

the **Banner** *of Truth*

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The Official Periodical
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In this issue...

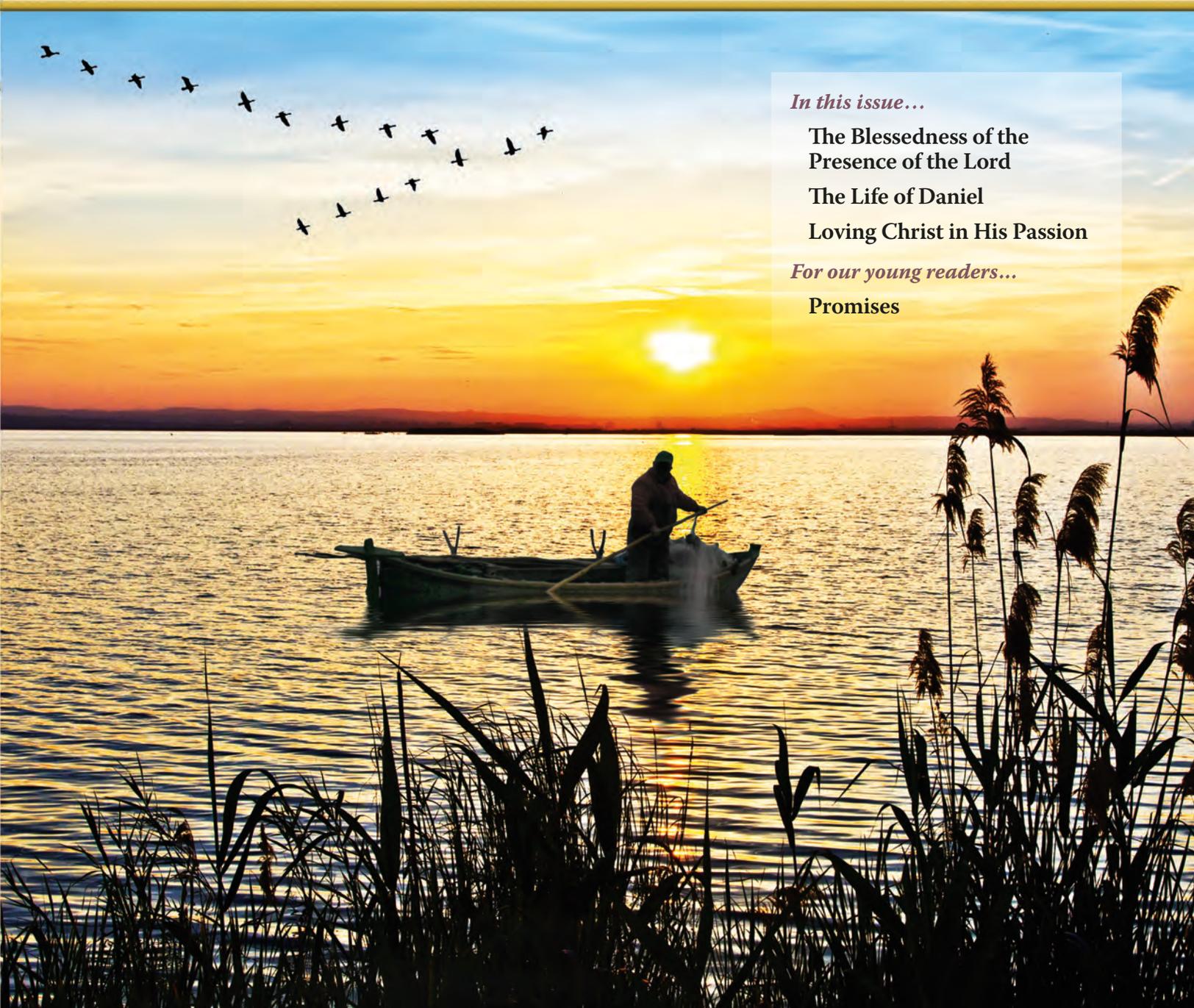
**The Blessedness of the
Presence of the Lord**

The Life of Daniel

Loving Christ in His Passion

For our young readers...

Promises



"...go thou to the sea, and cast an hook..." MATTHEW 17:27b



Meditation The Blessedness of the Presence of the Lord <i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>	51	Media Use A Fearful and Overwhelming Onslaught from the Powers of Darkness <i>NRC Synodical Modern Media Committee</i>	62
Curatorium Announcement	52	Current Events	63
Bible Study The Life of Daniel (1) <i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>	53	TIMOTHY – for the Young Of the Creation and Fall of Man and His Incapacity to Perform What Is Truly Good (3) <i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>	64
For Young and Old God's Free Grace Glorified (6) <i>Edited by Marinus Nijssse</i>	54	Bible Stories for Little Ones The Ten Plagues (5) <i>Submitted</i>	65
From Our Inheritance Loving Christ in His Passion <i>Isaac Ambrose</i>	56	Bible Quiz Promises <i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	66
Guidance Vaccinations <i>Rev. A. Vergunst</i>	58	Letters to My Young Readers	69
Questions & Answers Questions from Our Readers <i>Rev. H. Hofman</i>	59	News & Announcements	70
Doctrinal Studies Holy Baptism (2) <i>Rev. G.J. van Aalst</i>	61	Back Cover Finished Salvation <i>Augustus Toplady</i>	72

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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

The Blessedness of the Presence of the Lord

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And He said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest. And he said unto Him, If Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence” (Exodus 33:14&15).

