

the **Banner** *of Truth*

February 2020
Volume 86, No. 2

The Official Periodical
of the Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the
United States and Canada

In this issue...

Jesus' Life of Obedience:
The Expression of Love

Holy Baptism

Family-School-Church

For our young readers...

The Ten Plagues

Brothers

"He casteth forth His ice like morsels; who can stand before His cold?" PSALM 147:17



Meditation		Contemporary Issues	
Jesus' Life of Obedience: The Expression of Love	27	Family–School–Church	37
<i>Rev. A.T. Vergunst</i>		<i>Rev. G.J. van Aalst</i>	
Foregiveness of Transgression	28	Current Events	39
<i>Rev. A. Moerkerken</i>		TIMOTHY – for the Young	
Curatorium Announcement	29	Of the Creation and Fall of Man and His Incapacity to Perform What Is Truly Good (2)	40
Bible Study		<i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>	
The Life of Isaac (11)	30	Bible Stories for Little Ones	
<i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>		The Ten Plagues (4)	41
From Our Inheritance		<i>Submitted</i>	
The Announcement	31	Bible Quiz	
<i>Rev. F.W. Krummacher</i>		Brothers	42
Doctrinal Studies		<i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	
Holy Baptism (1)	34	Letters to My Young Readers	45
<i>Rev. G.J. van Aalst</i>		News & Announcements	46
For Young and Old		Back Cover	
God's Free Grace Glorified (5)	35	The Two Malefactors	48
<i>Edited by Marinus Nijse</i>		<i>John Newton</i>	
Questions & Answers			
Questions from Our Readers	36		
<i>Rev. H. Hofman</i>			

Cover Photo: Ice storm | © Mike Hollingshead | www.stormandsky.com

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

Monthly, Official Publication of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the United States and Canada. Typeset (Archtype Graphic Solutions) at Pompton Plains, NJ; printed and distributed (AlphaGraphics) at Midland Park, NJ.

Subscription rate: \$30.00 in the U.S. and Canada, payable in U.S. funds; \$35.00 to foreign countries, payable in U.S. funds. Rates listed are for one-year subscriptions.

Rev. J. den Hoed, Editor

972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264
Home: 360-354-0210 • Study/Fax: 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

Copy for *The Banner of Truth* is due the 1st of the month prior to month of publication. All copy (including announcements, obituaries, anniversary notices, and ads) should be sent to Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis. All announcements submitted for publication must be typed and are subject to editorial policy. Communications relating to subscriptions should be addressed to the subscription manager. Change of address should be forwarded to the subscription manager one month in advance of moving date. Please provide both new and old address.

Archived copies of *The Banner of Truth* (1934 to present) are available at Digibron.nl.

PERIODICAL: Postage paid at Mahwah, NJ

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

The Banner of Truth
11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005

Additional Denominational Sources for Printed Matter

Other denominational periodicals include: *Paul* (mission periodical), 377 Poldon Drive, Norwich, Ontario, Canada N0J 1P0; *Insight Into* (for young people), Rev. P. Van Ruitenburch, Secretary, 8920-3 Broadway Street, Chilliwack, British Columbia, Canada V2P 5W1; NRCEA School Journal *Learning and Living*, Plymouth Christian School, 1000 Ball Ave., Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

For a list of denominationally printed Reformed literature write to: Netherlands Reformed Book and Publishing Committee, Mr. Tom Fluit, 0-121 Leonard St. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49534, or e-mail nrcbnp@gmail.com. For a list of Reformed material which embraces additional publishing companies, write to our discount book distributor: Bible Truth Books, P.O. Box 1290, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

For free sermons write to: Treasured Meditations, P.O. Box 2753, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

In all our publications, the Netherlands Reformed Congregations aim to remain true to inerrant Scripture and its Reformed heritage as expounded in the denomination's doctrinal standards: the Belgic Confession (1561), Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and Canons of Dordt (1618-1619). The Netherlands Reformed Congregations are also in agreement with the Westminster Standards (1640s): the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Netherlands Reformed Denomination in the United States and Canada consists of twenty-seven congregations and approximately 11,000 members. Our sister denomination in the Netherlands has 152 congregations and a membership of approximately 107,000. The North American churches have established a mission post and congregation in Loma Alta, Bolivia, South America.



Meditation

Jesus' Life of Obedience: The Expression of Love

Rev. A.T. Vergunst, Waupun, WI

“But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence” (John 14:31).

The Lord's entire life can be summed up with the word *love*. None loved God with all his being and none loved his neighbors, friends, and foes as Jesus Christ, the Son of Man. The best definition of His love is captured in one word—*obedience*. Both are combined in the words Jesus spoke shortly before entering His final stretch of the race His Father called Him to run: *Arise, let us go hence*. The final battlefield ahead included the horrors of Gethsemane, Gabbatha, and Golgotha.

Jesus' obedience predates time as Psalm 40:7-8 reveals: *“Then said I, 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.”* Even though the Father's will included exchanging His heavenly delights and comfort with the hellish horrors and pain on behalf of His people, it was His delight to obey His Father's will.

The heart of Jesus' ministry was to *“destroy the works of the devil”* (1 John 3:8). This is fully in line with God's declaration of war against Satan and his seed in Genesis 3:15. The final act of the Seed of the Woman would be to bruise Satan's head. That bruising of his head did not mean the annihilation of Satan's being but the cancellation of his headship over this world. The only way to accomplish this was by obedience. Paul stated this link in Philippians 2:8b-10, *“...and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.”*

Satan relentlessly tempted the second Adam. If he could make Him disobey, Mansoul and the world would remain his dominion. Satan understood that if he could succeed in preventing the cross, it would not only affect the Son of Man—it would prevent Jesus from becoming the Door to everlasting life for all God's people. Only through His obedience, both actively to keep the Law of God and passively in taking the curse of the Law of God, could Jesus be the Door from a well-deserved banishment to God, to the pasture of communion with God (John 10:9). Satan suffered defeat upon defeat as the Son of Man obeyed His Father's will. Now the last hours of this battle were coming.

The hardest part of Jesus' battle was to obey His Father's will in taking the full curse of the Law on behalf of His chosen people. From the onset of Jesus' public ministry,

Satan concentrated his efforts to dissuade the Lord Jesus from His priestly sacrifice of laying down His life (John 10:17). How subtle was his false offer: *“All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me”* (Matthew 4:9). The Lord adamantly refused Satan's request. The only way to the throne of glory was the way through the cross. *“Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?”* (Luke 24:26).

The words of our text were spoken in the Upper Room. They followed Jesus' revelation that the prince of this world was coming (verse 30). It would be His most intense hour of tribulation. John never forgot how deeply troubled in spirit his Master was as the battle drew near though, at that time, John understood little about the deepest reason (John 13:21). Yet he never forgot the resoluteness with which His Master stood up from the Upper Room table and said: *“But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence.”*

Arise, let us go hence. The words are commonly used in military context. Their intent is therefore clear: “Let us go to face the final battle.” His act was the deepest expression of love to His Father. No greater love to the Father has ever been witnessed than when the second Adam obeyed the Father's command to drink the cup of condemnation. In contrast with the first Adam, who was commanded to not eat, Jesus heard the command, “Drink this and Thou shall live.”

No command has been so costly as this one. Never will we be able to describe the horror of what the Lord Jesus saw when He heard the commandment of God to drink the remaining part, the hardest part, of the cup of the curse. Now comes the test, the final test. Will He drink it to the bottom? His whole soul trembled in fear as He felt the horror of the imputation of all the sins of God's elect and the resulting total abandonment of His Person by God. Though He initially took the cup at His incarnation, now He needed to drink the last and most bitter part of it—to *be condemned as a transgressor of God's holy Law*. His soul shrank back from this reality, but He did drink it. *Arise, let us go hence.* Why? It was because He loved His Father more than His own life, His own name, His own comfort.

The story of Jesus' suffering and death is the story of His devotional love or obedience to His Father and His people. Through this travail of love, He satisfied God's righteous demand in order to pardon sin and receive His prodigals back. These redemptive acts of the Saviour we will trace again in the weeks to come as we follow Jesus in His

pathway of suffering. May God's Spirit lead us into the heart of the gospel message of this priestly obedience of the Saviour of sinners. Nothing less than His obedience can secure us from God's righteous wrath. Nothing dishonors God's holy Being more than when we seek to recommend ourselves to Him on basis of our faulty obedience. Nothing will bring distance and darkness in the life of communion than looking to self as a door of access to God. Oh, how we all need to learn with Paul to forget and abandon all our doings or feelings. Not the labors of our hands can bring

Nothing dishonors God's holy Being more than when we seek to recommend ourselves to Him on the basis of our faulty obedience. Nothing will bring distance and darkness in the life of communion more than looking to self as a door of access to God.

us peace with God. Not our sacrifices of obedience and love can secure our standing before God. Besides Jesus' obedience to the Law both in life and death, everything else is sinking sand. To learn this dying to every effort of self-justification is not a comfortable journey but leads to solid comfort. Let us pray, therefore, that God's Spirit not only enable us to behold the glory of Christ's obedience in His life and death but also open our hearts to embrace these sufferings as the only ground of hope and comfort. □

Forgiveness of Transgression

Rev. A. Moerkerken Capelle a/d Ijssel, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

“I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid” (Psalm 32:5a).

Although David does not say very much about his circumstances when penning this psalm, we may point to the time after his sin with Bathsheba when the Lord gave him these words. The poet speaks about this time as a time of silence (verse 3).

He was silent in the days and months after the terrible sins against Uriah and with Bathsheba—silent, not over against man, but he was silent before the Lord. How should we understand this? Did he no longer perform his religious duties? Did he no longer bow his knees? Did he no longer go up to God's house? Oh, surely, he did. When David says he was “silent,” he wishes to say that he did not want to confess his sinful life before the Lord; He kept the sin to himself. He wanted to cover up his unrighteousness.

My readers, that is also your life and my life, by nature. We are silent. Never in any way will we ever of our own volition bow our heads in the dust before God to pray to Him, our Judge, for grace, no never. Certainly, our lips do testify of sin and guilt. Our confession is truly orthodox, but we are silent before the Lord with our heart. By nature, we live in peace in this condition. Let no one bother us in our restful life of sin. Let no one take away our idols. Yet, with David there was something different.

