

the **Banner** *of Truth*

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of the Holy Spirit

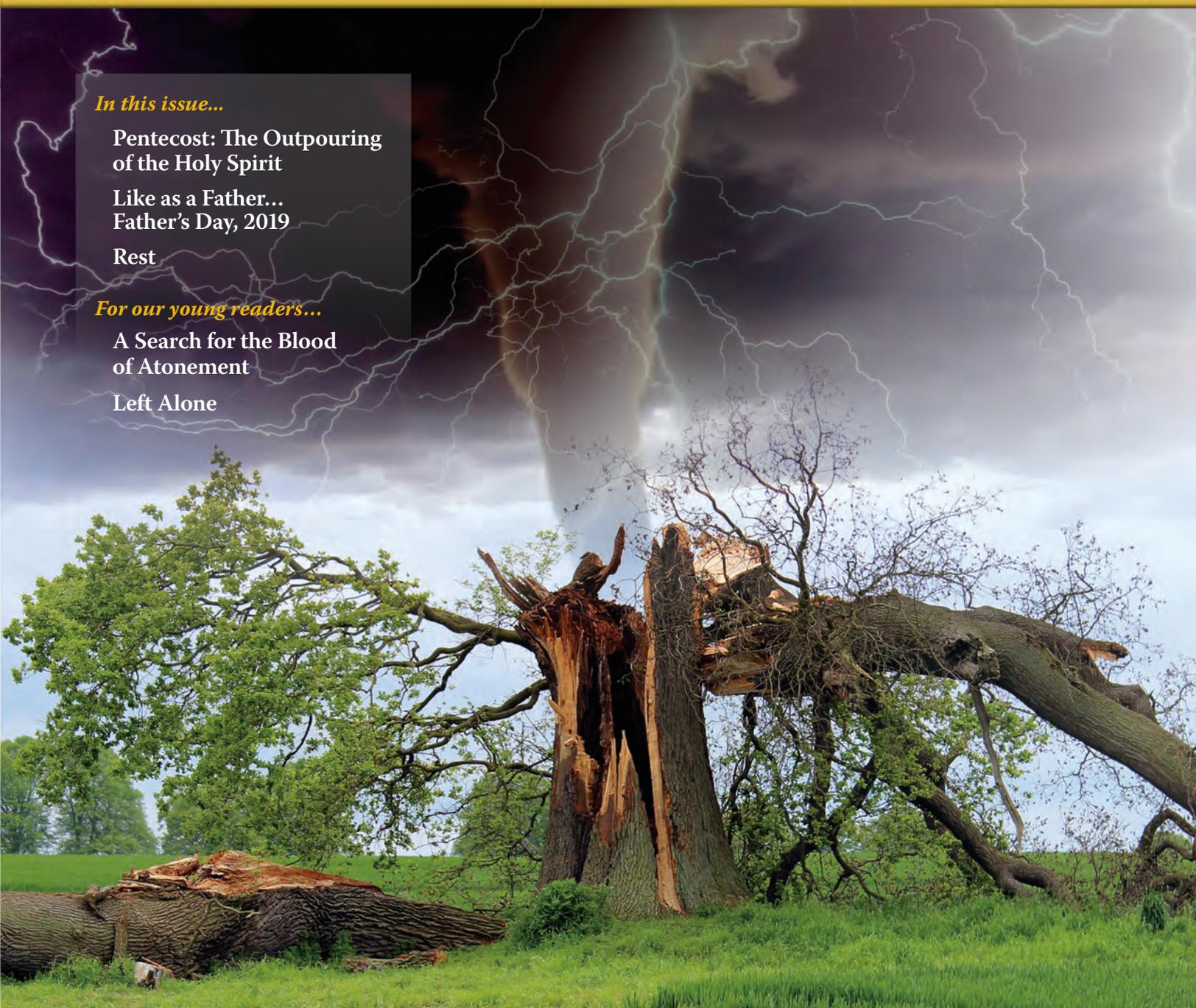
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Rest

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Left Alone



"...stormy wind fulfilling His word." PSALM 148:8b



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Rev. J. den Hoed, Editor

972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264
360-354-0216

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Assistant Editor

14 Longview Drive, Towaco, NJ 07082-1540
973-265-8632 • E-mail: revcvogelaar@gmail.com

Dr. Edward Nieuwenhuis, Managing Editor

62 Peach Tree Court, Hawthorne, NJ 07506
973-427-2025 • Fax: 973-427-4969 • E-mail: edfeetsr@gmail.com

John Sweetman, Subscription Manager

11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005
973-335-4679 • E-mail: nrcbannersubscriptions@yahoo.com

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Meditation

Pentecost: The Outpouring of the Holy Spirit

Rev. J. van Haaren (1933-1983)

“Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear” (Acts 2:33).

The outpouring of the Holy Ghost is one of the facts of salvation which has an exceptional significance for the Church. Actually, this is true for all of the facts of salvation, for not one of them can be missed. Without Christmas, we could not speak about Easter, and likewise without Easter no Ascension Day, and if there were no Ascension Day, we could not speak about Pentecost.

Not one human being would have been saved if the Word had not become flesh and lived among us. No hell-worthy sinner would ever have obtained eternal life if Christ had not arisen from the dead. No human being would ever have been placed in the communion with God if the blessed Immanuel had not ascended into heaven to thereby bring His Church home. Neither would the Holy Spirit have been able to come if Christ had not fulfilled all that was necessary for the salvation of lost sinners.

When Christ made perfect satisfaction to pay for the violated attributes of God and entered into the sanctuary not made with hands but into heaven itself to appear before the countenance of God for us, there the Holy Spirit descends upon the day of Pentecost to come and dwell in His Church. This is all now declared in a most excellent manner by Peter who was filled with the Holy Spirit.

He pointed to the fact that Christ made Pentecost come to pass. The multitude who had come together likely thought that Christ still lay in the grave, for they had crucified Him as a criminal and witnessed His death. Yet, He can no longer be found in the grave because God had raised Him from the dead and taken Him up in glory.

Christ, Peter says in our text, was exalted by the right hand of God. God’s right hand is the image of His majesty and omnipotence. His right hand did glorious things, for it placed Christ, who had humbled Himself unto death, as a triumphant King upon His heavenly throne and handed Him the reins of the government of the world. Exalted by God’s right hand, He lives to always be active for the well-being of all those that are His. Through Him they may with freedom draw near to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and find grace in time of need.

Exalted by the right hand of God, Christ had received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father. That does not mean that Christ only received the promise of the Holy Spirit after His resurrection; no, but this promise is now

fulfilled, for Pentecost is the feast of the fulfilled promise.

What was that promise? That the Holy Spirit would come to continue Christ’s work upon earth until the day of His return upon the clouds of heaven. That Spirit had been promised to Christ by the Father in the stillness of the never-begun eternity when He gave Himself as Substitute for His people. Had He not said to the Son, “Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession”? For this, the Holy Spirit was necessary. By means of this Spirit, Christ would gather His congregation which had been elected to eternal life out of the entire human race.

Christ would lay the foundation of salvation through His death and shedding of blood, and the Holy Spirit would cause the congregation to arise upon that foundation. First Christ had to satisfy the Father’s justice and to pay the ransom for all those who had been given Him of the Father. Afterwards, He would receive the authority to send the Holy Spirit for the salvation of His people.

This Spirit is, therefore, also promised to His disciples by the Lord Jesus and through them to the entire Church of the new dispensation when He spoke, “And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth.” Just before He ascended into heaven, Christ spoke about it once more with His disciples and expressly commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem but to await the promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “ye have heard of Me.”

The Spirit has been poured out because of the good pleasure of the Father; it happily goes forward by the hand of Christ to glorify the people of His good pleasure and to have them partake of Christ and all of His benefits. That means not one bought by the blood of Christ can go lost. The Spirit searches for them and regenerates them. He works an unrepentant sorrow after God—a sorrow not to be repented of. It is He, who in His discovering ministration makes place for Christ and His righteousness. He opens the eyes for the Fairest among the sons of man and causes them to experience that grace is poured out upon His lips.

He makes Christ necessary and indispensable so that the sigh is born, “Give me Jesus or I die, for outside of Jesus there is no life but an eternal death of the soul.” Cut off by God’s justice, the soul is assured by the Holy Spirit that his guilt and the punishment has been forgiven for Christ’s sake and that he in Him has a right to eternal life. Yea, the Spirit causes him to embrace that blessed Surety and Mediator so that he calls out in wonderment, “He is mine, and I am His.”

It is this Spirit which assures God's children of the favor of the Father, who testifies with their spirit that they are children of God and heirs of eternal life.

Oh, what a blessed work by a Triune God, for now the Father again receives His lost child, Christ receives His people as the wages for His Mediatorial work, the Holy Spirit receives His temple, and a hell-worthy people receive salvation.

Salvation is, therefore, out of God, by God, and unto God. It is of this salvation that Peter testifies when he says, "Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, He has shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." The apostle wishes to say that the wonder tokens of this day are a proof that Christ is truly alive. They tell us of His coronation. What you now see and hear all comes from Him.

The coming of the Holy Spirit preaches unto us that Christ is truly glorified, that He lives and is sitting at the right hand of the Father, clothed with all power and might in heaven and upon earth. Yea, upon the day of Pentecost,

it is evident that the exaltation of Christ does not only extend to the glorification of God but also to the salvation of God's Church.

Has it already become Pentecost for you? Many both heard and saw the tokens but remained who and what they were. How many Pentecost sermons have you already heard, and how has it affected you? Have you already come to need the Holy Spirit? He can break the hardest heart. What a blessing it would be if you would begin to call out with the three thousand, "Men and brethren, what must we do to be saved?"

Are there, perhaps, some who feel unsure about God's leadings? Oh, that God's Spirit would bring you to God's feet as a lost one. Lost ones, He reveals the salvation which is in Christ. Oh, how "your mourning would be turned into dancing." Yea, may that Spirit glorify Christ in your heart and fill your heart with His grace. May He cause it to be Pentecost for you, whereby you may testify with your spirit that you are children of God, for all those who are led by this Spirit are the children of God. □



Bible Study

The Life of Isaac (3)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

Based on Genesis 22:13-14

It was a severe trial for Abraham when he had to sacrifice his only son whom he loved so much. Yet, Abraham unconditionally obeyed the Lord and had gone to the mountain that the Lord would tell him of, "which I will tell thee of" (verse 2). Isaac followed his father quietly and there-in he was truly a type of Him of whom Isaiah has spoken, "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth."