The people of Israel have been led out of Egypt from a land of toil and misery. They have been led into the wilderness, a land of drought and dangers. They are on the way to Canaan, the promised land. Our life is a journey, and we are on the way to our eternal destination. There is a people to whom it is a wilderness journey, people who have learned to know their misery and bondage in Egypt but have been led out by God’s mighty hand. Yet, Israel is a stiff-necked people. God had made a covenant with them. The blood had been sprinkled upon them. They have promised faithfulness to Him but have made a golden calf and offended the Lord. He said that He would destroy the people and make a new great nation. Moses became an intercessor for them and pleaded on God’s own name and honor. What would the Egyptians say? The Lord answered him; He will send an angel with the people on their way to Canaan.

An earnest request

The tent of the tabernacle was placed outside the camp of the Israelites as a visible token that the Lord was not dwelling in their midst anymore. Moses was not content but grieved. He would rather be in the wilderness with God than in Canaan without Him. Do we know this desire? What do we prefer: riches, ease, convenience, pleasure, or God’s favor and nearness? Moses pleaded with God to show that He had not forsaken them, for God’s presence is life. We could also read verse 14 as a question that is asked by the Lord. Shall My presence go with you? And shall I give you rest? So it is also rendered in the Dutch Statenvertaling Bible. Moses does not want to go farther without God. What a blessing it would be if, not only on Prayer Day but every day of the year, we would desire God’s nearness. Then we would not be able to take a step without Him. Asaph says in Psalm 73:28, “But it is good for me to draw near to God.” Do we know such a desire? It was the petition of Moses.

God’s presence

It was as if the Lord tested and tried Moses, as if He asked, “Would it not be enough for him to have an angel leading them?” No! Moses desired God’s presence, or face. The poet of Psalm 4 knew this as well in verse 6, “LORD, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.” It is the

experience of God’s true pilgrims that God’s kind face gives joyfulness and light. A token of God’s presence was visible in the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night. God’s presence or face gives: 1) an acknowledgment that His people belong to Him and are His people, indeed; 2) preservation and protection amidst all dangers; 3) direction and guidance into an unknown future, “I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way thou shalt go” (Psalm 32:8a); 4) real worship where they may behold His face and may also adore Him; 5) them to see how it is in His heart, “I have loved thee with an everlasting love.”

His presence is sufficient for all their needs and trials. They are never alone. His presence is efficient; it is not merely observation but provision and supply. His presence is continual. When their flesh and heart faileth, God is the strength of their heart and their portion forever. His presence gives encouragement. Isaiah 41:10, “Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” However, how is it possible that God would show His kind countenance unto such foolish and undeserving people? That could only be because of Christ who would be nailed to the cross and experience the hiding of the Father’s countenance. There was no light of His countenance for the Lord Jesus, but darkness was upon Him. He descended into the breach between God and them. The righteous Judge was against Him, but in Him who is now the great Intercessor, God’s presence can go with such a rebellious people. What a wonder this is!

True rest

It was not enough for Moses that an angel would lead the people to Canaan, but only God’s presence would give them rest, or literally, a resting place. We live in a world full of unrest and turmoil. Also, in the heart of pilgrims the rest is so often missing. They are assaulted by many enemies and may fear that they would never arrive in Canaan to be with the Lord. However, the Lord promised to give Moses rest, and this applies to all spiritual pilgrims. After the conflicts of life, there is the rest of triumph in the heavenly Canaan. There are resting places here already and Elims from the toils of the wilderness journey. There is rest from fears, anxieties, and dangers of the way. There is rest from sufferings and afflictions of life. There is rest from the spiritual warfare, from the burden of sin, and at the end of the journey, there is the rest of eternal and heavenly glory. “There is a place by Me.” Christ is the resting place. He is

the Shiloh. He promised, “And be content with such things as ye have: for He has said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5b). Christ is the greater Boaz who would not be “in rest, until he had finished the thing this day,” as Naomi said to Ruth.

He invites, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Of Him the prophet testified, “In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity, He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old” (Isaiah 63:9). When faith may be in exercise, then they may rest in His good pleasure which is from everlasting. In His wisdom He knows what is best for them. There is rest in His faithfulness—“I am the

Lord, I change not”; in His immutability—He will not alter the words which He has spoken; in His power—all power is given unto Him in heaven and earth; in His love—although He may hide His face, His love is an everlasting love. There is rest in His balm which he pours into their wounds—rest in His nearness when He speaks to their heart—rest in the Ark of God where there is safety, and finally, rest at the heart of God when pilgrims may come home. To follow Him, the Rest Giver, gives rest. Let Him rule and reign, although this is something that we can never do in our own strength. We are totally dependent on Him to draw us unto Him and to keep us in the way we have to go, yet His care is sufficient for all our needs. It is our comfort that He will do what He has promised us. □

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.