Although his silence lasted approximately nine months, he had not experienced any peace, for his bones waxed old through his roaring all the day; his moisture was turned into the drought of summer. See, here you have the difference between the person who lives in a condition of unbelief and the person who lives in a state of unbelief. All of the

unconverted live in a state of unbelief; they do not feel any sorrow about their condition; they live on in this state unconcernedly. It is impossible to describe how terrible our state of death is. It is possible, at times, for God's Church to come into a condition of unbelief, but it then causes them sorrow and discontent.

Why is that? It is because they have known other times. They have so much sorrow as a result of darkness because they have seen something of the true light. David knew so well of times in his life that he could walk in the light of God's friendly face. Now, when he had to miss that light because of his own transgression, his moisture is turned into the drought of summer. His body even wastes away because of it. Yet...he holds fast to the sin, far from where he should be, for the good that he would, he did not do, but the evil which he should not, that he did. Although his soul pants and his body wastes away because of the hiding of God's face, he cannot bring himself in that place where sin becomes sin and guilt becomes guilt.

Tell me, readers, how did David ultimately come in that place? Who has brought him there? What has happened that we now hear him say, “I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid”? God has done that, for that is where the Lord has brought him. Do you ask how the Lord does that? God always does this through His Word and Spirit. The prophet Nathan was used to doing this. By means of a simple example, he showed the non-suspecting David the loathsomeness of his sin. When David heard this, he was filled with anger and called out, “As surely as the Lord liveth, the man that has done this is worthy of death.” Then the prophet stretched out his arm and said, “Thou art the man.”

Then the great wonder happened. David did not remove the head of the messenger in anger, but he came down from his throne and called out, “I have sinned against the LORD.” “I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.” Something else is written, following these words. “Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin.” That is the most important, and let us never forget it. A person sometimes thinks when he has somewhat heartily confessed his sin before the Lord that those sins are already forgiven, but that is not the case. There is a difference between what we confess and what the Lord speaks unto us. One thing

is certain—each forgiveness of transgression is preceded by one becoming a heartfelt sinner before the Lord. It is only for a broken and a contrite spirit that the blood of Christ, foreshadowed by the streams of blood which flowed daily from the altar of burnt offering in the tabernacle, has its rich value and power.

It is such an important question for you and me to ask ourselves if we have learned to know the place where we came down from our lofty throne and confessed, “I acknowledged my sin unto Thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid.” □

Curatorium Announcement

The Lord willing, the Curatorium of the Netherlands Reformed Theological School hopes to meet in Grand Rapids, Michigan, on June 3, 2020. Students Kleijer and Slingerland are to be examined at that meeting on the subjects studied this semester. Student Slingerland is also scheduled to speak a trial sermon, with the hope of being sent forth to speak an edifying word in the congregations. May the Lord help both our students and their instructors. At the same meeting, the Curatorium will consider requests to enter the theological school. Therefore, any that have received an attest from their Consistory are invited to come before the Curatorium and explain how they believe the Lord has dealt with their soul both personally and with respect to the holy ministry.

The Lord Himself declared, as He waited at Jacob’s Well, that it was His meat to do the will of His Father which had sent Him and to finish His work. This was more to Him than His necessary food. Without being sent by the Lord Himself, our flesh cannot endure in the work of the Lord. Without being sent we have nothing to go back on, no foundation to make us steady in the trials which attend the work. Without being sent we are sure to flounder and to end as Demas of whom Paul said, “Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world.” Poor man who runs of his own accord! He enters a work too heavy for human shoulders, without the sustaining hand of the Lord to uphold him. Is it any wonder that such would turn back, like an Orpah, at the first suggestion of trials and difficulties ahead?

On the other hand, those who are indeed sent by the Lord are sure to be sustained by Him in the work. They often have many fears to the contrary, as Moses did. No, not before he was *sent*. Then he was very ready. He was ready to slay the Egyptian in zeal for the Lord and for the deliverance of His people. His heart burned for their sakes. Yet, the Lord did not yet deem it the right time. Moses had much to learn, and the Lord taught him these lessons forty years in the desert. Afterwards, he found in himself no more ability, no more desire. When it was the Lord’s time, then He could use Moses, and not before. Incomprehensible ways indeed—ways against our flesh, yet the Lord knows what He does. May the Lord bring forth such broken and unable men who have no wisdom, strength, or ability for the work—these He can and will use as instruments in His holy fingers for the deliverance of His Church.

Any Consistory receiving freedom to grant an attest should notify the clerk of the Curatorium, who will forward a request for information. The applicant should also forward his own request to the clerk, asking to be heard by the Curatorium. Vacant congregations should seek the help of their moderator in all these matters, and all information should be submitted as soon as possible.

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

Address of the clerk of the Curatorium:
Rev. H.D. den Hollander
P.O. Box 627
Fort Macleod, Alberta, Canada T0L 0Z0
Phone (403) 308-8822
Fax (888) 688-8041



Bible Study

The Life of Isaac (11)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

Based on Genesis 28:1-5 & 35:27-29

The old pilgrim, Isaac, had blessed Jacob and Esau by faith in spite of all his failures. His pronouncing the blessing was an evidence of firm faith in the promises which God had given. He might have been mistaken in the object of the promise because it was not Esau, but by faith he embraced the promises themselves. God would be the God of his seed, and all the families of the earth would be blessed in this. Isaac, by faith, clung to God's promise which once had been given to Abraham. Christ would come, and it would be in Him that all families of the earth would be blessed. It is a wonder if we may believe what God has spoken even when the fulfilling of His words goes through ways of impossibility. It is also a lesson to fall outside of it and to see that God's counsel will stand, and that He will do all His pleasure. It is a grace to come at God's side, to agree with Him, and to give Him all the honor.

A solemn charge

Isaac had to learn to submit to the sovereignty of God. He was now fully reconciled to the will of God. Of this faith Hebrews 11 speaks, also mentioning Isaac conquering over the flesh. Isaac and Rebekah grieved about the wives that Esau had taken from the daughters of Heth. Rebekah said to Isaac, "I am weary of my life because of them, and if Jacob also takes a wife of these heathen people (as the daughters of the land were) that would be too much for me to bear." So, she desired her husband to do something about it. That is why Isaac called Jacob and blessed him but also gave him a solemn charge. He said unto him, "Thou shalt not take a wife of the daughters of Canaan." We read in 2 Corinthians 6:14a, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," and those daughters of Canaan certainly were unbelievers.

Therefore, Isaac charges him to arise and go to Padan-aram to find a wife from there of the daughters of Laban. It would be a journey of about four hundred fifty miles, but that was the place from where Rebekah had come. Jacob is not young anymore, about eighty years old, and he knew that Esau's marriage was a grief to Isaac and Rebekah, his parents. The Lord had kept him from seeking a wife among the people of the land.

The words that Paul spoke about being unequally yoked is also a necessary warning for our days. Many young people look at the daughters or sons of the land, regarding beauty, wealth, or other attractive factors, and do not take seriously that we should be separate from the world or false religion. We have but one soul to lose or to gain, and if the

Lord blesses a union of unbelievers with children, the entire family starts walking on the way that certainly leads to eternal destruction. May those who seek a partner for life come on their knees and ask for God's guidance and approval. What a blessing it was for Isaac and Rebekah that, in spite of failures in both of them, they could pray together and call upon the Lord for His blessing. Isaac and Rebekah were concerned about the spiritual welfare of their children. Do we have that serious concern as well, or are we looking at their career, that they may prosper in this world, while neglecting their soul's welfare? Are we praying that our children may never leave the truth and that they may be converted and fear Him who is so worthy to be served? We have become so materialistic and are also influenced by the lifestyle of those who serve mammon and pleasure. May the Lord give faithfulness to the vows that we parents have made at the baptism of our children.

Renewing the blessing

Isaac again pronounced the blessing that he previously had given. Then it was by deceit and not according to his own will. How different it now was when he said, "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people." It is like the Lord had promised Abraham in Genesis 12:2, "And I will make of thee a great nation." Here, in Genesis 28, it literally says, "That thou mayest be a multitude of people." You may wonder, is this only applicable to the people of Israel, his descendants? Were they not the chosen and highly favored people of God? They were living under the covenant of grace and, as such, were separated from other nations. We read in Genesis 12:3b, "And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." This applies to the spiritual blessings which will be bestowed upon not only the Jews but also the Gentiles. In Christ, the covenant of grace will have an ecclesiastical dispensation. That means the living Church, both Jew and Gentile, will share in these blessings. He is the blessed King who merited these gracious gifts; according to Psalm 72:8, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." What a rich blessing, therefore, is pronounced upon Jacob, not because of worthiness in him but because of God's good pleasure.

This multitude spoken of in verse 3 is the first part of the blessing. The second part, according to verse 4, is the promise of a land that they will inherit. "That thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger." There will be a promised land for his descendants, and at God's time, after

severe trials and oppression in Egypt, at the end of the wilderness journey, they will inherit it.

Peace

Isaac also comes to the end of his journey in this wilderness. He has become very old. He had to serve God's counsel; it appears that after God blessed Jacob and sent him away, Isaac has lived for several more years. We read in Genesis 35:27a, "And Jacob came unto Isaac his father..." Many years had passed, and, also in Jacob's life, God's faithfulness to His own word had been so clearly shown. Jacob, after having come back from Padan-aram about twenty years after he was sent away, has still met his father. In verse 27 we read, "And Jacob came unto Isaac his father unto Mamre, unto the city of Arbah, which is Hebron, where Abraham and Isaac sojourned." Yes, also Isaac was a pilgrim and stranger here below. We do not read about severe trials as Abraham and Jacob experienced, yet he was a man who truly feared the Lord, and for him the land where he sojourned was not a land of rest. When he was one hundred fourscore years, or one hundred eighty years old, Isaac died and his sons, Esau and Jacob, buried him.

So, we are told that Esau was present for his father's funeral. Jacob had probably notified him that his father was soon going to die. The two brothers are here together and will mourn about the loss of their father. We do not read of Rebekah. We probably must assume that she had died

before Isaac. She and Isaac's times, as well as ours, are in God's hands. Isaac now would never have to move from place to place as he once had. He will never be a stranger anymore, never grieve about his offspring, never be in disagreement with God's will. His birth was a wonder; however, the birth of One greater than he, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the greatest wonder.