On the third day, they had reached the place where the sacrifice would have to be brought. The wood of the burnt offering was laid upon Isaac, Abraham's son, and the fire and knife Abraham took in his hand. Abraham answered Isaac's question of where the lamb was for the burnt offering with, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering." Now they came to the place which God had told him of. An altar was built, and Isaac was bound and laid on that altar, upon the wood.

When Abraham stretched forth his hand and took the knife to slay his son, the LORD called him out of heaven. Oh, how faithful the Lord is in fulfilling His word. It must

have been a very severe test of Abraham's faith not only to offer his son but to sacrifice the promised seed. In this promised seed all the great things spoken of were to be fulfilled. The Messiah would be born from Abraham's son. Of Him was Abraham's expectation.

Substitute

The Lord told Abraham not to lay his hand upon Isaac, "For now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son from Me." Abraham "lifted up his eyes, and looked, and behold, behind him a ram, caught in a thicket." Abraham has given his son, but God gave a substitute. It is a ram, a male animal. He is a type of Christ, the only begotten Son of the Father, the Man of sorrows acquainted with grief. He is what Naomi told Ruth of Boaz, "For the man will not be in rest until he have finished the thing this day."

The ram was caught in the thicket; it waited there, as it were, and was already there in the time of Abraham's trial although he did not see him. Christ is given from eternity; He is slain before the foundation of the world. He waited until it was the appointed time. As the ram was caught in

the thicket, Christ bound Himself voluntarily to His Church—not to lilies but to thorns. He did not want to, and could not, break this bond. They are the bonds of an unbreakable covenant. What a comfort this covenant can be for changeable creatures, as also God's children are. They do not keep this covenant, but the Lord Himself preserves it and fulfills His promises. What must it have been for Abraham to see this God-given substitute. It is also inexpressible what a sinner, who cannot find a way in which he can deliver himself anymore, may see when that great Substitute from heaven, the Lord's only Son, is shown to him.

We read that Abraham went and took the ram. No, he did not steal it; it was God's gift of mercy and grace. The upright do not want to steal. They will not take anything that does not belong to them, but when the heavenly Substitute is shown in the gospel, then they are called to buy without money and without price, that is, to receive freely what the Lord has given. That is an unspeakable gift. Then Abraham "offered him up for a burnt offering in the stead of his son." What an incomprehensible love the Father shows in delivering His own Son to be consumed in the fire of the execution of His justice. And that, *instead of* those who deserved this judgment. How beautifully does the Form for the Administration of the Lord's Supper speak of this substitution: "He was bound that we might be freed from our sins." And He "suffered innumerable reproaches that we might never be confounded." And He "was innocently condemned to death that we might be acquitted at the judgment seat of God." He "hath also taken upon Himself the curse due to us that He might fill us with His blessings."

Now Isaac may be loosed and may leave this mount without the burden of the wood. Herein is a picture of the sinner, delivered from the burden of his sins and transgressions, justified freely. For him may be true what we read in Romans 8:1, "There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Isaac knows where that wood has gone, and such a sinner may know that Christ has carried all his sins away. How will God's people ever thank God for such a deliverance?

Provision

We read of this provision in verse 14, "And Abraham called the name of the place Jehovah-Jireh as it is said to this day, in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen." The word "provide" is a secondary meaning of the simple verb, "to see," as in 1 Samuel 16:1, "For I have provided me a king among his sons." God's provision is found to have been ready and waiting but is now revealed. Scripture speaks of another mount, Golgotha, where the Lamb of God, the only atoning sacrifice, is revealed. There it will become clear how an offended God and a righteous Judge can receive a sinner into His fellowship again.

Abraham had said to Isaac, "the Lord will provide," and now He had certainly provided in a manner that most

clearly displayed God's covenant faithfulness. In the stillness of eternity, there had been the question, "For who is this that engaged his heart to approach unto Me? saith the LORD." There was no creature that could pay the price and bear the wrath of a holy and righteous God and could atone for sinners. However, the holy Son of God answered, "Lo, I come, in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." God Himself found a solution. Now, without violating His justice, He could receive sinners and rebels back into His fellowship.

Isaac was set free because of God's provision. His whole life will testify of God's faithful care. He would not "die but live and declare the works of the LORD" (Psalm 118:17). In some respects, in this chapter, Isaac was a type of Christ, but for Christ there was no substitute like there was for Isaac. We see then, Isaac as a picture of God's Church. What a precious time of the ecclesiastical year it is when we may hear about His passion, His death, but also His resurrection. "Because I live, ye shall live also." Should this not lead to adoration and worshipping Him?

The purpose of all God's leadings, including the trials in which He brings the gold of His own work into the furnace, is His glory. He alone is worthy to receive the honor for His own work. That may lead us to the following questions: "Do we know the need for a substitute? Have we learned that all our money is of no value to pay our debts? Is there yet a way? Is there no way by which we may escape the punishment and be again received into favor?" Here, Christ is clearly displayed as One who said Himself, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life." May we, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, lose all grounds of hope for salvation outside of Him but find life in Him.

We read in Psalm 32:1, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." That is the work of the One greater than Isaac, the One who makes mourning sinners to laugh, which was the meaning of Isaac's name. It is true, the days of darkness are many in the life of true pilgrims, but when the Lord shows the divine Substitute, His gracious Provision, and faith may be brought into exercise, then they may embrace Him. They may rejoice in the Lord. Thomas could say, "My Lord and my God." Of this wonder of salvation we also read in Psalm 116:3, "The sorrows of death compassed me, the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow." Then the poet could also say, "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling." And further in this chapter, "I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord", and verse 16, "truly, I am Thy servant, O Lord; I am Thy servant, and the son of Thine handmaid; Thou has loosed my bonds." Therefore, one may pay his vows unto the Lord in the presence of all His people. There God's children will praise Him for His wondrous works manifested to them. ◻

(To be continued)



Reflections

Without Me, Ye Can Do Nothing

Rev. E. Venema (1922-2003)

(Translated from *Op het Aloude Kerkenpad* Uitgeverij/Boekhandel Gebr. Koster, Barneveld, the Netherlands Sept. 1999 ISBN 90-5551-140-4)

Rev. Venema in this book tells stories out of his official life in a form of a dialogue with his “friend” Jonathan.

When a person becomes older, he frequently lives in the past. Wonderful memories then usually drift to the top. I recall one of my teachers saying, “A person can make the past sound as nice as he wants it to be, for there is no one who can verify if it is the truth.” Even in those days there was strife, and also then disputes tore apart the peace in the church.

Yet, all things considered, it was different in those days. Just recall with me the history of Gideon. At the oak in Ophra, he had a surprising meeting. The Angel of the LORD called him to a very responsible task. He was called to deliver Israel out of the hand of their enemies. Then we hear Gideon’s complaint. “How can the Lord say that He is with His people?” It is frequently so different. The Lord has departed from His people. Then Gideon recalls for us the past: “Oh my Lord, if the LORD be with us, why then is all this befallen us? and where be all His miracles which our fathers told us of?” Is it not as if this complaint is a picture of our days? It seems as if the past has been crossed off, and mankind no longer wishes to speak about it for they say, undoubtedly there were issues in those days as well. We are now living in a different age. Happily, there remains a people who still think back upon the good old days.

That is how it is frequently with me also upon the ancient and time-honored church pathway. Most of the time I sit there alone under the tree. Then I feel myself lonesome and forgotten. In my journey through this life, I still have one friend beside me. If I would also have to lose him, then I would have nothing left here below. Certainly, I know very well that a person has to die to everything here upon earth. Joseph had to be forgotten, and Jacob was left behind alone, and when the Lord comes in our lives to take something away from us, then He frequently takes that which we love the most; David even had to lose his Jonathan.

Happily, I still have Jonathan as my friend. From time to time he comes to visit me, and his comfort has more than once been a blessing for me. I can understand that Paul was lovingly comforted with the coming of Tychicus. It is

in this manner that I sat mourning under the leafless tree on the old church path. Time and again I had to think along with Gideon about the past. I could no longer recognize the wonders of the past. “Oh, we will miss them so much.” Ah, how I miss those old people. I see so much confusion upon the path of the church—conversions which are not real, people speaking about things which they have not experienced. Even from the pulpit, at times, the doctrine of free grace is disparaged.

Suddenly I saw Jonathan coming in the distance. He also frequently thinks of the past, and then he often is homesick for those days. When he came to sit next to me, he said, “Tell me again something about the past, about what you have experienced.” For a moment it was quiet. Sometimes everything is so mixed up that I cannot reach it any more either. But in a moment, I remembered that woman from one of my congregations. She was unmarried, and for as long as I knew her, she was bedridden and helped by a girlfriend.

She suffered much pain, but as long as I visited her, she never complained. She did not even speak of her illness. As soon as I came there, from the first to the last the conversation was about her Beloved Surety in all of His beauty. I was privileged to often listen to her. She has been more to me than all of my teachers in school. She could speak of the matters in her life so simply. She had such a dependent life.

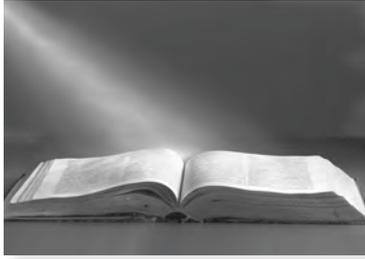
Together they had to live from the profits of a small grocery store. They were content with their lot. The woman herself kept the books of the business while lying in her bed. If you could only see how she had to do that. Her fingers had grown crooked because of her arthritis. She suffered much pain, but as long as I visited her, she never complained. She did not even speak of her illness. As soon as I came there, from the first to the last the conversation was about

her Beloved Surety in all of His beauty. I was privileged to often listen to her. She has been more to me than all of my teachers in school. She could speak of the matters in her life so simply. She had such a dependent life. She had to ask the Lord for the smallest token of His favor. She could not grasp the pencil in her hand if the Lord did not give her strength. She could not bring her glass of water to her mouth if the Lord did not help her. Rich were her exercises in “Without Me, ye can do nothing.”