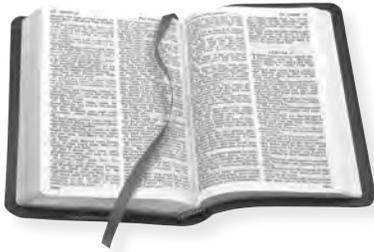
The Lord Himself declared, as He waited at Jacob’s Well, that it was His meat to do the will of His Father which had sent Him and to finish His work. This was more to Him than His necessary food. Without being sent by the Lord Himself, our flesh cannot endure in the work of the Lord. Without being sent 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 is the 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*

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Bible Study

The Life of Daniel (1)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“Now among these were the children of Judah, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah: Unto whom the prince of the eunuchs gave names: for he gave unto Daniel the name of Belteshazzar; and to Hananiah, of Shadrach; and to Mishael, of Meshach; and to Azariah, of Abednego” (Daniel 1:6&7).

The Lord is always true to His Word, to the threatenings as well as the promises in it. We read in Isaiah 39 that the prophecy came to Hezekiah, “Hear the word of the LORD of hosts: Behold, the days come, that all that is in thine house, and that which thy fathers have laid up in store until this day, shall be carried to Babylon: nothing shall be left, saith the LORD. And of thy sons that shall issue from thee, which thou shalt beget, shall they take away; and they shall be eunuchs in the palace of the king of Babylon.” Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, came unto Jerusalem and besieged it. We read in Daniel 1:2, “And the Lord gave Jehoiakim king of Judah into his hand, with part of the vessels of the house of God: which he carried into the land of Shinar to the house of his god; and he brought the vessels into the treasure house of his god.” What he also brought to his land were some young men of Israel of royal nobility. It was a select group of young men who had a good outward appearance, had an above average intelligence, had received a good education, and who might be fit to occupy some position in the court of Nebuchadnezzar.

The young men in Babel

What a change this was for these young men who were probably not even twenty years old. There, in a strange land, in exile, they had to study the old languages of Babylon, astronomy, astrology, mathematics, and a certain amount of natural history. Not only this, their names were changed. This was done with the intent to remove the remembrance of the religion in which they were brought up, serving the God of Israel. Their old names had something of their God in it. Daniel means, “God is my Judge.” However, it was changed into Belteshazzar, which may mean “the keeper of the hidden treasures of Baal,” which was the great Babylonian idol. The same we see in the names of his young friends. Hananiah, which means “Jehovah has been gracious,” was changed into Shadrach, which may mean the decree of the moon god. Mishael, which is, “He is the strong God,” was replaced by Meshach, after their idol Shach, the name with which Venus was worshipped. Azariah, of which the meaning is “Jehovah helped,” was changed into Abed-nego, servant of Nego, the god of the fire.

The intent of the change of these names was, according to Calvin, “To lead these youths to adopt the customs of the Chaldeans, that they might have nothing in common with the chosen people.” God had said of His people Israel that they should dwell alone. They were His covenant people which was a great privilege but also a high responsibility. Would these young men be alienated from the upbringing they had received? It is no different today when our young people go to colleges and other places of higher education. They often will be told that in order to be scientific they have to start by forgetting about what they have been told when they were younger, and now they have to see for themselves what the truth is that they can embrace. They have to begin without the ballast of their past and search themselves for what is true and worthy to be believed. These are the results of the modern philosophy which has no place for the truth as still may be taught among us—the truth about an almighty Creator but also a righteous Judge before whom we all will be placed to give an account of our stewardship and of what we have done with the talents and opportunities given unto us. It is to be feared that many young people will indeed be influenced and sometimes changed by what they hear from those who may impress them with their so-called knowledge. These young men in Babel did not only have names which spoke of God the Creator and Ruler of this world, but they also had, as it will appear later, the fear of the Lord in their heart. The Lord will keep them, also in this strange country.

Temptation

They received a privileged place, filled with opportunities to make a brilliant career. However, there will also be temptations to violate what they have been taught when they were still in Canaan. We read in verse 5, “And the king appointed them a daily provision of the king’s meat, and of the wine which he drank: so nourishing them three years, that at the end thereof they might stand before the king.” What a temptation because this was meat from the king’s table. You can be sure that it was delicious and also helpful to make them look well-nourished and healthy at the end of those three years. What would Daniel and his friends do? Would they compromise because there did not seem to be another way? No! We read in verse 8, “But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king’s meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself.”

It was clear to Daniel that no compromise was possible. There were several reasons for his refusal of the king's food. Many of the meats provided by these heathens were ceremonially unclean. Israelites had to abstain from things which had been offered to idols, and this was usually the case with meat in these heathen courts. Daniel knew it would be sinful to eat of food forbidden them by the Lord. These were not just matters of opinion, but he purposed *in his heart*, or, he laid it *upon his heart*, which means, he *solemnly resolved* not to do this. It was in his heart like when Joseph said, "How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" The tender fear of God's name was in the heart of these still so young people. It is good and highly recommendable that in the use of modern media we use filters to, as much as is possible, avoid coming into great temptations. However, the best filter is the fear of God. Even having a new life in our heart is no guarantee that we will be kept in the midst of the many temptations that young and older ones may meet in universities and society. However, the fear of God in practice will help one flee from the temptations as far as is possible.