The Lord Jesus came to dwell among His people as a stranger on earth. He came to do God's will, left crown and throne to come to this cursed earth to redeem His people and open the way to the house of the Father where there are many mansions, to restore rebels and sinners into communion with a triune God. That is the wonder for those who learn it is only by His gracious keeping that they may arrive at the place where pilgrims of all ages, from all the families of the earth, will honor and praise God for the inheritance of a land which they have not obtained by their own power but will receive as a gift of free grace. There is peace for Isaac and for all those whose hearts are inclined to leave their country and their father's house to go to a land that the Lord would show them. There, they may be home to rest and give God the honor, for He has made a people unto Himself that will show forth His praises. Angels sang in the fields of Ephrathah of God's good pleasure. How beautiful will be the song of the redeemed, praising Him for what He has so graciously given them. ◻

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



From Our Inheritance

The Announcement

Rev. F.W. Krummacher (1769-1868)

(An excerpt taken from "The Announcement" published in *The Suffering Saviour*)

Almost immediately after our blessed Lord had performed, perhaps, the most stupendous of His miracles in raising Lazarus from the grave after he had been dead four days, we are informed by the Evangelist that "the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put Him to death." What a humbling view does this give us of the depravity of human nature as exemplified in these men who, obliged to confess the fact of the miracles which Jesus wrought, not only refused to accept Him as the Messiah but even conspired together to rid themselves of Him by condemning Him to death. "...Neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."

"Jesus therefore," we are told, "walked no more openly among the Jews; but went thence unto a country near to the wilderness, into a city called Ephraim, and there continued

with His disciples." But "when the time was come that He should be received up, He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem."

With this object in view, the Lord takes His twelve disciples aside. He has matters of importance to disclose to them. Destined, as they were, to lay the foundation of His Church, they soon perceive His intention and hang upon His lips with increasing eagerness. They probably reckon on some cheering intelligence and expect to hear that the triumphant development of His kingdom is at hand. What shortsightedness and simplicity do they display. Oh, the mighty chasm which intervenes between their thoughts and God's thoughts—as though the restoration of fallen man were a thing of such easy accomplishment—as if sin had caused only a transient disturbance in the

relations between God and man and occasioned a breach which could be healed either by a voluntary declaration of mercy from on high or by a confession of sin on the part of the fallen.

The Lord opens His mouth, and to the astonishment of His disciples announces to them in plain terms His approaching sufferings and, at the same time, His subsequent victory. "Behold," says He, "we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished."

Observe, first of all, how these words convey our Lord's fixed resolution. His heart, under the impulse of love, is firmly and immutably bent on taking the way to the cross. You well remember with what impressive earnestness He rejected the advice of Simon Peter to spare Himself and not to go up to Jerusalem. "Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offense unto Me: for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men." So evident was it to Him that the sufferings He was going to meet were the express will and counsel of His heavenly Father, that in the contrary advice of His disciple, He could reckon nothing but a temptation from the bottomless pit, and Simon as the unconscious instrument of it.

No affectionate entreaty restrains Him in His course; no menace dictated by hatred deters Him from it. The bloodthirsty council has already assembled in Jerusalem and is concocting its plan of treachery and murder. The watchword of Jesus continues to be—"Behold, we go up," and though another Red Sea were foaming at His feet, and though a hundred deaths awaited Him, yet the only sentiment in His heart is—"We go up." For it is the Father's will, and the path to the great and ardently longed for aim of the world's redemption. Oh, what resignation, what obedience, what love to sinners is here exemplified by our adorable Immanuel.

"Behold," says our Lord, "we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished." Here we are informed what was His staff and His stay on the road to His sufferings. He found it in the "sure word of prophesy" in which He read what was recorded of Himself and the counsel of God respecting Him. If anyone still requires a definite authority for the divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, it is here presented to him. Christ, the King of Truth, recognized the Scriptures nothing less than the infallible record of the revelation of His heavenly Father; He bears it day and night on His heart; He decides according to its statutes as the Canon Law, which put an end to all strife respecting the vital questions of human life, and directs His steps whithersoever it points the way. It is to Him, the infallible guiding

star of His life. Whether the voice of the heavenly Father is heard direct from heaven or sounds to Him from this venerable record, it is the same to Him. The one is as important as the other, and He reverently bows to every tittle and iota of it. It is thus that His ways are established, and every moment's experience seals to Him that He is actually obeying a divine command. Everything that the Word enjoins becomes reality.

"Certainly," someone may say, "it ought to strengthen our determination to proceed upon the path prescribed for us by the Word of God when, like Christ, we are aware that our way through life is not only divinely ordered and superintended, generally speaking, but also when we can survey it step by step, in the light of an infallible and divine revelation, even to its glorious termination." Is not this really the case if thou hast believingly and sincerely given thyself up to God? For can there be any situation in which the divine Word, with its counsel, leaves thee at a loss? Is it not also written respecting thee, "but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing"? "Through much tribulation enter

into the kingdom of heaven," but "when thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shall not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee."

It may indeed be the case that men will revile and persecute thee, but if thou faithfully endure, thy reward shall be great. The light shall always rise upon thee after the darkness, and after sorrow joy shall again visit thy threshold.

Nor shall anyone be able to snatch thee out of the Lord's hands. Having fought the good fight, thou shalt finally receive the crown of righteousness and shalt not see death but pass from death unto life, and triumph eternally.

Does not all this and manifold more stand written of thee, and is not, therefore, thy path pointed out? Mayest thou not also say in thy measure with the Lord Jesus, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all shall be accomplished that stands written by the finger of God respecting me, a poor sinner, since I am no longer my own but belong to Christ?" Oh, certainly thou mayest say this. How ought we not, therefore, with such a consciousness, to put on a cheerful courage during our pilgrimage and feel as if heavenly triumphal music preceded us on our path through life.

My dear readers, let us place a firm reliance on the Word of truth and in its light ascend the precipitous road; according to its instructions, proceed forward with firm and steady steps, unmindful of the tumult of the world and not deviating a hand breath from the way prescribed. Let us meet Him who would direct us otherwise with a voice of thunder and exclaim, "Get thee behind me Satan,

*The watchword of Jesus continues to be—
"Behold, we go up," and though another
Red Sea were foaming at His feet, and
though a hundred deaths awaited Him,
yet the only sentiment in His heart is—
"We go up." For it is the Father's will,
and the path to the great and ardently
longed for aim of the world's redemption.
Oh, what resignation, what obedience,
what love to sinners is here exemplified
by our adorable Immanuel.*

for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” The Almighty then will be favorable unto us; we shall then carry the peace of God in our bosoms and literal accomplishments of the divine promises, which we have taken for our compass and for a lamp unto our feet will daily fall upon our path like lights from heaven.

The Lord’s face is toward Jerusalem, and we have already seen for what purpose. His intention is to suffer and die. Oh, there must be something of immense importance connected with His passion. It appears as the crisis of the work for the accomplishment of which He left His Father’s bosom and came down to earth. Were this not the case, it would have been tempting God thus to rush to meet death after having completed His prophetic office in Jerusalem; and the over-ruling Majesty on high would have exposed His justice to well-founded reproach in giving up the Holy One who had fulfilled His commands to the horrible fate of a malefactor and reprobate. However, the eternal Father had included in His counsels the scourge, the crown of thorns, and the cross long before the sons of Belial thought of having recourse to these instruments of torture; and all His prophets, however reluctantly, were compelled in spirit to interweave these horrible emblems along with the majestic image of the Messiah, which they portrayed. Thus, the Lord could say with profound truth, “All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished; for He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: And they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death.”

Such were the ingredients which filled the cup that Satan, in accordance with the counsels of eternal wisdom, was to present to the Son of the Most High. These counsels went far, very far beyond all that we understand by martyrdom, chastisement, purification, or trial. The immaculate and righteous Saviour did not require correction as for Himself, and if a purification had been salutary for Him, it need not to have come upon the Holy One of Israel in the form of such degrading infamy, unheard of reproach and humiliation, and such unparalleled suffering. The passion of our Lord has an infinitely more profound significance, and it requires only a cursory glance at the narrative to discover that this was the case. Observe what the Evangelist informs us respecting the way and manner in which the twelve received their Master’s communication. He states that “they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken.”

How striking is this circumstance. Who can resist inquiring what it was that they did not understand? They could not possibly have mistaken what their Master said respecting His suffering and dying at Jerusalem. Yet, Luke assures us that “they understood none of these things...neither knew the things which were spoken.” Is it not obvious that the Evangelist’s meaning is that he who would only apprehend the history of Christ’s sufferings, and regard His passion as a martyrdom, not essentially different from the bloody testimony borne by other saints, does not understand its true signification? We have here an evident reference to an infinitely deeper cause of the tragical termination of our Saviour’s life before us.

It is confessedly true that the eternal Father, by an almighty decree, might have annihilated the fallen race in which sin had taken root, and thus have put an end to evil, but we were to live and not die. Thus, He has not only caused the sin of man to act as foil for the display of the full radiance of His attributes and especially of His love but also, by the offering up of His Son, provided a means of salvation by which we might attain to a much higher stage of glory and relationship to God than we once possessed in our progenitor or than we should ever have attained if we had not fallen. Our fall afforded Him the opportunity of showing that in the destruction of sin He could not only manifest His justice but also glorify His mercy in remitting and forgiving sin without infringing upon His righteousness.

We sinned and were exposed to the curse. The Word that was with God, and was God, then was made flesh. The eternal Son became our brother, took upon Himself our sin in the way of a mysterious imputation, paid our debt to the majesty of the inviolable law, covered our nakedness with His righteousness, and presented us as those in whose stead He appeared, unblameable and acceptable to the Father. He excited the hallelujahs of angels at our exaltation, elevated us to a participation of His own riches, blessedness, and privileges, pitched tents of peace for us around the throne of God, and connected us with Himself by the bonds of eternal gratitude and affection. Such is the edifice which the Almighty reared upon the ruins of sin and of which the disciples, at that time, had not the remotest idea. In the sequel they recognized the divine method of salvation and of peace; how happy were they, subsequently, in the knowledge of this “great mystery of godliness.” □

Did you never run for shelter in a storm and find fruit which you expected not? Did you never go to God for safeguard, driven by outward storms, and there find unexpected fruit?

— John Owen



Doctrinal Studies

Holy Baptism (1)

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

“Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again” (John 3:7).

In a short series, we wish to consider the meaning of Holy Baptism. Just as in the history of the church, so also today, departure from the Reformed Confessions has serious consequences. It defines our perception of the congregation, how we approach young people, the emphasis in the preaching, religious upbringing, the teaching in the classroom, and similar situations. Recent (youth) meetings about this subject have raised questions and even, unfortunately, confusion. It is for this reason that, at the request from our readers among whom are office bearers, we provide these articles.