With all of this she remained a poor person. I witnessed that when her end drew near. Oh, how poor she was and worn out. In her last days she stammered continuously about the depths wherein she lay. Oh, the fall in Adam was so deep. She herself lay so inexpressibly deep. It seemed as if all lights had been extinguished for her.

As a Mary Magdalene she stood weeping at the grave.

Happily, that was not all; just before her departure she could relate how precious Christ had become to her as her Surety. He had to bow so deeply for her personally to bring her up out of those depths. He had become her Surety not only by His birth but much more even in His conception. Full of emotion I said my farewell. I still have in my possession the card announcing her death which she had written herself—no, not having departed after a long patient suffering but carried by the faithfulness of the Lord.



Biblical Exegesis

The Angel of the LORD (5)

Rev. C. Hogchem, Aalburg, the Netherlands

The Angel of the Covenant

The Angel of the LORD is also called the Angel of the Covenant: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts" (Malachi 3:1).

In the Book of Malachi, The Angel of the LORD is spoken of in depth (Malachi 3:1-3). It is the last time that He is called Angel. In addition to that it is the only time that He is called the Angel of the Covenant. The question comes to the fore as to why the Holy Spirit has written it down in this manner specifically by Malachi, the last prophet in the Old Testament.

The people in darkness

Anxious days were approaching like a long dark night. God's remnant would be small and despised, and the enemy would show nothing but anger. In the meantime, the mouth of prophesy would be silent. It would be a time where it would appear that God had cast them away eternally, a time where it would appear that the promised Messiah would never come. From out of the depths there would be an advent people who would confess, "If Thou Lord shouldest mark iniquity, Oh, Lord, who shall stand?" and waveringly question, "Is His mercy clean gone forever? Doth His promise fail forevermore?" (Psalm 130:2; 77:8).

The Spirit shall then let His promises shine as a light in a dark place. Oh, poor and miserable people are you already determining that there will no longer be any help and deliverance? Even that the promised King shall never come? Just see what His name is, the Angel of the Covenant. No matter what may happen or whatever may testify

Jonathan sat next to me listening with rapt attention. He whispered, "One does not hear that so much anymore." We do meet rich people upon the church path, but poor souls are rarely found.

It has become quiet; yet, the Prince lives always, He lives eternally.

I had to hasten to say goodbye to Jonathan. I had to promise him that I would send his greetings to all of you, a traveler upon the old church path. □

against you, it is impossible that the Covenant of Peace shall waver or that the Messiah shall not come (Isaiah 54:10b). Therefore, though He tarry, wait patiently for Him. You desire Him and seek Him. Yet most of all, He desires you and shall find you. He comes, He comes, and He will not despise you.

In this way the name—the Angel of the Covenant—is revealed in the soul by the Spirit as the gospel. Then the hope is rekindled and in the night the song of faith is heard, "Jehovah's truth shall stand forever, His covenant bonds He will not sever."

The preparer of His way

The Angel of the Covenant is speaking Himself when He says, "Behold, I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me" (Malachi 3:1). With these words, John the Baptist is pointed out as His messenger or herald. He, says the promised King, shall go before Me. This Angel, the Angel of the Covenant, shall prepare a way for Me where there is no way (Isaiah 40:3; John 1:23). Gabriel, while standing close to the altar of incense, said that the messenger "would turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." And Zacharias his father prophesied, saying:

*Now be the God of Israel bless'd,
Who makes His truth appear;
His mighty hand fulfills His Word,
And all the oaths He sware.*

*Behold the morning Star arise,
Ye that in darkness sit!
He marks the path that leads to peace,
And guides our doubtful feet.*

The name, the Angel of the Covenant, preaches the Covenant of Grace. The Angel of the Covenant is the Head, Surety, and Mediator of the Covenant of Grace. The two parties in the Covenant of Grace are the holy, righteous God and the elect, but damnable in Adam are sinners.

Christ has come to stand where the Judge would stand. The sword of God's justice did not rest until it was bathed in Christ's most precious blood. Also, the Mediator has not rested until He had satisfied all of the demands of the covenant. Salvation is of God!

Christ is also the Mediator of application. "Behold" He says, "I will send My messenger, and he shall prepare the way before Me." Before He Himself comes, law and gospel will be glorified; first, room will be made for Him. By nature, what His children confess with shame and sorrow, is also true for us. "He hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him." With this they wish to say, "It has not come from our side, for we would not have paid any attention to such great salvation and have rejected Him all the days of our life." Oh, what a wonder it is that God Himself takes care that there is a people who desire Him, a people that learn to see Him as the highest Good. The treasures of the earth when compared with Him are nothing but dung. These people shall not be in rest until

they may know upon good grounds that He is their Saviour. It is through drawing love that they seek Him. They are desirous of salvation, tired, burdened, and assailed.

He comes to enlighten

Does the deferred hope make your heart sick? (Proverbs 13:12). Will it be the greatest wonder for you if He has a desire toward you, if He will seek you to make an eternal covenant with you—with you, a child of Adam lost, without any rights and empty? (Isaiah 55:3). Though the Lord tarry, He will surely come.

"See, He comes, says the Lord of hosts, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace" (Malachi 1:3; Luke 1:79).

*The wondrous works that God had wrought
His people ever keep in mind,
His works with grace and mercy fraught,
Revealing that the Lord is kind.*

*God's promise shall forever stand,
He cares for those who keep His Word;
Upon His saints His mighty hand
The wealth of nations has conferred. □*

(To be continued)



Church History

Selcart (30)

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

W.J.D. van Dijck

According to the custom of the times, after he was sentenced, Cors was permitted to be left alone to live out his days as if he lived in his own home. That is why he could direct Pastor Harmensz and his companions to leave by the same door which they used to enter his cell, which he did with dignity and authority. The spiritual leaders, seeing that all their efforts made no impression upon the heretic, finally left with anger in their heart. Rulers and subjects both great and small bowed down for these pompous priests but not our farmer from Naaldwijk and, along with him, many who had been delivered from the bondage of the Roman Catholic Church and who had, through Christ's meritorious suffering on the cross, received free access to the heart of the Father.

About six o'clock that evening, Cors was brought out of the cell where he had been kept in solitary confinement and brought to the room where those who had been condemned to death would spend their last night. With his

hands and feet bound with heavy chains, he was led to the room by Dries and his helper. He looked up at Brechtje, who was also present, with a smile full of meaning, letting her know that he was joyful in his God and looked forward to entering the joy that the Lord has prepared for them that fear Him. Deeply moved, the poor maidservant returned to the kitchen, and while she wiped away a tear, she sighed, "Ah, if he had only been willing, it is likely I would have been able to save him from the scaffold."

Coming into the room, Cors saw a cheerful fire of wood branches, for Dries and the helper had taken care that he would not suffer cold in the long December night. In the corner of the room there stood a camp bed which had a sufficient quantity of bed coverings while on the wall there hung a large cross.

When Cors had sat down upon the chair, the jailer asked him what he would like to eat and if he had any further requests which, if possible, he would fulfill promptly.

Cors requested some bread and wine, and if at all possible, he would like to have Rev. de Lier whom he had not seen for a number of weeks and also Klaas Cornelisz, the shoemaker from s'Gravenzande with whom he had shared his cell for the past several weeks, to spend a few hours of the night with him.

The first portion of Cors's request was immediately acted upon. The second part raised considerable objection. Although there were no rules or regulations in place for the jailer to follow, he would be responsible if he had the three men as well as two servants together in one room. Dries was not very happy about being alone with the condemned prisoner. Although it had happened before, he was always bothered by superstitions regarding these occasions, so he strongly recommended that the visit be allowed. There was undoubtedly a measure of sympathy for the condemned man, so soon the three friends brought together by true faith were in the same room. Cors and the shoemaker sat upon the bed, Rev. de Lier sat upon the chair, and Dries and his helper stood by the fire.

The meeting of Cors and Rev. de Lier was heartfelt as could be expected of men who stood ready to give their lives for the name of Jesus; there was something in them of the lives of the early Christians who, in the face of their martyr's death, increased in love and encouraged each other to remain faithful.

In addition to that, the presence of the Holy Spirit was noticeably present when the three condemned prisoners, weighed down by their chains, knelt and offered prayer for the king and his representative, the welfare of the nation, and the extension of God's kingdom. In the nightly hour the cell of the condemned prisoners became a sanctuary of

God where a sweet savor of their prayers and supplications rose up to heaven.

Even Dries who heard all this did not know how to react. He had already guarded many heretics, but he had never before experienced a gathering such as he now witnessed, and it made a deep impression upon him. It is no wonder, for it is written, "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." There, where the great King of His Church reveals Himself in all His love and majesty, where He causes His light to shine, the darkness must roll away, and the world shudders under the supremacy of those people that in such an hour become

as "terrible" as a battle array under the banner of their King.

As a means of diversion, Dries and his helper began to play cards. "The heretics will amuse themselves," was his mocking retort, but their card playing aroused no interest. Against their will they were struck by the actions and words of the three men. They watched Rev. de Lier break the bread which had been meant for Cors's evening meal, and the servant of the Lord poured the

wine into the tin cup, and for the first time the keepers of the prisoners heard the words spoken by Jesus when He instituted the Holy Supper.

Whether the impressions upon the two men were of a lasting and saving nature we do not know. One thing is certain, it will either have been a savor of life unto life or of death unto death. Our pen is too feeble to adequately describe the gathering of the three brethren. We can only say that the blessed presence of Christ in the cell of that jail made it as Bethel so that they could say with Jacob, "Surely the LORD is in this place; this is none other but the house of God." □

(To be continued)

...the presence of the Holy Spirit was noticeably present when the three condemned prisoners, weighed down by their chains, knelt and offered prayer for the king and his representative, the welfare of the nation, and the extension of God's kingdom. In the nightly hour the cell of the condemned prisoners became a sanctuary of God where a sweet savor of their prayers and supplications rose up to heaven.

The whole life of a Christian should be nothing but praise and thanks to God. We should neither eat nor sleep but eat to God, sleep to God, work to God, and do all to His glory and praise.

— Richard Sibbes



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

What is the meaning of “the bridge has been pulled up?”

