERLAND REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY, is in need of a part-time Spanish teacher for the 2019-20 school year. Qualified individuals are encouraged to contact Tim Mol at 973-204-5677 or Mr. John Van Der Brink at 973-628-7400. If you know someone who may be interested in this position, please let him/her know it is available.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is a Pre-K through 12th grade school (435 students) serving NRC students from Rock Valley, Sioux Center, and Sioux Falls. We are seeking applicants for a music teacher to begin at any time. The focus of the position would be instrumental (5-12 band/orchestra) along with other opportunities in K-12 music. In addition, we encourage applicants for elementary teaching positions. Please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or dbreuer@nrscia.org for further information.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN is accepting teaching applications for openings in the elementary school and possible openings in the high school for the 2019-2020 school year. Interested K-6 applicants should send or email their resumes and/or questions to Mr. Nathan Bleeker (nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us). Interested 7-12 applicants should send or email their resumes and/or questions to Mr. James Bazen at (jbazen@plymouthchristian.us).

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, welcomes inquiries from teachers interested in teaching in our K-9 school. Please contact our principal, Tom Kwekel, at tom.kwekel@gmail.com.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is a kindergarten through grade 12 school located in small-town Norwich, Ontario. We have an enrollment of almost nine hundred students. We offer academic, vocational, and special education programs to meet the diverse needs of a large, supporting Reformed community. As continued growth is expected, we anticipate a range of unique teaching and employment opportunities well into the future. We are currently accepting applications to fill teacher and paraeducator openings at various levels for the 2019-2020 school year. We welcome those interested in joining our committed and supportive team to contact Mr. John Heikoop, the director of school operations, to discuss employment opportunities or to submit a cover letter and resume. He can be reached by phone at 519-863-2403, ext. 223, or by email at director@rcsnorwich.com.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK BRITISH COLUMBIA, has the following ongoing need—secondary/middle school teachers who are excited about teaching and have a particular love for the hearts of young people. If you are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For certification requirements and more information regarding the above positions and/or an application form please do not hesitate to contact either the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at 604-794-7114 or dstam@timothychristian.ca or the school board president, Mr. Wim Neels, at 604-858-8834 or wimneels@timothychristian.ca.

To All Candidates for Teacher Positions

Please visit advertising.nrcea.education for an up-to-date listing of job openings in NRCEA schools as well as links to the school websites for more information about the positions and the schools. When accessing the job bank on the NRCEA SharePoint, please use the following:

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password:

Schooljobs!

Anniversary and other announcements will be placed upon request. A donation for their placement would be appreciated. For consistency, size is limited. Please send your request to the managing editor, Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis, whose address is shown inside the front cover. Requests for placement should be made **by the first of the month prior to the month of publication.**

■ ■ ■ *The Banner of Truth* in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles which appear in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3 files are produced by a committee in Norwich, Ontario, with the support of the Norwich consistory, and they make the MP3 files available to the consistories of the end user. The consistories then distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost to the end user.

To arrange for a free subscription, contact Mrs. Leona den Dekker at 519-403-5178 or ldendekker@rcsnorwich.com.

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PERIODICAL
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Mahwah, NJ

When any turn from Zion's way,
 (Alas, what numbers do!)
Methinks I hear my Saviour say,
 "Wilt thou forsake Me too?"

Ah! Lord, with such a heart as mine,
 Unless Thou hold me fast,
I feel I must, I shall decline,
 And prove like them at last.

Yet, Thou alone hast power, I know,
 To save a wretch like me;
To whom, or whither, could I go,
 If I should turn from Thee?

No voice but Thine can give me rest,
 And bid my fears depart;
No love but Thine can make me blest,
 And satisfy my heart.

What anguish has that question stirred;
 If I will also go?
Yet, Lord, relying on Thy Word,
 I humbly answer, No.

— *John Newton*

March 2019

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