What is proposed

The following central themes are put forward:

1. The sentence which is written, as it were, in red letters above the Form for Baptism serves—if it is well—to provide the emphasis for the explanation of the entire contents. This sentence is as follows: “insomuch that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God except we are born again.” That is what we hope to discuss.
2. The theme that “baptism is come in the place of circumcision.”
3. The thought expressed in the first prayer with the administration of baptism, “by which baptism is signified.”
4. The differentiation of how our forefathers spoke about “we and our children” and about “this child.”
5. The value which our forefathers at Dort attached to the baptism of children, as is apparent in the conclusion of the Canons of Dort where they state against slanderous accusations that “the mouths of calumniators of sound doctrine be shut.”

The starting point

The essence of the doctrine of Baptism in our Form is expressed in the same three parts as our Heidelberg Catechism, namely, misery, deliverance, and gratitude. It is there that we will begin our discussion of baptism—not, as one frequently hears, “that we are admonished of, and obliged unto new obedience,” for then we have already reached the part of thankfulness, and we have skipped over two of the parts.

When we, very simply, begin to read the Form for Baptism, we hear of our misery and the misery of our baptized children. The doctrine of Baptism begins with “children of wrath, insomuch that we cannot enter the kingdom of God except we are born again.” In the first place, the impurity

of our souls is signified. Therefore, the clear absolute necessity of our conversion, as God’s work of grace, is first confessed. The water in baptism calls out to us in the first place how impure we are and that we stand outside of the kingdom of God’s grace. We can hear that there is only one way to be saved. This way is the “regeneration” of which we read in the Canons of Dort Head 3/4, article 12, “so highly celebrated in Scripture and denominated a new creature: a resurrection from the dead, a making alive, which God works in us without our aid.”

To be clear, regeneration is spoken of here in the narrow as well as the broader sense, meaning, the making alive as well as the renewal. Let us quote and use our Form honestly. That is why we begin the discussion of our Form in this manner. If this does not remain our starting point, we do not deal honestly with our tried and tested baptismal doctrine. It is a question to me when in reflecting upon this subject, the word regeneration is not even used.

Why is it, in some circles that even the word “regeneration” appears to be disputed? One must consider that it is the starting point in the entire explanation. It is exactly upon this point that the Canons of Dort teach us so completely in the third/fourth head of doctrine: of man’s depravity, the conversion to God, and the manner thereof.

The compelling question in our life, “How do I come to Jesus?” is answered in this chapter by the Canons of Dort with these words: “through this regeneration.” This forms a unity between the instruction and the significance of our confession. We may and should not deal selectively with these subjects.

It is so instructive to then read in the Form that when we are regenerated, we “loathe and humble ourselves before God, and seek for our purification and salvation without ourselves.” That happens when the sovereign deed of God’s grace goes before and remains. Then only is the certainty of it sure. Baptism is the visible preaching of God’s grace in the line of the generations, of the necessity and possibility...of regeneration. I can still hear Rev. A. Vergunst say, “We can never appreciate the value of baptism highly enough, as long as it never makes the necessity of regeneration unnecessary.”

In this manner we go, according to this baptismal instruction, from the part of misery to the part of deliverance. The grace in the Deliverer as the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is placed before us in this all determining instruction.

This is all about the doctrine of free grace, which works all in all. That is also true in our consideration of Holy

Baptism. In the church at Jerusalem, many believed in His name (John 2:23b), but what do we read immediately following? “But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them, because He knew all men (verse 24). Why did He keep His distance? “And needed not that any should testify of man: for He knew what was in man”(verse. 25).

Is that not the reason that immediately after this we read time and again, “Verily, verily..., Amen, amen..., ye must be born again”? (John 3:5&7). Marvel not, therefore, that this is also the principal thrust of our baptismal doctrine. For what is faith without a regeneration which precedes it? That is also how it is written in John 3:1-21. ◻

(To be continued)



For Young and Old

God’s Free Grace Glorified (5)

Edited by Marinus Nijse

(Uitgeverij Pieters, Oostburg, the Netherlands)

“Dear Mother,” said Mina, “please do not complain; do not complain, else I will rebel against God. The Lord is so good to me, and you and Father take such good care of me.”

Upon a certain day, her father prayed by her bed that the Lord would break through for her and grant light unto her soul.

“Dear Father,” she said, “when you pray for that, you are praying for my speedy death, for I will only receive complete deliverance when death draws near. The Lord had promised me that, and we must not walk ahead of the Lord. You may not do that, and you must follow the Lord. You will see that I will then first receive complete deliverance.”

“Whereupon is your hope grounded, my child?” asked her father.

“Oh, Father, it is difficult for me to speak to you from heart to heart. I can do that better with Mother. You desire that I will be led just as you, but is not the Lord free in leading me? You may not direct the way of the Lord.”

* * * * *

It is the last day of January, 1854. Rev. Middel is standing at the sick bed of his daughter. Things are not going well with her. The poor child suffers a great deal. Suddenly, the young daughter begins to shudder, and she asks, “Father, is that thunder?”

“No,” he said. “I do not hear anything. Why are you shuddering so?”

“It is just as if I heard thunder. When it thunders, I am so afraid that in a moment I will have to enter eternity—and then to be unprepared.”

“My dear child, how is it with the hope you may have? At the nearing of death, have you not been promised complete deliverance?”

“Oh, Father, in such moments because of the fear, I cannot hold on to that. That is only possible when I am calm again, but you will see it, for the Lord has promised it to me.”

The minister is pensive. Is she grounded upon a false hope? “God’s people pray much for you, Mina.”

“Dear Father, it is a comfort that the pious ones pray for me, but that cannot be a ground for eternity. The Lord Himself must help me. He has promised that to me, and I expect it from Him.”

The next day she asks, “Father, do not let any more friends come to see me, for I cannot speak with them because of my weakness. Because of these visits my thoughts are diverted, and I am drawn away from God. No one can help me, not you, not mother. Even though a hundred ministers would come, they cannot help me. This is a matter which only the Lord can do, and it must be solved between the Lord and me.”

She closes her eyes, her lips are moving, and she prays. Her father silently stands next to her bed. Will he now really lose her? When he thinks of that, memories come to the foreground. How often had his child encouraged him. It happened just recently when he was so discouraged. She had been such a support for him. She had thrown her arms around his neck and said, “Come, dear Father, do not be so bowed down. The Lord has always made all things well. He has never failed you nor departed from you. Even now, He will make all things well. Come, let us rather sing of His deeds.” Then she began to sing from Psalm 74 (Psalter 205, verse 8):

*O God, Thou art our King of old,
Salvation Thou hast wrought;
In safety through the mighty sea
Our fathers Thou hast brought.*

What else could her father do than sing along with her? After they finished singing, she began to relate all of the deeds of the Lord which had been shown unto her father. Then the minister was encouraged. He could again expect help from the Lord. His daughter had been the means used.

Mina lies quietly praying...He shall have to lose her... ◻

(To be continued)



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

This time I decided to formulate my own question, the reason being some responses I received upon publication of the December 2019 article about Hyper-Calvinism. Some were positive, some more critical, but all of them were sincere and well-meant. Therefore, I want to write about this subject one more time. The purpose is not to strike back or divide but actually the opposite—to unite and hopefully clarify some misunderstandings.

I think the fact that a subject like this triggers many conversations, confusion, or division only underscores the need to give and receive clear guidance. This was the sole purpose of the article. The intent was not at all to come against (young) people who ask this question. Far from it! The very purpose of the Questions & Answers section in *The Banner of Truth* is to reach out to people who *have* questions...I consider it very important to answer all questions. At the same time, I sometimes feel very sorry for our young people who are bombarded with certain *types* of questions. In my first paragraph I tried to make this clear. The very reason I decided to answer this question underscores my concern.

When I was young, I did not ever hear about Hyper-Calvinism, much less did I understand the term even though (in my second paragraph) I made it clear that the term itself seemed to be around since the 18th century. To be honest, I consider discussion about certain subjects like this one similar to the seemingly endless debate about the offer of grace, experiential preaching, and the like. My late father could be quite blunt sometimes when subjects like these arose. He would say, "If you want to end up in an argument with a CRC-person (in Dutch: 'gereformeerde'—H.H.), start up a conversation about the *covenant*." Well, nowadays such discussions seem to be no longer restricted to an inter-denominational discussion but, unfortunately, take place among the very brethren of the same house... That, in my opinion, stresses the seriousness of the problem. Let us remember the words of Christ that every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand (Matthew 12:25).

My second observation is then, once more, the issue itself. Some readers may have had the impression that I minimized the danger of Hyper-Calvinism. Here I would like to respond by saying that *because* of this danger I actually tried to avoid two extremes or pitfalls. The one

danger is falling for what Hyper-Calvinism supposes to be, and the other pitfall is what is sometimes pulled out of the closet to counter-balance it. Halfway through the article I wrote: "The wisdom of the Reformed Confessions, dear friends, is that they steered clear of reinforcing one-sided emphasis, and that is the answer, in my opinion, against charges of Hyper-Calvinism or any radicalization of truth. The truth of God's Word is radical enough, isn't it?" By this statement I had hoped to acknowledge that Hyper-Calvinism can indeed be a danger but also to show that both Scripture and the Reformed Confessions are balanced enough and need no balancing from our side. This is the direction, I believe, our (young) people sorely need in a very challenging and confusing time in which we live.

In closing, I wish to make a final, personal observation regarding this issue. A question that lingers in my mind is the origin of both the surge in *interest* in this subject as well as the *purpose* of it. I am afraid that the origin is not always necessarily as genuine and well-meant as the people who wrote me, of whom I in no wise distrust an upright concern. Every age has its own challenges and dangers. Strictly going by my own observations, I am afraid there is a hyper-un-Calvinistic spirit roaming in our days that seeks to overthrow the Scriptural-experiential preaching of Law and Gospel, Adam and Christ, and how a poor, lost sinner is united with a rich Christ by the indispensable operation of the Holy Spirit. The humiliation of Christ must then precede His exaltation; dying to self takes place before being alive in Christ, and justification of the ungodly sinner precedes the sanctification of the believer. Salvation hence becomes an undeserved wonder, and man's responsibility becomes guilt before God. For who is able to perform of himself what the Lord requires of us? Then Psalm 34:6 becomes so true: "*This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.*" Any deviation from such core truths, in my opinion, leads to extremism and becoming un-Calvinistically hyper.