A bridge usually connects two areas separated by, let's say, a valley or a river. In order for ships to pass through waterways, sometimes the bridge has a mobile part which can be lifted up. I still remember as a youth when I lived in the Netherlands that close to our home the bridge over the canal was lifted *manually* by two “bridge-men” (*brugwachter*, in Dutch). By hand they turned and turned the lever over and over until...“the bridge was pulled up.” Today this is done mechanically, sometimes controlled by just one person at a distance, managing several bridges.

The meaning of the saying, “the bridge pulled up” is a typical “Dutchism” as we call statements or sayings which are derived from the Dutch language, and we try to make something English-sounding out of them. It's fine to do so, but when they refer to something spiritual, we better know what is meant. It is understandable that especially young people who have no connection with Holland anymore sometimes wonder what such expressions mean. As ministers we certainly may use them because they often point in one sentence to a spiritual matter which otherwise perhaps might take a long time to explain. Still, we must be alert to the fact that especially in congregations where our Dutch heritage has become something buried deeper in the past that many hearers have no inkling what is meant. Then it is better to explain the saying or refer to an English equivalent. Of course, the English language has a wealth of such type of sayings as well.

What usually is meant by “the bridge pulled up” is its reference to the *world*. Remember, there is a bridge that, by nature, connects our heart to the world, meaning the things of the world—its pleasures, its joys, its vanities, and yes...its emptiness. Remember, it is this world, mentioned in Matthew 13:22 that chokes the Word. In 1 John 2:15-17 the Apostle John exhorts us not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world because the world passes

away, and the lust thereof. “*But he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*” Now, “the bridge pulled up” refers to doing the will of God versus loving the world. When the Lord by His Spirit works in the heart of a sinner, the love for the world is changed to the love for God and all His commandments. It refers to the principle of new obedience, new desires, and new outgoings of the heart, worked by the Lord.

Dear friends, has the bridge to the world already been pulled up or does the world glow for us and have our full attention? Are we walking to and fro and halting between two opinions? The Bible clearly exhorts us not to love the world, neither the things that are in the world. “*If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*” (1 John 2:15b).

Does this mean that the world has no more influence in the heart and life of God's children even “after the bridge has been pulled up?” Far from it! Repeatedly, they find themselves cleaving to the dust, and in their own heart and thoughts they meet more world than godliness. Their life is often so far removed from what Paul writes in Philippians 3:20 “*for our conversation is in heaven.*” Despite all this, if you would ask such souls if they would want to go back to the world and enjoy its pleasures as in the past, they would answer, “No, because ‘the bridge has been pulled up.’”

This means: *that* road is closed! It shows something of the “sincere joy of heart in God, through Christ, and with love and delight to live according to the will of God in all good works” (Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 33). May that life where “a bridge has been pulled up” be more visible today in the Church and be more in exercise in secret and in public. Perhaps our young people also would become more jealous to walk in the way that is so pleasing in the Lord's eyes. □

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

That God should pass by wise and noble persons, of sweeter disposition, better talents, guilty of less vice, and that the lot of free grace should fall upon you—oh, astonishing love of God!

—Thomas Watson



From Other Publications

Like as a Father...Father's Day 2019

Rev. G.J. Van Aalst, Klaaswaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

Oh, how many dealings he has already had with his son. No matter what the father did or said it was never any good. His son wanted to be free. He did not want the eyes of his father to see, he did not want to listen to the words of his father, he did not want the oppression in the house of his father. It was all much too distressing. When I am the boss, when I can do what pleases me, only then will I be truly happy; to do my own pleasure, to do what I want, to go my own way—that is the life. “Yes, but my boy, that is digging your own grave!” He no longer could nor wanted to listen to such talk. All that somber business. With such a father, for whom the world is strange, how can one enjoy life?

Departing

As soon as he would have the opportunity, he wanted to leave, to go out into the wide world which has such an attraction. First, he made his demands. “Father, where is my inheritance? I do have a right to that, for I am your child.” You must have some nerve to demand everything from your father with whom you share a common bloodline and then to have the firm intention to spend it all—to live only for yourself and your own pleasure. He does not feel that he is stepping on the heart of his father, for he sees things differently. He is busy taking care of himself, to establish a healthy self-dependence, that is, a healthy self-reliance. It is noticeable that the father is silent, gives him what he wants, and lets him go. A quiet, observing father remains behind with a wounded heart.

Forgetting

A quiet time follows in the house of the father, a time of...what do you think? His boy has traveled to a far away country, far from the heart and home of the father. Daily, the son spends his time in complete estrangement of everything which he has received at home. There, far away, there are no limits. There, one does what one feels like doing. It is like paradise upon earth. What a difference from that fault-finding, narrow-mindedness of the past. It is wonderful to be able to enlarge one's young heart. This is the life, for ultimately, we only live once.

Contrary to a long period of quiet in the house of the father, there is an awesome time in that far away land. After demanding the goods, there follows the going away, and after the squandering of his goods, there follows the staying away. For even when his goods become less and he has to do with less, he will never go back, no matter what happens. He has slammed the door of the house of his father shut with the firm intention never to return even when things

become more difficult, when he comes to be alone and begins to suffer want. Friends and girlfriends in that far away land are happy to help him squander his goods, but then they leave him over to himself, for they are not faithful friends. They only want to be part of the fun but not anything else.

The word “father” no longer passes over his lips. It is only at the swine's trough when he is miserable and perishing from hunger, not even allowed to eat the swine's food, that a certain end comes to that glorious free life of enjoyment without a father. What is it that his father had said? “My boy, that life of sin is to dig your own grave.” The words spoken in the house of the father do appear to be true.

Forgiveness

So far away, so immersed in misery, so much sin and guilt—all that makes going back impossible. How would that be possible when one is so malnourished and so weak, and that long journey on foot? To go back is impossible; yet he goes. To go back is such an incomprehensible wonder—he goes back and even reaches the house of his father, that swine herder in his weakness and stinking rags, his totally dreadful condition. What awaits him at the house of his father? A high fence with barbed wire? Dogs which are sent out to chase him? Servants who tell him to go to the neighbors? A father who first wishes to have an extensive conversation about what has happened in the past? A father who demands that he must first...?

What awaits him he could never have imagined—a father who has been on the lookout for a long time already; a father who has never dismissed his son from his heart, no matter how severely he has stepped upon it; a father who quickly leaves his home and property to go and meet his boy; a father who embraces him and kisses him; a father who does not let him finish confessing how greatly he has sinned. He is no longer allowed to say, “Make me as one of thy hired servants.”

The Father's Son and good pleasure

The words of man are too poor to describe this Father's love, but God's only-begotten Son knows the heart of the Father as no one else does. With this parable, Christ is saying in Luke 15, starting with verse 11: That is now My Father. I know Him perfectly. Those of you who have run away have completely wrong thoughts of Him. I am showing you the way back to the house of the Father. I prepare the way, I even am the Way, so that the Father's good pleasure may be accomplished in and through Me; so that the true

conversion may be accomplished in and through My Spirit, also in the lives of lost fathers (and sons) who have sinned it all away. When fathers and mothers may learn this Father's love experientially, then lost sons and daughters

caught up in the rebellious routines of every day shall recognize it. The blessing of this Father's love appears to be forgiving and renewing. It can be seen in the fruits. □



Biblical Lifestyle

Rest

Rev. F. Mulder, Rhenen, the Netherlands

“Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry” (Luke 12:19).

At this time of year, we often hear that people need a break from their hard work. They need a vacation to rest and relax. Many people seek rest, which is understandable considering the stressful time in which we live. The cares of daily life (things which we are allowed to do or must do) absorb most of our time. Even during the night, some are still “busy” with their work.

In our text we read of a man who wanted rest. He was blessed with a great harvest and did not know where to store it all. His existing barns were too small to hold everything. He contemplated on what to do to remedy the situation and decided on two things. First, he was going to tear down the old barns and build much larger barns. Second, he was going to rest. He had so much that he could sell some each year and live from the income. While taking a long rest he would eat, drink, and be merry. He would be relieved from all of his stressful worries for many years. It is true that when one must make a very important decision in life, he should not do it rashly. Jesus mentioned in Luke 14:28, *“For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?”* There is nothing wrong with building a larger warehouse when circumstances require it.

Yet, God called the man in our text a fool who thought he would decide when he would rest. God decided when and how long that the man would use the goods given to him from God's hand. In fact, he never got to see any prosperity. He never even started building those barns because, in the next night, God took his soul, and he had to cross over the river of death all alone. The multitude of his goods could not help him when he had to give an account before God.

By now, many people have already made vacation plans. Like the builder of the tower in Luke 14 they have calculated the cost. The vacation would be expensive, but they could just afford it. They planned to go for a week or two of rest with some eating, drinking, and having fun. It would not

be in excess, but they hoped to use this time to “recharge their batteries.” If the trip is to a place somewhat farther away where no one knows them, they can live a little different from the way they normally do. When they go to God's house, they wear their street clothes. Reading the Bible and morning and evening prayers are often conducted more casually in a different environment. Prayers before or after meals in restaurants are often hasty or forgotten.

Reader, if you can relate to some of the things listed above, remember that God said to the man in the parable, “Thou fool.” This does not mean that you are not allowed to take a vacation to rest. However, even on your vacation you show the world what is most important in your life.

There are also parents who are concerned about their teenaged children going on vacation with a group because they fear that their children will want to try to be like other teenagers. Sadly, parents cannot be everywhere, especially in our days. The man in this parable did not seek God when he conceived his plan. “He thought within himself...” (verse 17) and the fruit of it was a sudden death.

Dear readers, both young and old, I sincerely hope you will take the above message to heart. At any moment, no matter where we are, we may be summoned before the judgment seat of Christ so that we may receive the things in our body, according to what we have done whether it be good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). We will carry away nothing good. This is different only if we have received life-renewing grace. If anyone carries away anything good, it is only because of the work of Zion's King who came from heaven for evil ones, wicked ones, harlots, and publicans. Jesus paid their debt and satisfied God's justice. Only through Jesus' works and merits is it possible to have any “good work” in man. Jesus initiated this good work, and He will also finish it.

By grace, knowledge of this good work in our life will give us rest during vacation weeks, either away or at home. Then there will not be a desire to “eat, drink, and be merry.” Our desire will be for quietness and undisturbed communion with God.