Request

The life of Daniel had made an impression upon the prince of the eunuchs who was set over Daniel and his friends. Evidently, he saw sincerity and faithfulness in the conduct of these young men which distinguished them from others. Do we have a life in the fear of God that may make others jealous? Although enmity may then be our portion, such a tender walk in God's ways will also give

impressions in the heart of worldly people. They may see something that they cannot explain but that is definitely sincere. Such a life is only possible if, in the midst of temptations, we have a praying life. Do not attempt to fight these dangers in your own strength. We should be conscious of our weakness but seek God's grace to be kept by His gracious hand.

Daniel then acts wisely and politely; he makes his request to be excused from such food. He does not provoke others, does not come as one who stands above them, but it is evident that it is a sincere, earnest request from a humble heart. Although the prince of the eunuchs expresses his fear that granting Daniel's request will endanger his life, when Daniel asks for a trial period of ten days, his request is granted. For ten days they will eat pulse and drink only water, using only a simple nourishment. Pulse may mean peas and beans but also things which are sown which will include grains, even bread. However, it would be a far simpler meal than what the other young men would receive. Daniel, however, knows that God reigns and he may entrust himself and his friends unto His care, believing that He will provide. The Lord can make the simplest food so rich in nourishment that the expectations of this young man will not be put to shame. What a privilege it is, also in our days, that we may be steadfast, not drift away into compromising and adopting the customs and fashions of the world. May the Lord grant this tender fear of His name, this life of prayer, also in our families. □

(To be continued)



For Young and Old

God's Free Grace Glorified (6)

Edited by Marinus Nijse

(Uitgeverij Pieters, Oostburg, the Netherlands)

The recently passed days showed a rapid decline in Mina's condition.

It is now the third of February. Rev. Middel stands sorrowfully at the sickbed of his daughter. He cannot help his daughter, but he can pray for her. If Mina has to die, it will be very difficult for him, but then—if only she may be eternally happy.

The poor father goes to his study and there brings his needs before the Lord. He begs that the soul of his child may be saved. He wrestles and continues in prayer. Then it is almost as if he hears an audible voice, and there come with power in his soul the words of Nahum the prophet, "Affliction shall not rise up a second time."

Oh, the great wonder of God's mercy. The Lord showed His servant that although the affliction of his child was very grievous, it would not come over her a second time. Upon her death, she would be delivered from her afflictions. She would then be with God in glory eternally.

Suddenly the minister's thoughts went back twenty-six years to the "Oosterkerk" in Amsterdam. It was a service where Rev. Van Maanen preached about the marriage of Amram and Jochabed, the parents of Moses. Out of that marriage, three children would be born to serve the Lord, namely, Moses, Aaron, and Miriam. In this way the Lord still fulfills His counsel, when He unites God-fearing people in marriage in an exceptional manner.

At that time, Rev. Middel was able to believe that this is what happened in his own marriage. He had been closely bound to his future wife by means of correspondence but without ever having met her. They had never yet spoken to each other. Powerfully, he was given to believe that also out of their marriage three children would be born who would serve the Lord. What unspeakable joy that had been for him then, but He was only able to enjoy the expectation of the promised fulfillment for a short time. Later that promise was hidden for him, and he thought very little about it. Now his thoughts were again fixed on this promise. It was as if the Lord asked him, "Have you forgotten what I promised you during that church service and later in your home?" Then the Lord showed him how He had converted his young son John at a very early age and had taken him up in glory at five years old. Now He would also bring his daughter there where all tears will be wiped away; also he thought of his oldest son who was a minister in God's Church.

"I am the God of Bethel." That is what the Lord now spoke in his soul. He was placed back in time and was able to see who the Lord had been for Him. Rev. Middel could not find the words to praise the Lord in a right manner. His soul sank away in deep humility and childlike love for the grace and faithfulness of the Lord. He glorified God's wisdom and wondered at the great love which had been shown unto him.

On the night of February 3, the young girl lay deathly sick because of fever, coughing, and diarrhea. When the morning came, there seemed to be some improvement. Her father asked her how it was with her spiritually. Then she answered, "Father, what is the spiritual meaning of the words of Psalm 48, 'Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the Great King?'" She was not satisfied with the literal translation of the text; she wanted to know the deeper meaning.

Then her father began to explain, saying, "It was a beautiful sight in Israel when they celebrated her feasts, when thousands of people entered and left the temple on

the north side of the temple. In holy zeal and full of joy, they praised and glorified the Lord, but how will it be when a multitude will stand before God's throne with holy zeal? What a glorious vision that shall be! Then the multitude who have been redeemed shall glorify the Lord in a most perfect manner."

"Oh, Father," the young girl called out, "how great, how great."

She was so affected that she could say no more. Her bodily weakness would not allow it. She closed her eyes, and a happy smile covered her face.

A little later she again opened her eyes and saw her father who was still standing at her bedside.

"My dear child," he said, "if the Lord now saves your soul and brings you into His glory, what great glory you will see. Then all will be fulfilled."

"That is true, Father; I do not have that faith yet, but when death draws nigh, He will send complete deliverance. Do you remember, Father, one time you preached in Terneuzen that we must serve the Lord with an undivided heart?"

The minister nodded and said, "Tell me about it."

"You asked if we were willing to serve Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King. If so, we must break the covenant with Satan and sin, for Christ must possess our entire heart. Then I invoked the omniscience of the Lord; God knew of my desire to serve Him completely and to live for Him with my whole heart, but I could not rise above sin. I had great difficulty to not burst out loudly crying while I was in church."