I want to thank all those who responded so respectfully, and I hope we may share the same love and concern for our young people whose lot it is to live in a day and age when so much wind of doctrine blows their way.

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



Contemporary Issues

Family–School–Church

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

(Translated from *De Saambinder* #13, 12/27/2019)

In the December 27, 2019, issue of De Saambinder, Rev. G.J. Van Aalst looked back upon some of the articles and series of articles which had appeared in De Saambinder in the past year. He asked the readers to give special attention to an article which was attached to his message emanating from Calvijn College in Zeeland, a college which was founded on and continues in the doctrines of the Reformation and the Second Reformation. Although, regrettably, we do not have such a college in North America, the issues discussed also apply to us in our high schools and even extend into the primary grades. I will let Rev. Van Aalst speak and introduce an excerpt of the letter sent out by Calvijn College (Ed.).

One item which I wish to bring to the foreground is the discussion about modern media. When we look back upon the year 2019, I cannot earnestly enough ask your attention for the position taken by the administration of the Calvijn College in Zeeland. They have taken an integral and courageous attempt to serve and to promote in principle, the oneness of family, church, and school as noted in the heading of this article. This is a position which asks for support throughout the nation from every family, the entire educational system, and the church. It is a position which must result to the benefit and welfare of the souls of our young people. It is high time! We are obligated to do so because of God's covenant faithfulness and also His vengeance in regards to not only how we extend but also how we restrict the administration of the covenant of grace.

Excerpt of the letter sent out by Calvijn College

Since the 60s of the previous century, we have tried to keep television at a distance until about twenty years ago. At that time, the Internet was introduced and ten years later the smartphone. In large numbers we have created a small opening in our homes, and almost without any sound the digital wonder has crept in. It has established itself as part of our lives without our fully realizing it. Unsuspectingly, we have begun to use it, every day a bit more driven by inquisitiveness and ease. Today we can no longer go without it (at least that is what we think), and we all are bound to the leash of technology.

A countermovement

Stealthily—That is also how it came into Calvijn College. Currently, thousands of students walk about Calvijn College, most of them with a smartphone, an occasional one without. The coming of the Internet and also the smartphone has not only radically changed our society

but also the culture in our school. In the past several years as school board and school administration, we have had far-reaching discussions. That has brought us to the intent to keep the smartphone and other means of digital communication (as for example smart watches) outside of the confines of our school. To reinforce our position, we have formulated three principal arguments which we want to explain to you as follows:

Spiritual (im)purity

Our young people are inundated by means of Internet and smartphones with “spiritual wickedness” (read Ephesians 6). Although there are naturally differences, our young people are crammed full with wrong music, sports, sexual content, and violence. That also goes on while school is in session. Many students have access to film sites such as Netflix or Videoland either through a personal or shared subscription. The destructive influence upon their morals and morality is great. More importantly, every second of their time is occupied, and the truth remains, if God does not prevent it, that His kingdom is not part of their thoughts.

Mental (un)rest

Our students come to school to learn. In order to be able to learn properly, both mental rest and concentration on the proper things is necessary. The physical presence of their smartphone serves as an unnecessary and disruptive element. They are continuously stimulated while their attention is caught up in all types of matters which have nothing to do with school and learning.

(Anti)social behavior

A school is a community. Because our students have their smartphones handy, the temptation is great to sit and stare at their screen rather than talk to each other and thereby be more engaged with each other. Contact and communication with people is more important than interacting with technology. In addition to that, there is also much abuse of the smartphone with undesired and unacceptable behavior. Because we as a school have a mission to form and educate our students upon our foundation and principles (Scripture and Confessions) as well as the baptismal promise of the parents of our students, we feel that we must take this responsibility for the students which attend our school.

A voice out of the past

J.C. Ryle states the following, in the consideration of Mark 7:14-23, about the evil in our hearts:

“Our innate sinfulness and natural leanings toward evil are never sufficiently considered. The perverseness of mankind is often attributed to wrong examples, evil companions, exceptional temptations, or lists of the devil. It would seem people forget that every person carries a fountain of iniquity within him. We do not need bad company to tempt us to do evil. The inclination to every sin under heaven lies within us.

“We must remember this when training and instructing our children. Whenever we provide leadership, we should never forget that the seeds of all evil and wrong lie in our hearts.

“It is not enough to keep boys and girls at home to protect them from every temptation in the outside world. They carry within themselves a heart

that is inclined to every sin, and until their heart is changed, they are not safe no matter what we do.

“When children do something wrong, it is a common habit to blame evil friends for all of the wrongs. To do this is pure ignorance, blindness, and foolishness. Evil friends are undoubtedly and without question a great iniquity which must be avoided as much as possible, but evil friends do not teach a boy or a girl half as many sins as those which lie in their own heart. Unless they are renewed by the Spirit, the inclination to all evil lies within.

“If parents were half as busy in praying for the conversion of their children as they are in protecting them from evil friends, their children would be better off than what they are at present.”

It would seem people forget that every person carries a fountain of iniquity within him. We do not need bad company to tempt us to do evil. The inclination to every sin under heaven lies within us. We must remember this when training and instructing our children... If parents were half as busy in praying for the conversion of their children as they are in protecting them from evil friends, their children would be better off than what they are at present.

The Faithfulness of the Lord's Word

I believe the greatest number of God's children are cast down in their minds and grievously perplexed, at times, respecting the reality of their repentance and faith and the genuineness of their religion before God. One reason why I draw this inference is because there are so many “fear nots” in the Word of God. They come from God's mouth and are not spoken as an uncertainty. There are some professors to whom the “fear nots” in God's Word have no manner of use, for they never feel the bonds and fetters that the Lord's people do. Neither do they appear to have any afflictions or bitters in their cup; consequently, as they have nothing to try and cast them down, so they need not these encouraging “fear nots” from God's blessed Word.

There may be some who are questioning whether the Lord has ever picked them up and begun the good work of grace in their souls or whether their religion is only of the flesh and through the workings of natural conscience. So, they are full of anxiety to know whether they belong to the Lord's quickened family. I never find empty professors of religion—those great and high-flown, six-foot gentlemen who are full of their own

wisdom and fleshly confidence—ever in anxiety to know whether the good work of grace was ever begun in their heart. Wherever the good seed of the Word is sown, it is always in the heart that has been ploughed and harrowed. When the good seed is dropped into good ground, then there is honesty in that soul, and it is made honest before God. Such a one cannot come and grasp the promises as he pleases; he is not able to take hold of this and that passage and claim it as a child's portion. No, no; the poor soul wants God to claim him as His child and His portion. He will come begging and crying to the Lord to give him some testimony of His favour and speak home some promise with power to satisfy the desires of his soul. There is true heart work going on in such a sinner as this. He will say, “Lord, give me a token to satisfy me that I am not a hypocrite; give me to feel that Thou art mine, and I am Thine!” What, be a hypocrite, and yet have the good work of grace in the soul? Depend upon it, no hypocrite can ever come here. If you search all through the Word of God, you will not find any but the living family who come into this spot—never, never.

—John Warburton



Current Events

Secularization altering the use of churches in the Netherlands

It is estimated that 1700 of the 5500 churches in the Netherlands will lose their primary function in the next ten years. Increasing secularization will see churches used for businesses, entertainment centers, and for living accommodations, according to a real estate advisor.

—RD (12/23/2019)

Increase closings of U.S. abortion providers or discontinued procedures

According to a new report from a pro-abortion organization, nearly a third of all independent abortion providers not affiliated with Planned Parenthood have either closed or stopped providing the procedure in the past seven years. Part of the reasons for this trend are new state-level abortion regulations and the Trump Administration actions. These independent abortion clinics represent about a quarter of all abortion providers in the U.S., however, combined they provide 58% of abortions. One pro-life proponent said this has not happened overnight. This trend has been decades in the making following the efforts and prayers of pro-life individuals and organizations across the country.

—ConservativeReview.com

NJ mandated vaccinations bill fails to receive Senate support

In a victory for New Jersey citizens and medical and religious freedom, the State's Senate failed in its attempts to pass a new bill that would have eliminated religious exemptions for vaccinations. In a massive public pushback, thousands of parents protested inside and outside the State Capitol on the day of the vote. As the day neared its end, the senator who sponsored the bill said that he was one vote shy of passage and thus a Senate vote was not held. However, the NJ Legislature will have an opportunity to revive the bill before January 13. Hopefully, it will not be passed, thus forcing the entire process for such a bill to start over again in the next Senate session.

—PRNewswire.com

ISIS claims revenge killings

ISIS claims they have killed 11 Christian men in Nigeria as part of a grisly campaign to avenge the deaths of its leader and the group's spokesman. It is believed these killings happened on Christmas Day. Back in October, this ISIS leader killed himself during a U.S. raid on a compound in northwest Syria, seven months after the so-called ISIS "caliphate" officially crumbled as the terrorist group was defeated in Syria. But some are saying now that ISIS affiliates are rising across Africa, almost unchecked.

—FoxNews.com

Religious freedom concerns entering 2020

Some good things happened on the religious freedom front in 2019. Yet, roughly three-fourths of the world's population lives in countries with high or very high levels of government restrictions and social hostilities toward religion. There are some challenges 2020 will pose to religious freedom. Government favoritism of one religion over others, like what has happened in India and Turkey, paves the way for discrimination and can even result in mass violence as religious extremists use it as cover for attacking minorities. Authoritarian regimes, like Iran,

North Korea, and China, exert the full strength of their security apparatuses and advanced technology to spy on, imprison, torture, and even execute people who do not belong to the state's official religion. Laws targeting religious groups, like in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, will continue to pose one of the biggest threats to minority faith groups. Recent laws in India make it the newest concern for religious freedom advocates. There are a few things countries can do to help address these issues. One approach is to make foreign economic investment conditional on religious liberty. Another approach is to demand reciprocal religious freedom in bilateral relations, so nations cannot exploit the liberties offered to their citizens abroad while denying them to religious minorities at home.

—FoxNews.com

Genocide concerns increasing in Nigeria

A recently released report estimates that over 1,000 Nigerian Christians have been killed during 2019 in attacks led by Fulani extremists. As land becomes scarce in areas, these Islamist militia (herdsmen by trade) continue to engage in aggressive and strategic land grabbing tactics by forcing farmers off their lands and settling in their place. This strategy has become known by the phrase: "your land or your blood." Some estimates indicate that over 6,000 Christians have been killed since 2015, while 12,000 have been displaced from their land. Tensions between these groups are not all based on religion, but religion and ideology do play a key part. A human rights organization has told the International Criminal Court that the standard of genocide has now been reached in Nigeria.