Current Events

Points to Ponder—A Legacy of Sin and Shame

It was recently noted that in the past forty-six years, **sixty million abortions** have taken place around the globe. The numbers are staggering, and in many places the church has remained silent, oblivious to the genocide that is taking place in our communities. There appears to be some evidence that the tide is shifting among believers and non-believers who are becoming aware of the atrocities of abortion. May the Lord graciously remember us and our leaders and grant that we may come to see the wickedness in both the performing and perpetuating of this sinful practice.

The continued marginalization of Christianity is increasing exponentially. A recent claim by Rep. Ilhan Omar, a congresswoman from Minnesota, repeated the statement which has been promulgated by Palestinian activists and Muslim leaders that Jesus was not a Jew but a Palestinian. This story was quickly published as fact by the *New York Times*. It was subsequently retracted but only after an article by Michel Brown of *Townhall* showed the fallacy of this claim. It is well known that the term Palestinian was not used until one hundred years after Jesus' death and resurrection and was used by the Romans to mock the Jews.

* * * * *

The recent increase in the number of cases of measles which have been diagnosed this year in the United States has led to more than one hundred bills being introduced in thirty states to expand, restrict, or eliminate vaccine informed consent rights. The future may prove to make it more difficult for those who have conscientious objections to vaccination to exercise their biblically-based beliefs.

—*NVIC Vaccine News*

Persecution against believers in China was front and center as the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom released its 20th annual report. "They go after anybody of any faith that might compete with the communist, atheistic government of China.... It is deeply disturbing to see that... China is an expanding power—a country getting more and more powerful by the year. To have a country with these ideas and this degree of persecution ought to be something that scares everyone." Chinese authorities closed or raided hundreds of Protestant house churches in 2018 and continue to do so in 2019. Other religions are persecuted, too, Muslim and Buddhists included. With the U.S. and China on the cusp of a major trade deal, religious freedom and related human rights diplomacy should be integrated into the ongoing trade negotiations.

—*ChristianPost.com*

Christians in Burkina Faso are mourning a deadly attack on a Protestant church as "a new turning point in terrorism" in the West African nation. The church was one of the oldest Protestant congregations in the region, which borders Mali to the north. After two hundred attacks

over the past three years, the government considers Sunday's shooting to be the first at a house of worship, a sign that the violence could be shifting from indiscriminate to targeted attacks. Burkina Faso is about 60 percent Muslim and approximately 25 percent Christian (around 20 percent Catholic and 5 percent Protestant). The country, where peaceful coexistence between the different religions has always been the bedrock of social cohesion, has faced a growing threat of terrorist violence ever since 2016 when al-Qaeda affiliates took hostages and went on a shooting spree in the capital city of Ouagadougou.

—*ChristianityToday.com*

Two religious congregations, about twelve miles apart—one Jewish and the other Christian—were bound by tragedy in April. One was a synagogue ripped apart by gunfire; the other was a church where the suspected shooter's family regularly attended. Both groups shared an overwhelming sense of grief as worshippers grappled to make sense of the senseless. The shooter, from a Christian family, proves that terrorism is not practiced only by Muslim extremists. These shootings also show the role modern media and technology play in motivating such persons who carry out these terrorist acts. The suspect, in a manifesto he published before the crime, did not blame his Christian family for his radicalization, saying it was based on writings he encountered online.

—*USAToday.com*

The Easter bombings, where three Christian churches in Sri Lanka and three luxury hotels were targeted, were a series of coordinated terrorist suicide bombings. The teaching director of "Youth for Christ" in a Sri Lanka church wrote a response to these terrorist Easter Bombings. "Whenever a tragedy hits a nation, Christians need to ask how to think biblically in response to the situation." He posits six necessary responses: 1) Lament Loss, 2) Condemn Evil, 3) Alleviate Suffering, 4) Leave Vengeance to the Lord, 5) Don't Bear False Witness, and 6) Pray.

—*ChristianityToday.com*

"We will answer to the good Lord one day—for unborn babies," declared Mississippi governor Phil Bryant as he signed a bill outlawing abortions once a fetal heartbeat can be detected, which is about six weeks into a pregnancy. In signing one of the strictest laws regulating abortion, the governor stated that he anticipates legal challenges to the legislation. He is hopeful, however, it will get to the Supreme Court and that they will uphold this bill.

—*AP News*

The Trump administration issued a new rule on Thursday, May 2, 2019, granting health care workers leeway to refuse to provide services like abortion, sterilization, or assisted suicide, if they cite a religious or conscientious objection. The rule issued by the Department of Health and Human Services is designed to protect the religious rights of health care providers and religious institutions.

—*NPR.org*

Conformity to Christ is the best cure of conformity to the world.

— *Augustus Toplady*



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

A Search for the Blood of Atonement

Taken from *The Friendly Companion* and *The Free Presbyterian Magazine* (Scotland)

In the spring of 1898, a gospel address was given by a minister in San Francisco, California, to a “Mission to Israel.” Afterward an old Jew spoke to his Jewish brethren who were present at the meeting. The minister found those remarks so interesting that he wrote them down in his own words, as nearly as he could remember them, which were as follows:

“This is Passover week among you, my Jewish brethren, and as I sit here, I was thinking of how you will be observing it. You will have put away leaven from your houses, and you will eat the matzah (unleavened wafers) and the roasted lamb. You will attend the synagogue services and carry out the rituals and directions of the Talmud. You forget, my brethren, that you have everything but that which Jehovah required first of all. God did not say, ‘When I see the leaven put away, or when I see you eat matzah or the lamb or go to the synagogue.’ His Word was, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over you’ (Exodus 12:13). Ah, my brethren, you can substitute nothing for this. You must have blood, blood, blood.

“Blood—that is an awful word for one who reveres the ancient oracle and yet has no sacrifice. Turn where you will in the Book, the blood meets you, but seek as you may, you cannot find it in Judaism of the present.”

After a moment’s pause, the patriarchal man went on somewhat as follows: “I was born in Palestine nearly seventy years ago. As a child I was taught to read the law, the psalms, and the prophets. Early on, I attended the synagogue and learned Hebrew from the rabbis. At first, I believed what I was told, that ours was the true and only religion, but as I grew older and studied the law more intently, I was struck by the place that the blood had in all the ceremonies outlined there, and I was equally struck by its utter absence in the ritual to which I was brought up.

“Again and again, I read Exodus 12 and Leviticus 16 and 17. The latter chapters, especially, made me

tremble as I thought on the great Day of Atonement and the place the blood had there. Day and night one verse would ring in my ears, ‘It is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul’ (Leviticus 17:11). I knew I had broken the law, and I needed an atonement. Year after year, on that day, I beat my breast as I confessed my need of it, but it was to be made by blood, and there was no blood.

“In my distress, at last I opened my heart to a learned and venerable rabbi. He told me that God was angry with His people. Jerusalem was in the hands of Gentiles, the temple was destroyed, and a Mohammedan mosque was reared up in its place. The only spot on earth where we dare to shed the blood of sacrifice in accordance with Deuteronomy 12 and Leviticus 17 was desecrated, and our nation was scattered. That is why there was no blood. God Himself had closed the way to carry out the solemn service of the great Day of Atonement. Now we must turn to the Talmud and rest on its instruction and trust the mercy of God and the merits of the fathers.

“I tried to be satisfied, but I could not. Something seemed to say that the law was unaltered even though our temple was destroyed. Nothing else but blood could atone for the soul. We dared not shed blood for atonement other than in the place the Lord had chosen. Then we were left without an atonement at all.

“This thought filled me with horror. In my distress, I consulted many other rabbis. I had but one great question: where can I find the blood of atonement?

“I was over thirty years of age when I left Palestine and came to Constantinople with my still unanswered question ever before my mind, and my soul was exceedingly troubled about my sins.

“One night, I was walking down a narrow street of that city when I saw a sign telling of a meeting for Jews. Curiosity led me to open the door and go in. Just as I took a seat, I heard a man say, ‘The blood

of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin' (1 John 1:7). It was my first introduction to Christianity, but I listened breathlessly as the speaker told how God had declared that *'without shedding of blood is no remission'* (Hebrews 9:22); he said that God had given His only begotten Son, the Lamb of God, to die, and those who trusted in His blood were forgiven of all their iniquities. This was the Messiah of Isaiah 53; this was the Sufferer of Psalm 22. Ah, my brethren, I had found the blood of atonement at last. I trusted

in it, and now I love to read the New Testament and see how all the shadows of the law are fulfilled in Jesus. His blood has been shed for sinners. It has satisfied God, and it is the only means of salvation for either Jew or Gentile."

Reader, have you found the blood of atonement? *"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world"* (John 1:29). Are you trusting in God's smitten Lamb—the sacrifice of God?



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Job, a Man who Loved God (2)

(Job 2)

Perhaps you wonder, "Did God take away all of Job's animals and his children? Why would God do that if He loved Job?"

The Lord did not make the terrible things happened to Job but did permit them to occur. They were the work of Satan. Do you remember who Satan is? Satan is the devil. Satan hates God, and because he hates God, he also hates God's people. Satan tries to get us to do bad things also. God has given us something called a conscience. It is a little voice inside of us which warns us when we are going to do something wrong. Always listen to your conscience, and ask God if He will help you not to sin against Him.

Why do you think Satan did these things to Job? I will try to tell you why. One day Satan had said to God, "Job is such a good man, but he loves Thee only because Thou art always good to him. If you will cause him trouble, for example by taking away all of his animals, he would curse Thee and say bad things about Thee." Although God did not permit Satan to hurt Job himself, He did allow him to do terrible things to Job. He took away his camels, his sheep, and oxen. He even took away Job's children. Did Job curse God after all this sorrow? No, he actually blessed God, for he said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord took away, Blessed be the name of the Lord."

Satan was not happy about this. He said to God, "If Thou would let me touch his body so that he is in pain all the time, he will certainly curse Thee." The Lord said that He would allow Satan to hurt Job in his body, but he was not allowed to take his life; he could not kill him. When you read this, you will

see how much power Satan can have. He is much stronger than we are, and we need to pray to the Lord every day that He will keep us from evil and from the evil one, that is, Satan.

What did Satan now do to Job? He caused Job to get boils over his entire body. Boils are sores filled with pus, and they cause severe itching and pain. Can you imagine how awful it would be if this happened to you? Poor Job. The Bible tells us that he sat and scraped himself with a broken piece of pottery. Job now did not have much to be happy about because even his wife told him to curse God for all of his troubles. Is that what Job did? No, the Bible tells us that in all of these troubles Job did not sin with his lips or charge God foolishly.