She waited a few moments, for she was so tired, but her eyes were glistening. A little later she continued, "As a closing psalm, we sang Psalter 420 verse 5, and when the lines 'He hears the needy when they cry, He saves their souls when death draws nigh,' were sung, the Lord in a powerful way made me believe that He would do this for me. He promised that He would save my soul and that as death drew near, He would grant complete deliverance." □

(To be continued)

Setting Our Affections on Things Above

Faith, whereby especially Christ rules, sets the soul so high that it looks down on all other things as far below—as having represented to it by the Spirit of Christ riches, honor, beauty, and pleasures of a higher nature.

—Richard Sibbes



From Our Inheritance

Loving Christ in His Passion

Isaac Ambrose (1604-1664)

(Taken from the February 1988 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Let us love Jesus as carrying on the great work of our salvation for us during His sufferings and death. What, did He suffer and die? “Greater love than this hath no man, that a man should give His life for His friends.” But God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). Why, here is an argument of love indeed. How should we but love Him, who hath thus loved us? In prosecution of this, I have no more to do but first to show Christ’s love to us and then to exercise our love to Him.

For His love to us—had not God said it and the Scriptures recorded it, who would have believed our reports? Yet, Christ hath done it, and it is worth our while to weigh it and consider it in a holy meditation. Indeed, with what less than ravishment of spirit can I behold the Lord Jesus who from everlasting was clothed with glory and majesty, now wrapped in rags, cradled in a manger, exposed to hunger, thirst, weariness, danger, contempt, poverty, revilings, scourgings, and persecution? But to let them pass, into what ecstasies may I be cast, to see the Judge of all the world accused, judged, condemned? To see the Lord of life dying upon the tree of shame and curse? To see the eternal Son of God struggling with His Father’s wrath? To see Him who had said, “I and my Father are one,” sweating drops of blood in His agony and crying out on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Oh, whither hath His love to mankind carried Him? Had He only sent His creatures to serve us, had He only sent His prophets to advise us in the way to heaven, had He only sent His angels from His chamber of presence to attend and minister to us, it had been a great deal of mercy; or if it must be so, had Christ come down from heaven Himself but only to visit us, or had He come only and wept over us, saying, “Oh! that you had known, even you, in this your day, the things belonging to your peace! Oh! that you had more considered of my goodness! Oh, that you had never sinned!” This would have been such a mercy as that all the world would have wondered at it; but that Christ Himself should come and lay down His blood and His life, and all for His people, and yet I am not at the lowest, that He should not only part with life, but part with the sense and sweetness of God’s love, which is a thousand times better than life, “Thy loving kindness is better than life” (Psalm 63:3).

*Be thou swallowed up, O my soul,
in this depth of divine love,
and hate to spend thy thoughts
any more upon the base objects
of this wretched world,
when thou hast such a Saviour
to take them up. Come, look on
thy Jesus, who died temporally
that thou mightest live eternally...*

That He should be content to be accursed, that we might be blessed; that He should be content to be forsaken, that we might not be forsaken; that He should be content to be condemned, that we might be acquitted: oh! what raptures of spirit can be sufficient for the admiration of this so infinite mercy? Be thou swallowed up, O my soul, in this depth of divine love, and hate to spend thy thoughts any more upon the base objects of this wretched world, when thou hast such a Saviour to take them up. Come, look on thy Jesus, who died temporally that thou mightest live eternally, who out of His singular tenderness, would not suffer thee to burn in hell, for ten, twenty, thirty, forty, an hundred years, and then recover thee; by which, notwithstanding, He might better and deeper have imprinted in thee the blessed memory of a dear Redeemer; no, no: this was the article betwixt Him and His Father, “That thou

shouldest never come there.” See, but observe Christ’s love in that mutual agreement betwixt God and Christ, “Oh! I am pressed (saith God) with the sins of the world, as a cart is pressed that is full of sheaves; come, my Son, either thou must suffer, or I must damn the world.” Accordingly, I may imagine the attributes of God to speak to God, mercy cries, I am abused; and patience cries, I am despised; and goodness cries, I am wronged; and holiness cries, I am

contradicted: and all these come to the Father for justice, crying to Him, “That all the world were opposers of His grace and Spirit; and if any be saved, Christ must be punished.” In this case we must imagine Christ stepped in: “rather than so, (saith Christ) I will bear all, and undertake the satisfying of all.” And now look upon Him, He hangs on the cross all naked, all torn, all bloody, betwixt heaven and earth, as if He were cast out of heaven: and also rejected by earth: He has a crown indeed, but such a one as few men will touch; none will take from Him; and if any rash man will have it, He must tear hair, skin and all, or it will not come: His hair is all clotted with blood, His face all clouded with black and blue; He is all over so pitifully rent, outwards, inwards, body and soul. I will think the rest, alas! when I have spoken all I can, I shall speak under it; had I the tongues of men and angels, I could not express it. Oh! love deeper than hell! Oh! love higher than heaven! the brightest seraphims that burn in love, are but as sparkles to that mighty flame of love in the heart of Jesus.