—ChristianPost.com

High school student denied permission to form a Christian club

A high school student in New York state was denied by the principal assistant and superintendent to form a Christian club as it was considered too "exclusive." A non-profit legal organization representing the student has sent a letter to the school stating among other things, "The school's repeated rejection of this student's application to form a religious club is a violation of the Equal Access Act of 1984." By not providing religious groups access to school resources, the school shows a hostility toward religion and also violates the First Amendment. In a September letter to the assistant superintendent, the student wrote, "I am a Christian. But sometimes it seems like I'm the only one. I want to start this club for other students like me so we can support each other in our beliefs." The application was delayed, for many suspect reasons, for several weeks. Happily, since a legal letter delineating constitutional violations was sent to the high school, the school district reversed its decision and is expected to approve the club in the New Year.

—ChristianNewsJournal.com

U.S. birth rate continues to drop

According to NBC News, the U.S. birth rate dropped again in 2018 for the fourth consecutive year, to its lowest level in three decades. A closer look at the statistics suggests that Americans are not having enough babies to sustain the population. Each family (female) should give birth to at least two children to maintain the present population level.

—NBC News (11/27/2019)



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

Of the Creation and Fall of Man and His Incapacity to Perform What Is Truly Good (Article XIV) (2)

Rev. A.M. den Boer (1929-2004)

That which we quoted from this article of our Confession in the previous issue is also stated in the Catechism and in the five articles against the Remonstrants. God is the Creator not only of heaven and earth but also of mankind. The Lord did not need man for His glory as He is all-sufficient in Himself, but it was His pleasure and sovereign will to make man. It is remarkable to see the difference between creation in general and the creation of man.

In creating all other things, the Lord only commanded and it came into existence. The creation of man was different, for we read, “And God said, let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness.” When the Lord had finished His work of Creation, He then called man into existence and made him the possessor, the owner, of the earth. The Lord made the body of Adam of the dust of the earth and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul. Man is of high descent by virtue of his creation; Adam is called the son of God. Man is the crown jewel of Creation because, as the Bible tells us, he was made after God’s image and likeness.

These are not, as Rome teaches, two different things, but they express the same thought, namely, that man was created in the likeness of God’s image, consisting in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness. The whole essence of man, in ability, power, nature, and attributes was without any shortcomings. He proceeded from God’s hand perfectly good; therefore, man was the image bearer of God. It is possible when we speak about likeness that we mistakenly think it means to look like God. That cannot be true of our body since God does not have a body. God is a Spirit. Therefore, to look like God is out of the question. What, then, can be the likeness?

God has given to man an imprint in the soul of His communicable attributes. This is the likeness of man to God. In the state of innocence, man was pure and had an upright relationship with God, just as this article states. When we speak, however, of the image of God found in man, then we can make a division on a wider and a narrower sense; the image of God is visible in his whole appearance—in the figure of the body, in his government over the beasts, and the immortality of the soul. The image of God in the narrow sense is knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

It has pleased the Lord to create some traces of His attributes in the soul of man. These attributes are infinite in God but finite in man. Man knew God and rejoiced in Him as the all-sufficient God of his salvation. His mind was so enlightened that he knew God as the triune God and as the fountain of his salvation. The communion with God was his highest joy. Adam knew God, and his obedience to Him was not a burden but the greatest good which he had.

We cannot imagine what this has been for Adam, but we know what the Church saith by faith: “I will behold Thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with Thy likeness.” In addition to this highest peak of knowledge, man also possessed righteousness, which was the ability to be and to do good. Man wanted to fulfill God’s will and serve Him in uprightness. Man was also holy and without even one sin, not even a sinful thought. The soul was a brook of crystal wherein not a speck of dust or uncleanness was to be found. The soul went out to the Lord and rejoiced in blessed communion with Him. Thus, man lived in immediate communion and in the friendship of God. Oh, in what a glorious state was man created!



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Ten Plagues (4)

(Based on Exodus 8)

Do you see many frogs in your area? “No,” might be your answer, “but I do not want to see them either. Frogs are so ugly. They have such big eyes and a wide mouth, and they can jump so far.”

Just think—how would you like to have frogs in your bed—frogs in your oven—frogs in your sink—frogs jumping on you—and frogs hopping all around you? Would that not be an awful thing? Most of us do not even want to think about it.

That is what happened to King Pharaoh. It was the second plague with which God punished him and his people. Moses and Aaron had asked him again to let the people of Israel go to worship their God, but again Pharaoh said no. Consequently, “Aaron stretched out his hand over the waters of Egypt; and the frogs came up, and covered the land of Egypt.”

Did that bother the king? No, in fact he told his magicians to do the same thing, and...they did. They were able to make frogs come up out of the water, too. Why would they even want to do that? We certainly would not want to do that, for I would not want more frogs around, but why did the magicians not get rid of the frogs? Because they could not do that; only God could.

Do you think that Pharaoh would now listen to Moses and Aaron and let the people go? Pharaoh called Moses and Aaron and asked them if they would have their God take away the frogs, and then he would let them go and worship God.

Do you think the king meant what he said? Just listen. Moses asked the king, “When would you like the Lord to take the frogs away?”

The king replied, “Tomorrow.”

“Then it will be tomorrow,” Moses told him. “I will pray to God and ask Him to take them away.”

Sure enough, the next day all of the frogs died. Now there were dead frogs everywhere—in the people’s beds, on the floors, and all over. Dead frogs are easier to pick up than live ones, don’t you think? So, the people of Egypt picked up all of the dead frogs and placed them on piles. They had to cover their noses because the smell was so bad. Then, according to Pharaoh, the people of Israel could go and worship, but Pharaoh changed his mind after the Lord took away the frogs. He said they could not go but had to stay in Egypt.

Is that not just like us. How many times have we promised the Lord that we would no longer do bad things, but we soon forget our promise and we go on as we did before? Just remember, we may forget, but the Lord does not forget, and we will have to answer to Him for all that we say and do.

It would be awful to have frogs everywhere wouldn’t it? Yet, I think it would be even worse to have lice all over. That is what God sent next to the people of Egypt.

Lice are very tiny, tiny bugs. You can barely see them, and that is why they are worse than frogs. You can see frogs hopping around, and you can probably push them out of the way, but lice are so tiny they can be all over you, and you would not be able to see them. They crawl over your skin, in your hair, and inside your clothes. They make you itch all over. The lice probably ended up in the food and drink. Not only the people were bothered by the lice; they also infected the animals.

God had directed Moses and Aaron to change all of the dust in the land to lice, and they had done so. This was the third plague God brought upon the king. The king again asked his magicians to do it, but this time they could not do it. “Oh, king,” they said to Pharaoh, “we cannot do that. Nothing happens when we try. The dust will not change to lice for us. Only God is able to do such a thing.”

Pharaoh, however, would not listen, and as the Bible tells us, he hardened his heart. He would not let the people go. Do you also harden your heart sometimes? That can be when you do not do something your father or mother asks you to do. Always remember, God punishes us when we harden our heart, except when we refuse to sin, for then we do God’s will.

The Bible doesn’t tell us, but it seems as if the Lord took the lice away after a few days. After the lice were gone, Moses and Aaron came to the king again and said, “Our God says to let us go to worship Him. If you do not let us go, He will send flies. There will be flies all over you, over all of your people, and throughout your houses.”

Do you think that the king might listen this time? He knew what the Lord could do. He knew that whatever Moses predicted would surely come to pass. Maybe he will listen this time, but the king did not

listen. Again, he would not let the people of Israel go. He continued to harden his heart.

Are we any different from the king? We go on as if we will never die, even though we know we must die. It happens to all of us. We “harden our hearts” and do not listen to the ministers God sends to us. Aren’t we just like king Pharaoh?

And then...the flies came—flies, mosquitoes, bees, and wasps. Wouldn’t that be horrible if it happened to you? The flies were all over, on people’s faces, biting their bodies, and sitting on their food. This plague was not sent on the children of Israel. God made a separation and only sent the plague upon the Egyptians. The king then agreed to let the people worship, “But,” said he, “you must do it here in Egypt. You cannot leave the land.”

“No,” replied Moses, “we cannot do that. The people of Egypt would kill us if they saw us praying to our God. Our God told us to go into the desert to worship, and we have to obey Him.”

The king finally agreed and said, “You may go, but first ask your God to take away these flies.”

Moses said that he would do that. “I will pray to God tomorrow and ask Him to take away the flies, but oh king, do not change your mind again and tell us a lie.” The next day after Moses prayed, the Lord took away the flies, and everything returned to normal. When that happened, the king again changed his mind, “hardened” his heart, and would not let the people go. Are we ever like that king?



Bible Quiz

Brothers

Dear Boys and Girls,

I have read in your notes to me that many of you have little brothers. Some of you have older brothers, even ones that are already married and have children of their own. You might bicker with your younger brother sometimes, and your mother might say, “That’s enough. Remember, not everyone has a little brother to play with; you two should be best friends.”

The truth is, you actually are. You can always count on your brother to play with you and depend on him to back you. When you are at school, and you see someone tease your younger brother, what do you do? You will either say, “Come on, let’s go on the swings together; don’t mind them,” or you will defend him and say, “Leave my brother alone.” This is just as true for sisters. Brothers and sisters are a blessing from the Lord, just like your father, mother, and grandparents are. Are you kind to each other? If you do not have a brother or sister, perhaps you have a friend who is just as special to you as a brother or sister would be.

Let’s think of older brothers. In our family, my two-year-old has three older brothers. One is just six, but he is still a “big brother,” and my two-year-old, Abe, copies everything he does. A few days ago when

we went on a long hike, it took only moments for me to realize why Abe was halfway up a steep incline next to the path, scrambling on all fours. Sure enough, his big brother was already at the top, grinning down at him. Abe did whatever his big brother did, and his big brother loved to reach out and help him up the rocks. Back at home, Abe brought his books to his brother and snuggled up next to him. He knew his brother could read.

Another one of Abe’s brothers is much older and far away from home. All of his younger brothers and sisters miss him and are always excited when the phone rings and they hear his voice. When he came home for a few weeks, they cried and laughed at the same time; they were really happy. They had looked forward to his coming for so long. They are glad when they receive emails or texts, advice or pictures, or even just a, “How was school today?” or “You can do it!” My six-year-old often wears his big brother’s military cap.