Then three friends came to visit Job and to comfort him. Did they treat Job kindly? No, they told him that he must have done something bad to cause God to punish him in this way. The only thing Job did was to curse the day of his birth, but he would not say anything bad about God. It was not right for Job to curse the day he was born, but he would not curse God. Then God spoke to Job, and also to his friends. God told his friends to give him gifts, and the Lord gave Job twice as much as he had before his troubles began. God also gave him seven sons and three daughters.

What would we do if all of these terrible things happened to us? Would we praise God, or would we complain? The Lord sometimes sends us troubles so that we will seek Him. Always remember that.



Bible Quiz

Left Alone

Dear Boys and Girls,

Tyler shoved his book bag into a corner of the mudroom and scrunched himself into the window seat that looked out over the pasture, trying to make himself as small as possible. He didn't want anyone to bother him. He'd rather disappear than have his sisters notice that he had been crying, and he didn't want his brothers to ask him to play. He clenched his jaw and balled his fist inside his pocket. If only he had fought back. If only he had used that fist and socked Michael with it. Instead, he had been afraid when Michael threatened him at school, and he was angry with himself. Michael was just so much bigger and taller. Tyler knew that if his older brother Bryce had known Michael punched his little brother, he would have walloped Michael. Tyler sighed. Why couldn't he take care of his own problems? He looked at his skinny arm. "I'm puny," he thought. Then he straightened his shoulders as he rubbed away a last stray tear. "But I'm a whole lot smarter than Michael, anyway." His mind spun with hateful and revengeful thoughts. "Just wait, Michael," he muttered. "I'm going to knock your teeth out—tomorrow!"

Just then, Mom came into the mudroom. She picked up a pair of stray boots and set them side by side, then placed a cap on the shelf and looked around searchingly. Her eyes lit up when she saw Tyler in the window seat. "Ah," she exclaimed, "there you are!" She cupped his chin into her hand and looked into his eyes. "What's wrong, Tyler?"

Tyler squirmed backward, but he could not move any farther. He looked down. "Just leave me alone," he muttered. He didn't want to be pulled out of his angry and revengeful thoughts.

Mom looked surprised. "What did you say?"

Tyler threw up his hands and swung himself out of the seat. "Leave me alone!" he growled as he stomped away.

Perhaps you have said this at some point, boys and girls. "*Leave me alone!*"

Imagine little Ava, who doesn't want to get up from her nap. "No, no, let me stay!"

Imagine Eric, whose little brother won't stop pestering him to play. "Go away!"

Imagine teenager Carla, who snaps at her dad when he asks her with a twinkle in his eye how she's doing. "Just leave me alone!"

Even grown-ups sometimes say it. Perhaps Tom, a young father, has had a very long and stressful day at work, or Karen, a busy mother, is exhausted. They might say, "Can you just leave me be for a few minutes while I catch my breath? Now is not a good time."

Here is a question, though, which perhaps none of us have thought about. What if any of these people were really left alone? What if everyone they know and all those they love *truly* went away? I think we would soon discover they would be even sadder than before. If no one ever asked them anymore how they felt or what was wrong, it would not help their mood. If they never felt little hands tugging at them anymore, or had loving arms hug them, or heard someone begging for their time and company, they would not become happier staying in their own misery.

It would not make us any happier, yet we all continuously beg to be left alone. We are actually asking for a horrible thing. All of us tell the Lord that we want Him to let us be. We do that when we hear His warnings in church that we are sinners, but we don't let it bother us. We do that when He tells us in His Word that there is a way to be saved, but we turn away because we don't want our life to be any different from what it is. We do that when we are willing to try to do some things right and serve God a little bit but not with all of our heart. The rest of our heart we want to keep available for our own pleasure. We would rather that the sermons don't come too close to us and make us too uncomfortable because we want to be happy the way we are. Maybe we have serious thoughts sometimes, but we plan to pray diligently when we are older.

What are we actually asking? Would we actually be happy if God did leave us alone? What if God took His presence and blessing away when we are in church? What if He no longer called to us? What if He no longer took care of each one of us? Not one of us would find happiness or safety that way. What a mercy it is if God has not yet left us alone. It is really a wonder if He still calls out to us in sermons, Bible stories, catechism classes, and more, saying, "You cannot die as you are born."

If God did leave us alone, we would always leave Him alone—we would never begin to seek Him, love Him, and beg Him to have mercy. Perhaps we would have an easy life; that is possible. Maybe we would

have few troubles, but...our life would only meet a terrible, terrible end—an end which is, really, only a beginning. At the end of our life we stand before an eternity which never ends, and we will not be able to say, “Let me alone,” when God asks what we have done with our life.

Pharaoh did so. Nine times, he was warned seriously with plagues. Four times, he tried to make agreements with the Lord. He said to the Israelites, “Go ahead then, leave, but you have to leave your little ones and cattle here...” He wanted to stay in control. He did not want to give up and bow before God. Finally, he said to Moses, “Let me be. Don’t bother me again.” This met with a terrible end, didn’t it? Pharaoh, indeed, did not see Moses anymore, but he perished and had to come before God as an angry Judge.

“Let me be...” “Leave me alone...” In the Bible it is called “hardening your heart.” Even if you feel that your heart is not willing, ask the Lord to *make* it willing to listen. He has the power to do so.

“Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power”
(Psalm 110:3)

* * * * *

1. Can you name the ten plagues which God sent upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians as warnings? _____

2. Place these events in order in the order in which they happened.

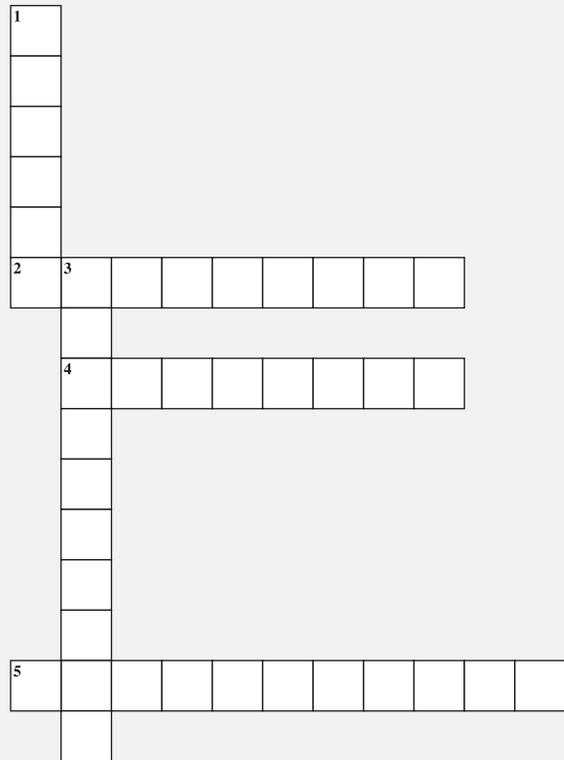
1. ___ 2. ___ 3. ___ 4. ___

- A. “And Pharaoh said unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face thou shalt die. And Moses said, Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more.”
- B. “But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said.”
- C. “And Pharaoh’s servants said unto him, How long shall this man be a snare unto us? let the men go, that they may serve the LORD their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?”
- D. “And Pharaoh hardened his heart at this time also, neither would he let the people go.”

3. In Exodus 14:14, we read a clear example of how God’s presence gives joy. It says, “The LORD shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace.” Read the rest of the chapter, and in your own words, explain HOW the Lord helped and saved His chosen nation of Israel. _____

For the Older Children

4. Complete the crossword puzzle.



Across

2. (2 Chronicles) “And he also rebelled against king Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him swear by God: but he _____ his neck, and hardened his heart from turning unto the LORD God of Israel.”

4. (Proverbs 28) “Happy is the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into _____.”

5. (1 Samuel) “Wherefore then do ye harden your hearts, as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? when he had wrought _____ among them, did they not let the people go, and they departed?”

Down

1. (Mark) “For they considered not the miracle of the _____: for their heart was hardened.”

3. (Psalm 95) “Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of _____ in the wilderness.”



Letters to My Young Readers

Welcome to our new members:

Kaylynn Ekema, Sawyer Dob, Renae Vandenberg, Thomas Brouwer, Sierra Post, and Elijah, Emily, & Noah Cutajar.

Please send me your mailing address: Malachi Groeneweg, Nicholas Ymker, Tonia Wisse, Kairen & Konner van Middendorp, Sharon & Rachel Veldhuizen, and Serina Klyn. Thanks so much.

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth



Jenina Blom

I love your letter and picture, Jenina. I'm glad you liked the welcome envelope. I'm happy your mom helped you do the puzzle; you did very well. Thank you for the text you wrote down for me. That is a beautiful verse. I hope you remember to pray every morning and every night.

Heidi Ymker

Thanks for your note, Heidi. It is good that you live in the country. Up till three years ago we lived in a town. Now we have a house and barnyard in the woods with just a few neighbors. Yes, I like it! Do you enjoy living in the country?

Heidi Van Den Top

Thanks for your letter, Heidi. I really like receiving mail. It is not too much at all. Are you enjoying the summer weather? To see the green leaves again and hear the chickens cackling busily outdoors is pleasant. Can you think of some texts which contain the word "seek"? It is an important question to remember: for what do we seek in our life? I hope to hear from you again.

Dear Boys and Girls,

We would like to tell you about a new idea we are planning. In place of our previous incentive idea, we will now begin to save up for Bibles.

"Bibles?" you might ask. "Don't we all have so many of those—perhaps one in every room, or at least one in the kitchen and one by our bed?" However, these Bibles will not be for YOU. Do you know that not everyone has a Bible? Do you know that there are children who are so poor that they cannot buy one, children in countries where Bibles are hard to find, and children who have never even heard of a Bible? Some people don't even have a Bible in their own language, so I thought, "Maybe our *Banner* children would like to help." Perhaps, they would like to work towards buying Bibles for poor children. We have so much, don't we, boys and girls? Think how wonderful it would be if you could light up the face of a child far away—a family will receive a Bible, and that will bring God's precious and holy Word into their home! Will you help?