If this be Christ's love to us, what is that love we owe to Christ? Oh, now for a heart that might be somewise answerable to these mercies! Oh, for a soul sick of love, yea, sick unto death! How should I be otherwise, or any less affected? This only sickness is our health, this death our life, and not to be thus sick is to be dead in sins and trespasses: why surely I have heard enough, for which to love Christ for ever. The depths of God's grace are bottomless, they pass our understandings, yet they recreate our hearts; they give matter of admiration, yet they are not devoid of consolation: O God, raise up our souls to Thee; and if our spirits be too weak to know Thee, make our affections ardent and sincere to love Thee.

Surely the death of Christ requires this and calls for this: many other motives we may draw from Christ, and many other motives are laid down in the gospel; indeed, the whole gospel is no other thing than a motive to draw man to God by the force of God's love to man. In this sense the holy scriptures may be called the book of true love, seeing therein God both unfolds His love to us and also binds our love to Him; but of all the motives we may draw from Christ and of all the arguments we may find in the gospel of Christ, there is none equal to this—the death of Christ, the blood of Jesus; is not this such a love-letter, as never, never was the like? Read these words, “for His great love wherewith He loved us” (Ephesians 2:4). Or, if you cannot read, observe the hieroglyphics; every stripe is a letter, every nail is a capital letter, every bruise is a black letter; His bleeding wounds are as so many rubrics to show upon record: oh! consider it, is not this a great love! Are not all mercies wrapped up in this blood of Christ? It may be thou hast riches, honors, friends, means; oh! but thank the blood of Christ for all thou hast; it may be thou hast grace, and that is better than corn, or wine, or oil: oh! but for this thank the blood of Jesus, surely it was the blood of Christ that did this for thee; thou wast a rebellious soul, thou hadst an hard and filthy heart, but Christ's blood was the fountain opened, and it took away all sin and all uncleanness; Christ, in all, and Christ above all. And what, wilt thou not love Him? Oh! that all our words were words of love, and all our labors labors of love, and all our thoughts thoughts of love, that we might speak of love and muse of love and love this Christ who first loved us with all our heart, and soul, and might! What, wilt thou not love Jesus Christ? Let me ask thee then, Whom wilt thou love, or rather whom

canst thou love if thou lovest not Him? If thou sayest, “I love my friends, parents, wife, children”; oh! love Christ more than these; a friend would be an enemy but that the blood of Christ doth frame his heart, a wife would be a trouble, but that the blood of Christ doth frame her heart; all mercies are conveyed to us through this channel; oh! who would not love the fountain? Consider it again and again, our Jesus thought nothing too good for us. He parted with His life and blood, He parts with the sense and feeling of the love of God, and all this for us and for our sakes; ah! my soul, how shouldst thou but love Him in all things and by all means?

It is reported of Ignatius that he so continually meditated on the great things Christ suffered for him that he was brought entirely to love Him: and when he was demanded, why he would not forsake Christ, rather than to suffer himself to be torn and devoured of wild beasts? He answered that he could not forget Him because of His sufferings, “Oh! His sufferings (said he) are not transient words, or removable objects, but they are indelible characters, so engraven in my heart, that all the torments of earth can never raze them out.” And being commanded by that bloody tyrant Trajan to be ripped and embowel led, they found Jesus Christ written upon his heart in characters of gold. Here was an heart worth gold; oh that it might be thus with us! If my hands were all of love, that I could work nothing but love; if my eyes were all of love, that I could see nothing but love; if my mind were all of love, that I could think nothing but love, all were too little to love that Christ who hath thus immeasurably loved me; if I had a thousand hearts to bestow on Christ and they most enlarged to the highest pitch of affection; all these were infinitely short of what I owe to my dear Lord and dearest Saviour. Come, let us join hands, “He loved us, and therefore let us love Him,” if we dispute the former, I argue from the Jews, when He shed out a few tears out of His eyes at Lazarus' grave, “Then said the Jews, Behold how He loved him!” John 11:36. How much more truly may it be said of us, for whom He shed both water and blood and that from His heart, “Behold, how He loved us!” why then, if our hearts be not iron; yet, if they be iron, how should they choose but feel the magnetical force of this loadstone of love? For to a loadstone doth Christ resemble Himself when He saith of Himself, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth will draw all men unto Me” (John 12:32). ◻

Devil's Logic

Do not think that because God is merciful, you may go on in sin. This is to make mercy become your enemy. To sin because mercy abounds is the devil's logic.

—Thomas Watson



Guidance

Vaccinations

Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)

(Taken from the September 1978 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind”
(Romans 14:5b).

Last month, the Lord graciously turned the hearts of Senators in the New Jersey legislature, and they did not pass a bill which would have removed religious exemption for vaccinations and mandate compulsory immunizations for all school-age children. May we humbly acknowledge the Lord for His divine favor in this matter. The following article appeared in De Saambinder of June 15, 1978, and it is republished to perhaps provide some guidance for parents and school personnel who are increasingly faced with difficult choices and who also have their conscientious objections trampled upon. (The Editors)

There are some subjects regarding which the people of God have different opinions. This was the case in the church at Rome, as can be seen in Paul’s Epistle to the Romans, from which the above text has been taken. There were differences of opinion with regard to the eating of certain foods which were forbidden by the Jewish ceremonial law and also with regard to the observance of particular feast days.