An older brother is someone you can trust and lean on, someone to look up to. If he goes hunting and comes home with a big buck, you are proud. If he builds a beautiful shed in the yard or a coffee table for your mother, you tell everyone about it.

“Guess what MY brother did...!” He is someone whose example you often follow and who helps you when you need it. If you have trouble with a math problem, you know you can always ask him because he knows more than you do. When he takes time to play a game outdoors with you or teach you something new, you are so happy. He belongs to you, and because you are his little brother or sister, he is protective of you.

In the Bible, we also read of older brothers. Joseph was Benjamin’s older brother, and he took good care of him when he came to Egypt. Andrew was a man who made sure he shared good news with his brother. There were also unkind brothers or brothers who were a bad example, and that is because they are all human brothers. However, the Bible gives us many examples of people who loved one another as brothers or “brethren.” The Bible also tells us about a Brother who is not just an ordinary human being. Who is that?

This is Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, and He is not only truly man but true, Almighty God. He is one with His Father and the Holy Spirit. God’s children are also “sons of God,” but they have been made God’s children by adoption. They belong to one family because God is their Father even though they might not dare to call themselves His children or call Him Father. They love others of God’s children as brothers of one house. They have been adopted, but there is One who is the only begotten Son of God, and that is Christ.

God’s people need the Lord Jesus Christ the way we might need an older brother. They know that He not only knows more, but He knows everything. They know that He is not only able to protect them, but He is a complete Hiding Place of safety. They know that He is not only strong and able to help them, but He is all powerful. They are dependent on Him for everything. They can do nothing at all without Him. They might forget, and turn more to the world and less to Him, but then everything becomes wrong in their life. Then they cry to Him in their trouble, and He saves them. He has not only defended them as an earthly brother might do, but He sacrificed His life for them. He died so that their souls may live. They have many things to tell Him—many complaints about themselves, many cries for help against soul-enemies, many pleadings for His mercy. Even when they cannot explain themselves anymore or cannot put anything into words, He understands, and He knows all about them. He will never forsake them because they are His “brethren.”

The Bible says that God’s people sometimes cry, “O that Thou wert as my Brother” (Song of Solomon), and God writes in His Word that Christ “is not ashamed to call them brethren” (Hebrews). Are they people that are so good, so beautiful, so desirable? No, not at all. It is quite the opposite; yet, He is not ashamed to call them his brethren because He sees His own work in their heart. These people love Him because He first loved them. They long for His voice, are glad when He speaks, and love going to church because it is His house. They often read what He has written—the Bible. If He seems far away from them, they long for Him, and they are happy if He seems close to them. They are often in the wrong way, straying and falling into sin and believing the devil, their enemy, but their best times are when they trust and lean on the Lord Jesus as their elder Brother. Then they love to speak of Him and desire for others to know Him, too.

“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!”
(Psalm 133:1)

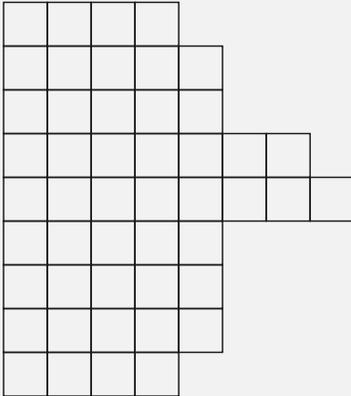
* * * * *

Which brother was...

1. A keeper of sheep? _____ (Genesis 4)
2. A tiller of the ground? _____ (Genesis 4)
3. A brother who ran to find the servant at the well—the servant who wanted to take his sister along as a wife for his master? _____ (Genesis 24)
4. The little brother for whom the ruler in Egypt had been waiting so anxiously? _____ (Genesis 43)
5. The tribe who went with their brother-tribe Judah when Judah had to be the first to go up and fight the Canaanites? _____ (Judges 1)
6. Caleb’s younger brother who was raised up by the Lord to save and be judge over Israel? _____ (Judges 3)
7. A fisherman who worked together with his brother Simon Peter? _____ (Matthew 4)
8. A brother of John whom Jesus saw mending the fishing nets? _____ (Matthew 4)
9. Sick and died, for whom his sisters mourned and were sad? _____ (John 11)
10. A brother of James who wrote a very small book of the Bible? _____ (Jude 1)

Using the answers from #1-10 as a guide, who was the brother of...

11. Abel?
12. Othniel?
13. Simeon?
14. Martha?
15. Joseph?
16. John?
17. Andrew?
18. Rebekah?
19. James?



List the sons of...

20. Simeon: (Genesis 46 – six brothers) _____

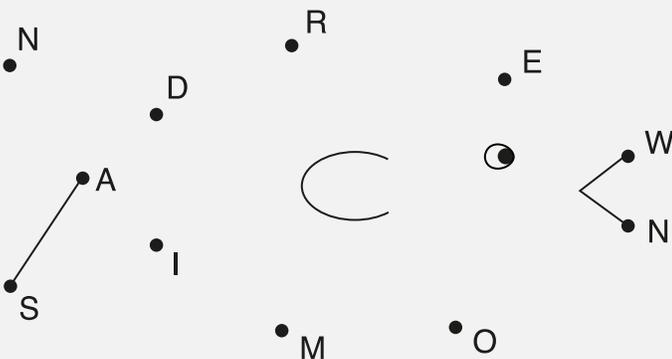
21. Levi: (Genesis 46 – three brothers) _____

22. Judah: (Genesis 46 – five brothers) _____

23. Noah: (Genesis 9 – three brothers) _____

For the Younger Children

24. In Mark 1:16 and John 1:40,41, two brothers are working together as fishermen, and one brother tells the other brother the good news of having found the Messiah. Who are the two brothers? Connect the letters to form the names.



For the Older Children

Fill in the blanks.

25. John writes in his first epistle, "He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in _____ even until now. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of _____ in him."

26. In Genesis 31 we read, "Then Jacob offered sacrifice upon the mount, and called his brethren to eat bread: and they did eat bread, and tarried all night in the _____."

27. After their money is returned to them in their sacks of corn, the brothers of Joseph tell father Jacob all that has happened, and how they told Pharaoh, "We be twelve brethren, sons of our father; one is not, and the _____ is this day with our father in the land of Canaan."

28. In 1 Samuel we read of David hiding in a cave with others. "David therefore departed thence, and escaped to the cave Adullam: and when his brethren and all his father's _____ heard it, they went down thither to him."

* * * * *

Answers to January's "Opportunity" quiz:

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. wise | Proverbs 1:5 |
| 2. hear | Exodus 6:12 |
| 3. commandments | Nehemiah 9:16 |
| 4. come | Psalms 34:11 |
| 5. people | Psalms 45:10 |
| 6. Israel | Psalms 81:8 |
| 7. walked | Psalms 81:13 |
| 8. tents | Psalms 106:25 |
| 9. repent | Acts 3:19 |
| 10. kingdom | Matthew 18:3 |
| 11. safely | Proverbs 1:33 |
| 12. mouth | Proverbs 7:24 |
| 13. Judas Iscariot, betray Jesus (Matthew 26:16) | |
| 14. all men, especially those of the household of faith (Galatians 6:10) | |
| 15. Philippians 4:10 | |
| 16. Hebrews 11:15 | |
| 19. Psalm 19:7 | |
| 18. Matthew 13:15 | |

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth
180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435
E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com

Answers to previous quizzes were received in November from:

Maddy Anzelmo 1
 GaryJon Blom 3
 Jenina Blom 7
 Lawrence Blom 2
 Martena Blom (3) 12
 Willem Blom 5
 Derek Brouwer 6
 Thomas Brouwer 5
 Aleah Dale 3
 Nathan Dale 3
 Nicholas DeVries 6
 Kaylee Den Boer 1
 Sarina Den Bok 6
 Thomas Den Bok (2) 7
 Joshua den Breejen 2
 Julianna den Breejen 2
 Cody Driesen 7
 Kacie Driesen 7
 Sam Driesen 7
 Toby Driesen 7

Kaylynn Ekema 7
 Geralyn Engelen 6
 Kariena Engelen 5
 Shawn Engelen 6
 Trevor Engelen 6
 Alia Kelderman (2) 5
 Brendan Kelderman (2) 2
 Christa Kerkhoff 4
 Ashley Knibbe 8
 Courtney Knibbe 8
 Lindsey Knibbe 8
 Whitney Knibbe 8
 Callie Koedam 1
 Marlisa Korevaar 4
 Rebekah Korevaar 4
 Lydia Mol 7
 Rachel Mol 5
 Teddy Mol 7
 John Murphy 2
 Marielle Neels 5

Samuel Rozeboom 1
 Autumn Rus 1
 Brooke Rus 1
 Jaron Schipper 1
 Willaena Schipper (4) 4
 Gavin Spaans (4) 11
 Jacob Spaans (2) 8
 Micah Spaans 1
 Wilson Spaans (4) 10
 Megan Taylor 4
 Renee Taylor 1
 Colin Ten Hove 7
 Drake Timmer 7
 Harley Timmer 9
 Hunter Timmer 7
 Kadin Timmer 7
 Sierra Timmer 8
 Skye Timmer 9
 Wyatt Timmer 7
 Anna Van Brugge 3

Maurice Van Garderen 7
 Emmalyn Van Garderen 7
 Sophia Van Lagen (2) 6
 Shantel Van Liere (3) 9
 Lydia Van Manen 8
 Rosalee Van Manen 8
 Kaiven Van Middendorp 8
 Konner Van Middendorp 8
 Jozias Van Ravenswaay 8
 Naomi Van Ravenswaay 8
 Alivia Vande Hoef 9
 Micah Vande Hoef 6
 Rachel Veldhuizen 2
 Sharon Veldhuizen 2
 Anthony Wessels 4
 Johanna Wessels 8
 Allyson Ymker 4
 Cameron Ymker 8
 Paxton Ymker 4
 Quentin Ymker 4

9 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is 99—one more and we have reached 100! Thank you, boys and girls.

The number behind your name in the list indicates how many quizzes you have completed. When you complete six, a Bible will be sent to a Bolivian child. The numbers that appear in parenthesis behind some of the names just mean that those children sent in a few quizzes at a time that month.



Letters to My Young Readers

Welcome to our new members:
 Callie Koedam, Samuel Rozeboom, Brooke
 & Autumn Rus, Micah Spaans, Jared &
 Aidan Bosch, Jaron Schipper, and Kaylee
 Den Boer.