Here is what we will do: if you do the quiz and send it to me, for a certain amount of time (to be determined), we will send a Bible to a needy family. You will be able to see your progress—each month I will try to put the number of quizzes completed behind your name. As you will notice, several of you have already begun saving up last month. From time to time, I will let you all know how many Bibles we have sent. Together, we may be able to send quite a few. Wouldn't that be wonderful?

As a little bonus, I hope to randomly select six children once a year who will receive a voucher in the mail. You can send this voucher to Bible Truth Books (or take it to your church book room if they are willing to participate) in order to choose and receive a book to keep.

I would like to thank all of you for your hard work. I hope you and I have learned something while doing the quizzes. Over the months, 147 children were given coloring books, 118 children were given Timothy slider puzzles, and 161 children were given a book to read. A special commendation goes to Anabelle and William Berkenbush, Courtney and Lindsey Knibbe, and Rebecca and Sara Krygsman for completing 45-47 quizzes. Several others also had completed 43-44.

Good job.

Now, what about those who are new and just beginning the quizzes for the first time? **THEY WILL STILL RECEIVE A WELCOME ENVELOPE.** I hope to hear from you all again next month—I look forward to beginning this endeavor with you. May we all realize through this effort how precious God's Word is!

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth

P.S. More specific details will follow once the plan is worked out and in place.



News & Announcements

Church News

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Extended:

To Rev. C. van Ruitenburch of Krimpen a/d IJssel, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Markham, Ontario.

To Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, by the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

Declined:

By Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

By Rev. C. van Ruitenburch of Krimpen a/d IJssel, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Markham, Ontario.

By Rev. A.T. Vergunst of Waupun, Wisconsin, to the congregations of Moerkapelle and Bodegraven, the Netherlands.

Obituaries

BEEKE, Jane Anne (nee Powers) – Age 66, April 21, 2019; Kalamazoo, Michigan; Husband – Thomas; Mother – Maggie Powers; Sister – Mary Jo & Craig Riddle; In-laws – Chris & Karen Beeke, Mary Ann & Joe Reno; predeceased by father Duane Powers. (Rev. H. Hofman, Luke 7:11-17.)

FLUIT, Elizabeth (nee Van Hofwegen) – Age 84, May 5, 2019; Bellingham, Washington; Husband – Teunis (deceased); Children – Harriet & Henry Kattenberg, Charlotte & Scott Pitman, Teunis & Joanie Fluit, Henry & Amy Fluit, Patrick & Paula Fluit; 21 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren; Brothers – Adrian, Case & Alberthan, Dick & Mary, Arie, John & Jessie, Herman & Joan, Bob & Dolores, Martin & Bernice, Carl & Joyce; Sister-in-law – Traci Van Hofwegen. (Rev. P. van Ruitenburch, 2 Corinthians 7:9.)

GOUD, Christiaan Bernardus – Age 75, April 25, 2019; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Johanna; Children – Judith & John Verhey, Christine & Derrick de Bruin, Gerdien & Chris Bolle; 13 grandchildren; survived by a sister, brothers, sisters- and brothers-in-law; predeceased by an infant granddaughter, a sister, and 5 brothers. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Psalm 38:9.)

MANS, Johannes – Age 88, April 24, 2019; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Huibertje; Children – Andries & Coby Mans, Anneke & Henk Van Ginkle, Arjan & Joanne Mans, Joost & Caroline Mans, Henk & Rita Mans, Toos & Harry Vandenberg, Els & Ed Van Hierden;

Sister – E. Van Essen; 39 grandchildren, and 63 great-grandchildren; predeceased by brother and numerous brother- and sister-in-laws. (Rev. E.C. Adams, John 20:31.)

OVERBEEK, Brandon Jacob – Age 3-1/2, May 5, 2019; Norwich, Ontario; Parents – Len & Melissa Overbeek; Siblings – Johnathan, Tyler & Jenny, Shawn, Nicole, Ryan, Nathan; Grandparents – Joanne & John (deceased) Overbeek, Peter & Theresa Barendrecht; Great-grandmothers – Anna Barendrecht and Heather Hampson; predeceased by brother Kevin Overbeek. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Psalm 62:1.)

SLINGERLAND, Monika (nee Reker) – Age 65, May 4, 2019; Grimsby, Ontario; Husband – Gary; Children – Brandon & Jackie Slingerland, Glen & Rebecca Slingerland, Kevin & Kelly Slingerland, Daniel Slingerland & Jessica Acs; 14 grandchildren; Brother – Gunther & Dorothy Reker; Sister – Gerda & Don Buetow; In-laws – Ralph & Elsie Slingerland, Roger & Linda Slingerland, Tina Bruinekool & Jack Sroka, Ria & Kees Vant'wel, and Hilda & Jim Overbeek. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Isaiah 59:1.)

New Congregation— Nobleford, Alberta, Canada

With gratitude to the Lord, the consistory of Picture Butte wishes to announce that the building dedication and institution of the new congregation in Nobleford, Alberta, will take place on Thursday, August 15, 2019. There will be two separate services: the dedication at 1:30 P.M. and institution at 7:00 P.M., D.V. Rev. E.C. Adams hopes to lead both services. All are invited to attend this special day. Persons desiring accommodations may contact Deacon Gerard de Leeuw at 403-824-3434 or gerarddl0034@gmail.com, or Deacon Marco de Wilde at 403-824-3034 or dewildemarco@outlook.com.

Installation and Inaugural Services for Rev. E.C. Adams

The consistory of Picture Butte announces with gladness that the Lord has inclined the heart of Rev. E.C. Adams to accept the call to become our teacher and shepherd. On Wednesday, July 17, 2019, at 1:30 P.M., Rev. Adams will be united with our congregation in a service led by Rev. H.D. den Hollander. Rev. Adams' inaugural service will follow at 7:00 P.M.

Farewell Service Planned for Rev. E.C. Adams

The King of His Church has inclined the heart of His servant, Rev. E.C. Adams, to accept the call which came to him from the congregation of Picture Butte, Alberta. A farewell service is planned on the evening of July 9, 2019, at 7:00 P.M. in the NRC of Corsica, South Dakota. After the service there will be an open house in the NRC school auditorium where an opportunity will be given to extend a personal goodbye to Rev. Adams. Refreshments will be served.

—The Corsica NRC Consistory

Farewell Service of Rev. A.A. Brugge

On Wednesday, April 10, Rev. Brugge bid farewell to the congregation of Lethbridge whom he served as shepherd and teacher for four years. The text for this farewell service was 2 Thessalonians 2:15-17. The theme was "Paul's care for the congregation" with three points: 1) in giving a warning to the congregation; 2) in pointing to the foundation of the congregation; 3) in praying for a blessing for the congregation.

1) *In giving a warning to the congregation*—"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (verse 15). The congregation of Thessalonica struggled with the question of whether they should be concerned about work and duties if the coming of the Lord Jesus was imminent. Paul feels the need in a loving and empathic way to instruct this wavering congregation. His desire is to do this in a scriptural and biblical manner. "Stand fast, and hold..."; place your feet firmly upon the ground and know what you stand for. "Stand fast, and hold"; cling firmly to the traditions, to the oral word which has been preached in the congregation, and to the instruction from the epistles. Do not cling to Paul's word but the word which has been revealed to him. Cling to God's Word. Hold fast, Lethbridge, hold fast to God's Word. Hold fast to the spiritual instruction, guidance, and correction given in His Holy Word.

2) *In pointing to the foundation of the congregation*—"Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace" (verse 16). This verse speaks of the unity between God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In the

original Greek translation this unity is stressed with a singular verb. They are one, and this is the source of salvation and consolation. The traditions of which we read in verse 15 are because of Christ and God the Father. The source of the consolation is in the Trinity. Christ's redemptive labor is a labor approved by the Father and applied by the Holy Spirit. This work is an everlasting comfort which will remain with the children of God: "therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." The door to Christ's passion is close by. This is the foundation and source of consolation. This source is sanctified because of the perfect, mediatorial work of the Lord Jesus on the cross. Paul speaks of a good hope through grace. On what is this hope based? It is based on what the Lord has revealed to the heart. The promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus the Lord, and the only ground for this good hope is God's eternal election.

3) *In praying for a blessing for the congregation*—"Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work" (verse 17). Where do we find our comfort? Who is comforting? Is it a comfort that only the Lord can comfort? Are we waiting with a praying heart? Then a minister can leave his congregation, for that true comfort for the heart comes from the Lord. "And stablish you in every good word and work"; this is the matter we find in Lord's Day 32. Those people become living examples. They walk behind their Master, and their desire is to testify with the whole of their conduct a life of gratitude to God. It is a testifying with word and work.

Rev. H.D. den Hollander addressed Rev. Brugge on behalf of Classis Far West and the denomination. Elder F. Mulder addressed Rev. Brugge on behalf of the congregation of Doetinchem, the Netherlands. Elder William Grinich spoke a parting word on behalf of the Lethbridge consistory and congregation. He addressed Rev. Brugge with the words of Psalm 126:5&6 which reference sowing in tears and reaping in joy. "Rev. Brugge, you have also sown the seed with the love of your heart." Mrs. Brugge and the children were also addressed, as was the congregation. The congregation was asked to stand and sing Psalter 445 verses 3&4 as a wish to our departing minister. Rev. Brugge spoke some words of acknowledgment to the speakers and concluded the service.

III Farewell Service of Rev. J. den Hoed

On Tuesday evening, May 14, 2019, Rev. J. den Hoed preached his farewell to the Franklin Lakes congregation after a blessed ministry there for almost fifteen years. In his opening remarks Rev. den Hoed wanted to give all praise and adoration to the Lord for fifteen years of His faithfulness. "In and of ourselves we were but the smallest tool but, when the Lord took that tool in His hand, it could be

felt that the Word was being received in the congregation." He earnestly admonished the young people, who had been so close to his heart during his stay in New Jersey, to stay with the truth which they had been taught, and that the Lord would give them discernment in these difficult times. He admonished God's people that what they had received from the Lord, as Thomas Boston wrote, "be best kept in the cabinet of humility." To those still going for their own account, Rev. den Hoed hoped that the seed which had been sown may still bear fruit, even after he is gone.

The text Rev. den Hoed chose for his final sermon as minister of Franklin Lakes was Colossians 17:16a. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly." The points were: 1) a preaching of Christ; 2) a preaching which has Christ as its content; and 3) a preaching where Christ should have the pre-eminence.