The apostle had to deal with these subjects, but he gives no opinion. Rather, he leaves this subject to the individual’s conscience. In these things, we must not judge, let alone condemn, one another.

Let us read this portion of Scripture: “For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.” And verse 5: “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind.”

This portion of Scripture is also very instructive with respect to the subject of vaccinations. This subject continually demands our attention, and it draws special attention when cases of polio arise here and there. An enormous campaign is then mounted to persuade those who have not had their children vaccinated to do so. This is often coupled with a smear campaign mounted by the press and the other communications’ media. The crudeness with which people dare to treat those who have scruples about inoculations is often unimaginable. One “manufacturer” of wheelchairs came to a school principal in an affected area and told him that he wished to do “business” with him. Such macabre jokes are illustrative of the atmosphere in which our people must live.

Those who have never had objections to abortion (an evil which has become an assembly line process) now appear to be the strongest defenders of threatened lives. It is very difficult to come to a reasonable conclusion about the attitude one must adopt with regard to vaccination in such an atmosphere of hatred.

As a result of the upbringing we receive in our circles, there is often strong opposition to vaccination, and rightly so, in my opinion. We often speak or write as if we could take our lives into our own hands, but God’s people have always resisted an outlook in which there is no room for God and his dealings. There is also evidence that the small-pox vaccinations (as well as the swine flu vaccinations in the U.S.) can have undesirable side effects.

Whether or not to be vaccinated is a matter for personal decision, but this decision is not always easy. We must not forget this. Many do not understand what is involved in vaccinations. In some cases, serum is injected which gives resistance or immunity to some disease. This serum is usually obtained from animal sources. In other cases, weakened or killed viruses are injected into a healthy person with the purpose of allowing the body to develop its own resistance to these viruses. There are, therefore, variation in types of vaccinations, and this makes a difference.

We cannot deny that some sicknesses, which have been scourges on the human race, no longer appear in epidemic proportions. These are indisputable facts.

However, many people still have no freedom to be vaccinated. On the other hand, there are those who have had their initial reservations removed. Is this not a matter regarding which every man must “be fully persuaded in his own mind?” I think so. My perspective on this very painful matter arises from my personal experience. We know from experience what it is to have polio in one’s family, and what cares and troubles can fill the heart when one thinks on one’s children. We may not be careless, but neither may we forget the Lord.

We know that the Lord can give rest and submission in the knowledge that our lives are in His hands. It is better to fall into His hands than into the hands of men. This can be a refuge in times of great need, for the Lord has protected us. Certainly, these are not the worst times, but this does not mean that more strife will not follow.

Some years ago, a serious case of polio arose in one of our churches in Rotterdam, producing tremendous worry and anxiety in that congregation. It broke our hearts to think of the afflicted girl, who rapidly changed from a healthy child to a helpless one. We could understand the

heartrending doubt of her parents very well. Have we done the right thing? Have we withheld the necessary means from our child? Should we not think about our children, who we love so dearly, who we wish to protect from such troubles?

In our Scripture reading we came to Ezra 8. The beginning of the chapter is mostly names, but then we came to verses 21-23. "Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to seek of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us." The Lord instructed us with this passage. In the past we too had spoken of the hand of our God, which is upon us for good, and now we were ashamed to request a band of soldiers and horsemen, namely vaccination. The following Sunday I preached about this text, and the congregation was instructed by it. Our way was then clear.

Yet, we read with interest that Nehemiah requested horsemen from the king for his journey. Read Nehemiah 2:7: "Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;" and verse 9b, "Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me."

Would Nehemiah be able to accuse Ezra of carelessness? And would Ezra be able to accuse Nehemiah of not seeking God's help? I do not think so. What Nehemiah could do, Ezra could not; Ezra's exercise of faith was not Nehemiah's portion. This is also what Paul writes in Romans 14. Thus, there will be those who, with Ezra, have spoken about God's goodness, and who, therefore, cannot and dare not be vaccinated, even in times of need. Yet, there will also be

those who, with Nehemiah, request "captains of the army and horsemen" from the king. We should leave this for each other's conscience and not judge or condemn one another in this matter. I read in a church paper, "We leave this to the people. We do not censure in these matters." This means that we can never bind your conscience with "thus saith the Lord." We do not say this with regard to stealing, murder, or adultery, because God's demands are clearly recorded in His Word on these matters, but vaccination is like eating certain foods or observing feast days, regarding which Paul wrote to the Romans. This is what we call a derived principle.

We must never forget what the Lord says through his servant Paul: "He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and He that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks" (Romans 14:6).

It is of foremost importance that we do not just do things. This applies both to being vaccinated and to not being vaccinated. We should seek the Lord's guidance in making our personal decision.

In this personal matter, no one may appeal to or depend upon another. We must remember, "He who does it, does it before the Lord, and he who does it not, does it not before the Lord." We must make our decisions before the face of the Lord. These decisions may be tested, but the Lord has said, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for me."

I will never say, "You must not do that" or "You must do this." I would rather direct you to God's Word and to prayer, to the inner chamber, where we can bring our needs before God on our knees.

Ezra and Nehemiah—what the one could do, the other could not. What the one did, the other dared not, but we believe that Ezra and Nehemiah made their decisions before the Lord. This is what our decision with regard to vaccination comes down to: "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." □



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

Sometimes we hear in a sermon "as one born out of due time." What does this mean? When I first heard this, I thought that it referred to someone who is born when it was not expected, but if this is referring to a child of God, isn't the Lord's time always perfect?