Love,
 Aunt LenaBeth



Willaena Schipper

Thanks for writing me a letter, Willaena. It wasn't attached to your answers, so hopefully I will receive it and be able to answer you next time, the Lord willing.

Anthony Wessels

I hope you are enjoying your summer holidays, Anthony. What do you enjoy doing outside? Do you know the song, "Summer and winter and springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above join with all nature in manifold witness to Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love"?

Johannah Wessels

I hope you are enjoying your summer holidays, Johannah, and that you had a good Christmas. What a wonder that the Lord Jesus came down to earth as Man to be with men! Ask the Lord often if He will give you a true need for Him. Do you have names for your pet lambs? They must be adorable. We almost took home some shivering, cold, newborn goats the other day, but then their mother finally stepped in to care for them. We do have animals, yes - a pony, a donkey, two sheep, three dogs, three ducks, fifty chickens, two bunnies, and a cat. A potbellied pig and another dog also share the yard with us.

Aidan & Hayley Bosch

Thanks for joining us, Aidan, and your brother as well. I hope you enjoy doing the quizzes. How is your calf doing? I'm glad you take good care of her by feeding her every morning. Creatures depend on us, especially in the winter when it is so cold and they need extra care. How far are you with your class in studying the book of James, Hayley? I sometimes forget that it is warm by you when it is cold by us. I hope you are enjoying the summer days. Can you find some verses in the Bible about summer and the sun?



Here are two more pictures of children enjoying the Bibles that you sent them, boys and girls.



News & Announcements

Church News

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Extended:

To Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Brakel, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Markham, Ontario.

Declined:

By Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Brakel, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

By Rev. E. Hakvoort of Norwich, Ontario, to the congregation of Aalst, the Netherlands.

By Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregations of Capelle a/d Ijssel West, the Netherlands; Covell Avenue, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Nobleford, Alberta; and Sioux Center, Iowa.

Obituaries

HARMSSEN, Wesley – Age 90, December 16, 2019; Waupun, Wisconsin; Wife – Hilma Jean (deceased); Children – Gregory & Beverly Harmsen, Stanley Harmsen, Kathleen & Dale Jeche, Karen & Gerald Tjepkema; 13 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren; predeceased by sons Jeffrey and Timothy Harmsen. (Rev. A.T. Vergunst, Isaiah 53:11.)

RUS, Frances Reva (nee Maassen) – Age 91, December 17, 2019; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Jacob; Children – Marion & Becky Rus, Darwin & Helen Rus, Shirley Van Voorst, Tami & Jim Van Beek; 23 grandchildren, 83 great-grandchildren, 4 great-great-grandchildren; Sister – Sally Koedam; Sister-in-law – Joan Maassen; predeceased by great-grandchild Jayda Fay Van Voorst, brother Ray Maassen, and sister Eileen Klootwyk. (Rev. H. Hofman, Psalm 39:4.)

SLINGERLAND, Elisabeth (nee Groenendijk) – Age 51, December 20, 2019; Lethbridge, Alberta; Husband – Willem; Children – Heidi & Piet Heger, Caroline, Martina & Abe den Hollander, John & Henriët, William & Janita, Joshua, Elsa Slingerland & friend Larry Kleinsasser, Nathan, Martin, Louise, Lynette, Ezra, Allen, Lydia, and guardian children Roxene and Sandra; 6 grandchildren; Parents – Jan & Corrie Groenendyk; Siblings – Jannie & Pete Van Waardhuizen, Wim & Brenda Groenendijk, Jos & Judy Groenendijk, Corine & Tim Hunt, Gerard & Henriëka Groenendijk; In-laws – Gerie & Bas de Peuter, Jannie & Jaap Stouten, Jacob & Nellie, Aris, Gonnie & Kor Vanden Hoek, Martin & Jeanette, Case & Rose,

Adam & Annie, Hank & Arlene, Tony & Lisa, Diane, Judy & Chris den Hertog, Marinus & Wilma; predeceased by parents Maarten & Hillegonda de Peuter, infant sister Theodora, sister-in-law Margaret, brother-in-law John, infant children Pauline and Rebecca, and infant grandchild Jonathan. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Exodus 12:12&13.)

SPAANS, Andrew – Age 77, January 2, 2020; Mitchell, South Dakota; Wife – Doris; Mother-in-law – Grace Groen; Siblings – Leonard & Elizabeth Spaans, Ben & Betty Spaans; Sisters-in-law – Pauline Spaans, JoAnne Spaans, Hermina Spaans, Madelyn Spaans, Cathy Spaans, Rosalie Spaans, and Betty Spaans; also survived by wife's siblings Betty & Tom Strehlow, Jane & John Gerlach, Lois & Duanne Lubbers, Dick & Pam Groen; predeceased by sister Nellie Bouma, and brothers Herman & Clazina Spaans, Cornie, Rev. John, Henry, Albert, Dick Jr., Adrian, and Marvin. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, James 4:14.)

New Clerk for Corsica, SD

Steven Johnson
P.O. Box 253
Corsica, SD 57328
johnsons@siouxvalley.net

New Titles from Bible Truth Books

Letters from the Cabin by William Huntington—A collection of previously unpublished and uncollected letters by William Huntington. Hardcover, 407 pages, \$37.00.

Nelleke's Prayer by L. Visser-Oskam—A great sorrow had come into Nelleke's life. It was all because of that miserable alcohol. Father spent almost all of his money at the bar. At home there was so much poverty, and the atmosphere was far from pleasant. One day, Nelleke prayed for a Bible...and the Lord answered that prayer in a very special manner. For ages nine and older. Hardcover, 77 pages, \$6.67.

Upheld by God by J. van Brakel—The young German Karl Wagner knew that he had to become a minister, but how...? It seemed impossible. When he was wounded in World War I, he became acquainted with a rich Jewish nurse, Esther. After many difficulties, a solution came, but then World War II approached, with awful consequences. Yet, this way would also lead to God's honor. For ages fourteen and older. Hardcover, 123 pages, \$17.50.

Young Singers, Volume 9 by J. Westerbeke—Another collection of stories of children and young people who were converted by the Lord and taken from this life at an early age. Note: Volumes 1-8 of this series remain in print and are available for \$16.50 each. Hardcover, 114 pages, \$16.50.

Musings of the Heart by Mr. Jack Swets—The late Mr. Swets of Grand Rapids composed poems which appeared on the back cover of *The Banner of Truth* from time to time. These poems have now been compiled into a booklet. Paperback, 55 pages, \$2.00.

From the Manse, Volume 9 by Rev. J. Roos—Another collection of monthly meditative letters by Rev. Roos, in which he relates experiences and events from the lives of God's children. The irrevocable nature of this word is both a serious warning and consolation. Note: Volumes 1-8 of this series remain in print and are available for \$16.50 each. Hardcover, 154 pages, \$16.50.

The prices above do not include postage.

Bible Truth Books
P.O. Box 1290
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-1290
Phone / Fax: 616-776-2593
BibleTruthBooks@igateweb.com

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 2020-2021 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 further oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be bound upon someone's heart to come over and help us. Any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail, rdteunissen@yahoo.com.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY, We are interested in receiving applications for the following two positions: 1) For a transition into the administrator role of our school for the 2020-2021 school year. Qualified applicants would be those with educational administrative experience or who are experienced teachers with administrative aspirations. A suitable transition 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 desire for the temporal and spiritual welfare of the students. 2) For a teaching position opening for the 2020-21 school year. Qualified applicants would be those capable of teaching various Literature and other English related courses at the junior and senior high levels.

To apply or request more information, please contact the education chairman, Mr. Tim Mol, at 973-204-5677 or tjmol@yahoo.com or the administrator, Mr. John Van Der Brink, at 973-628-7400 or jvanderbrink@nrconsnj.org.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is a Pre-K through 12th grade school serving 420 students from the NRC of Rock Valley, Sioux Center, and Sioux Falls. We are seeking to fill the following positions: a secondary math/science teacher and a music teacher. The focus of the music position would be instrumental (5-12 band/orchestra) along with other opportunities in K-12 music. Please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or dan.breuer@nrconsia.org for further information.

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, invites inquiries from teachers desiring to teach in our small K-9 school. Interested parties, please contact the principal, Tom Kwekel, at tom.kwekel@gmail.com or 616-644-2661 for more information.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is a kindergarten through grade 12 school, located in the small town of Norwich, Ontario. We have an enrollment of approximately 850 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 2020-2021 school year. We welcome those interested in joining our committed and supportive team to contact the Director of School Operations, Mr. John Heikoop, to discuss employment opportunities. He can be reached by phone at 519-863-2403, ext. 223, or by email at director@rcsnorwich.com. To submit a cover letter and resumé, please email hr@rcsnorwich.com.

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!

“Then delivered he Him therefore unto them to be crucified” (John 19:16a).

The three “G’s” mean everything to God’s people: Gethsemane, where Jesus crept; Gabbatha, where Pilate judged Him; Golgotha, where He was crucified. People of God, you know of such a cross. He who hung there was cursed. Oh, consider that crucifixion. Jesus was nailed to the cross so that the curse could be laid upon Him and taken away by Him. His hands were affixed to the cross so that yours hands could be released from the bands of sin. His feet were nailed to the accursed cross so that your feet could be set upon the way of life. He was hung on the cross to be the link between the Father and you. Adore Him, the crucified Saviour, the Just for the unjust—to lead the redeemed up to God. Reader, was He crucified for you? Did He surrender Himself to death for you? This will be the question for each of us. It is not that we accept Jesus but that the Father may give Him to us.

— Rev. G. Van Reenen

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 Two Malefactors

Sovereign grace has pow'r alone
To subdue a heart of stone;
And the moment grace is felt,
Then the hardest heart will melt.

When the Lord was crucified,
Two transgressors with Him died;
One, with vile blaspheming tongue,
Scoffed at Jesus as He hung.

Thus he spent his wicked breath,
In the very jaws of death
Perished, as too many do,
With the Saviour in his view.

But the other, touched with grace,
Saw the danger of his case;
Faith received to own the Lord,
Whom the scribes and priests abhorred.

“Lord,” he prayed, “remember me,
When in glory Thou shalt be”—
“Soon with Me,” the Lord replies,
“Thou shalt rest in paradise.”

This was wondrous grace indeed,
Grace vouchsafed in time of need!
Sinners, trust in Jesus' name,
You shall find Him still the same.

But beware of unbelief,
Think upon the hardened thief;
If the gospel you disdain,
Christ, to you, will die in vain.

— *John Newton*