At the close of the service Rev. den Hoed was addressed by Rev. C. Vogelaar of the Clifton NRC as moderator of Franklin Lakes, by Rev. A.H. Verhoef of St. Catharines NRC on behalf of Classis East, and Elder J. Willekes on behalf of the Franklin Lakes consistory and congregation. The congregation sang Psalter 425:3 as the doxology after which Rev. den Hoed laid the blessing upon the congregation for the last time.

III Young Adult/Post High School Youth Camp

A three-day, two-night trip to northern Michigan is being planned for **August 1-3, 2019**, by the Kalamazoo Young Adult Committee which is under the oversight of the Kalamazoo NRC consistory. We have reserved a beautiful lodge located in Boyne Falls, Michigan. We are planning to provide meaningful topics and discussions during the time we hope to spend together. Our Friday itinerary includes a visit by ferry to scenic Mackinac Island. For further information or questions please contact Mrs. Liz DeVries at lizd@mwf.net or by text to 269-808-2146. You will also find further information and may sign up for this camp at www.KalamazooRetreats.org. The password to enter the site is *conference*.

III Classis East Youth Conference

The Classis East Youth Conference is scheduled to be held on **June 21&22, 2019**, in Norwich, Ontario, D.V. All young people ages 16 and older are invited to attend. Rev. Hakvoort and Student Slingerland hope to present topics. We wish to extend a special invitation to our young adults as separate activities are planned for them. All attendees are required to register, preferably at www.classiseastconference.org; the password is *conference*. You may also contact John Van Vliet at john.ria.vanvliet@gmail.com or 519-468-2124. We look forward to a profitable time together with our young people and young adults.

III Classis Midwest Youth Conference

The Lord willing, the Classis Midwest Youth Conference will be held this year in Rock Valley, Iowa, on **July 6, 2019**. All attendees will be asked to register on Friday, July 5. Rev. H. Hofman and Rev. J. Witvoet will provide the topics, and there will be a sing-along after the Sunday evening service. All of the Classis youth (ages 16 and older) are encouraged to attend. The congregations are encouraged to provide transportation for the young people who will be attending. May the Lord bless the labors of His servants in the midst of our young people.

III Classis Far West Youth Day

The Picture Butte NRC will be hosting the annual Far West Youth Day on **July 6, 2019**, D.V. We extend a hearty welcome to all young people ages 16 and older for a time of learning, activities, and socializing. Accommodations for the weekend may be arranged for out-of-town guests. There will be a welcome evening for our guests to meet each other and their host families on Friday, July 5. For further information and registration please contact Elder Rick de Kok at rdesignwoodwork@gmail.com or call 587-370-4007.

50th Wedding Anniversary

On May 9, 2019, our dear parents, and grandparents,

Hendrik & Linda Kegel

commemorated their 50th wedding anniversary

"The Lord hath been mindful of us: He will bless us" (Psalm 115:12).

1080 Pinewood Dr. N.W.
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

50th Wedding Anniversary

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

George & Alice Eckhardt (nee Stam)

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary on July 3, 2019.

"But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19).

34-8400 Young Road
Chilliwack, BC V2P 4P1

III Erratum

We regret publishing the wrong address in the May *Banner of Truth* for Mr. & Mrs. Jay Lugthart. The street address is 725 Baldwin St.

—Ed.

Education

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COALHURST, ALBERTA, anticipates several vacancies for the 2019-2020 school year and welcomes applications from qualified teachers interested in any position, including:

- Elementary teachers
- Secondary teachers (especially in high school English language arts and social studies/history, though other specialties are also invited).

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, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2019-2020 school year. We have a very small multigrade classroom school. Certification is not required for this position, although it would be helpful. Currently the school board acts as principal with oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be remembered in prayer, and be bound upon someone's heart to come over and help us. Any questions regarding this position or any interested applicants, please contact Randall Teunissen at 920-894-3395 or by e-mail at rdteunissen@yahoo.com.

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA—We ask that those who are interested in teaching consider M CCS. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification and subscribe to the faith identity of the M CCS 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@mccs.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@vanmarenegroup.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.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY, is interested in receiving applications from individuals to be employed or transition into the administrator role of our school for the 2020-2021 school year. Qualified applicants would be those with educational administrative experience or experienced teachers with administrative aspirations. A suitable transition plan will be instituted based on the applicant's experience and background. The applicant should be a male in good standing from the Netherlands Reformed Congregations who has a burden and a desire for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the students. To apply or request more information, please contact the education chairman, Tim Mol, at 973-204-5677 or the administrator, Mr. John Van Der Brink, at 973-628-7400.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is a Pre-K through 12th grade school serving 435 students from the NRC of Rock Valley, Sioux Center, and Sioux Falls. For the 2019-2020 school year we are seeking a secondary math teacher and are interested in inquiries regarding a secondary science teacher. We are also seeking a music teacher to begin at any time. The focus of that position would be instrumental (5-12 band/orchestra) along with other opportunities in K-12 music. In addition, we encourage inquiries 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!

Minutes of Classis Midwest 2019 Meeting

On Tuesday afternoon, April 9, 2019, prior to the Classis Midwest meetings, an office-bearers' conference was conducted by Rev. A.T. Vergunst in the True Dutch Reformed Church in Lansing, Illinois. Rev. A.T. Vergunst opened the meeting with singing Psalter 60:1&2; reading Psalm 128; and prayer. His topic was entitled Domestic or Spousal Abuse, using the words of Proverbs 13:14, "*The law of the wise is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.*" There is nothing more damaging in our natural and spiritual life than sexual, physical, verbal, or domestic abuse. An outline was followed which concluded with a real-life story written by an abused wife.

In the evening Rev. H. Hofman led a prayer service. His text was from Amos 2:13, "*Behold, I am pressed under you, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves.*" The theme was Perspectives of a Harvest Wagon, with three thoughts: 1) A fully-loaded cart, 2) A squeaking cart and 3) A stopped cart. He explained the context in the time of Amos and applied the text to striking similarities today. May our cries go up to heaven that the Lord would cause the cart of our heart, school, church, and families to be stopped, for then there is hope.

On Wednesday, April 10, 2019, Rev. G.M. de Leeuw opened the Classis Midwest meeting with Psalter 371:1&2, read Psalm 119:81-88, and prayed. He then welcomed all delegates, office bearers, and friends. This was followed by some words about Psalm 119:88, "*Quicken me after Thy lovingkindness; so shall I keep the testimony of Thy mouth.*" Dear brothers, if we may be quickened, then we shall be helped in our offices. May we edify one another. So be it.

Rev. G.M. de Leeuw then read some Special Memories since our last meeting. This was followed by the presentation of the credentials of the delegates; twenty were seated; two were absent.

The moderamen, either by rotation or appointment, were Rev. E.C. Adams, *President*; Rev. J.J. Witvoet, *Vice President*; Elder Jerry Fluit, *Clerk*; Elder Paul Firlit, *Treasurer*.

The meeting was then declared open for business and turned over to Rev. E.C. Adams. The minutes of the last two meetings were approved and signed. Correspondence was reviewed. Discussion was held concerning distribution of classis letters when it is not in session. This will be addressed in a documented mandate of duties submitted to the next classis.

Under Article VI the youth committee announced our next Youth Day will be on July 5 and 6, 2019, in Rock Valley, Iowa. Consistories were asked to assist parents and the youth who wish to attend the Classis Midwest youth events by providing transportation for them. Future Youth Days will be held every other year and in the interim

year the Midwest youth will be encouraged to join the Classis East Youth Day event.

The ministers proposed moderatorship assignments which were confirmed by vote of the delegates. There was one point of discussion from a member of Grand Rapids Covell Avenue Church about the interpretation of the history regarding the midwives in Exodus 1. The classis agreed that this biblical subject was not an essential doctrine of salvation and Bible expositors do differ in their interpretation. Thus, the matter was at rest and ministers will be careful in their exegesis over such texts.

Church visitations were then discussed under Article X. They have all been done properly and reports submitted and read. Details regarding these meetings were documented for the future. A new Church Visitation question booklet is being reprinted by NRC Book & Publishing with many improvements which will make it conformable with the original Dutch edition.

The election of a new classis clerk was conducted to replace Elder Jerry Fluit who is retiring from the position after serving nine years. Elected to a three-year term was Elder Larry Teunissen who accepted the position. It was agreed that a mandate or a classis document of the specific duties of the classis clerk be written and presented at the next classis meeting.

Customary Questions under Article XI were opened. Sheboygan asked for and was given advice regarding the continuation of their school which does not have a teacher for this coming year. It should definitely be continued. Sioux Falls then asked that the points in the prayer service be further explained, which Rev. H. Hofman freely offered to do. This was satisfactory to all. Waupun asked if there were guidelines for delaying a classis if there are no pressing needs to have one. It was agreed that we will have at least one classis meeting per year even if there are no points from specific consistories.

The expenses were published and the next classis meetings were scheduled. The Lord willing, Waupun will be the calling church on Wednesday, April 15, 2020. If a special Classis Midwest meeting is to be held for a classical examination of a student for the ministry, that date is set for Wednesday, July 24, 2019.

Rev. E.C. Adams made some closing remarks, acknowledging the Lord for His help. Rev. J.J. Witvoet, as vice president, thanked the chairman for leading the meeting and asked to sing Psalter 308:1&3, and then closed the Classis Midwest meetings with prayer.

All the Lord willing.

—Elder Jerry Fluit, *clerk*

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.

The Day of Pentecost

When the blessed Day of Pentecost
Was fully come, the Holy Ghost
Descended from above,
Sent by the Father and the Son
To bring immortal blessings down,
And shed abroad God's love.

Sudden a rushing wind they hear;
And fiery cloven tongues appear;
And sat on every one;
Cloven, perhaps to be a sign,
That God no longer would confine
His Word to Jews alone.

And were these first disciples blessed
With heavenly gifts? And shall the rest
Be passed unheeded by?
What! has the Holy Ghost forgot
To quicken souls that Christ has bought,
And let them lifeless lie?

No, Thou Almighty Paraclete,
Thou shedd'st Thy heavenly influence yet,
Thou visit'st sinners still;
The breath of life, Thy quickening flame,
Thy power, Thy Godhead, still the same,
We own, because we feel.

— *Joseph Hart*