Let me first answer your question about an unexpected birth being less perfect. Reasoning from man's side we sometimes speak about a birth being late or early, but from God's side it is always on time. The phrase to which you are actually referring is in I Corinthians 15:8 where we read, "And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of

due time.” Paul is speaking in this chapter about the resurrection of Christ from the dead. In Acts 1:3 we read: “*To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.*” The resurrection of Christ is a supernatural and incomprehensible redemptive act of salvation, but so are the appearances of Christ after resurrection as well. The state of humiliation is now behind the Mediator. Every appearance is impressive, glorious, comforting, reassuring, and convincing for the Church of God, and Paul mentions several examples: Cephas, the twelve, James, five hundred brethren at once, Mary Magdalene, and the two friends walking to Emmaus. Every appearance had its own beauty and character.

Then, it seems as though Paul’s voice chokes...there is *one* appearance of Christ that is the greatest wonder. It is, as it were, the crown of them, the most incomprehensible: “*and last of all he was seen of me also...*” We read in Acts 9:3&4: “*And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?*” Paul now compares this appearance with being “born out of due time.” It is an expression rather difficult to explain; it is used here in the New Testament and only three times in the Old Testament. Literally, the word refers to an “abortion” or “miscarriage.” In Ecclesiastes 6:3 we read, “*I say, that an untimely birth is better than he.*”

What could this mean? To what is Paul referring? It is perhaps good to consider in this respect that an abortion *as such* does not always mean that it is cruelly provoked (abortus provocateuse) but can also point to a *premature* birth, where the focus points to a wonder that the child actually will live. A birth can be such that the doctor says it is basically *impossible* that this child will live. The question is why Paul uses this word and to what it refers. The most plausible explanation appears to be that Paul wants to make clear that his conversion and calling did not go as they normally would. The Dutch Marginal Note explains: “The apostle compares himself hereunto, in respect of his sudden and unexpected conversion and calling (...) and happened after the Lord Christ was ascended unto heaven and because he had before persecuted Christ.” Several matters went differently, regarding both his conversion and his calling to become an apostle. Mark well, this does not refer to the *essence* of conversion but to the *manner* in which it took place:

1. All the other apostles were disciples first and were with the Lord Jesus while on earth...while Paul became an apostle without having been a disciple;
2. Jesus appeared to all the other disciples *before* His ascension, but the Lord appeared to Paul *after* His ascension;
3. Paul was the only one of the apostles who actually persecuted the Church of God;

As to Paul’s conversion and leading we could mention that all the other disciples were called and prepared according to a similar pattern: “*follow Me and I will make thee fishers of men*”; “*and He ordained twelve, **that they should be with Him**, and that He might send them forth to preach.*”

The following is a quote from Simon J. Kistemaker’s commentary on 1 Corinthians which I believe clarifies the matter also: “Paul had neither followed the Lord nor seen the empty tomb on Easter Sunday. Yet Paul could claim that he had personally seen the risen Christ (9:1), who appointed him to be an apostle to the Gentiles. Jesus discounted a period of discipleship for Paul, overlooked Paul’s record as persecutor of the Church, and made his conversion the starting point of his apostleship. His appointment is abnormal, but so is Christ’s appearance to Paul near Damascus.”

Dear friend, this is God’s normal way: faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. By means of the hearing of the Word, the Lord commonly calls sinners to His marvelous light; they are called irresistibly and sovereignly but under the faithful means of the Word. God remembers His Covenant and often works in succeeding generations. God’s common way is in the faithful use of the means. Are we using the means prayerfully and faithfully?

Paul writes of his conversion that it was not God’s *common, normal* way. Dear reader, remember that most conversions do not take place in an extraordinary way but in God’s common way. Or to say it this way—not on the way to Damascus but close by, at home, in church, in school, in catechism class—by the faithful use of the means. Let us use those means faithfully and expectantly. Hence, we are speaking here not about the essence of conversion but about the manner in which it took place. Paul says the fact that his name is on the list of appearances is “out of the *ordinary...*” Paul does not say: “This is how conversion should go” but rather makes clear “This is how conversion normally does not go!” Yet, if it were possible for such a one as I am, it is possible for the whole world! Today is the best day, for tomorrow may be too late. Let, therefore, Paul’s “*last of all*” not become your “*too late...*”

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

I am not afraid of alarming people too much about their souls; I wish I could hear more crying out, “What must I do to be saved?” under a feeling sense of their lost and ruined condition, and crying earnestly for mercy. —William Tiptaft



Doctrinal Studies

Holy Baptism (2)

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

The Vein

There is a vein in our Form for Baptism. After three examples have been given as proof for the biblical basis of infant baptism, a conclusion is made: “since baptism is come in the place of circumcision...”

The corollary to this sentence is the answer to the question as to why we baptize our children. They are not too young to deal in the terrible punishment of God; they are partakers of the condemnation in Adam. It is true that they are too young to understand this but not too young to fully share in it. Because they are not too young for condemnation, they are also not too young to share in the grace of God. Therefore, they are also not too young to carry the mark of God’s covenant of grace. Hereafter our forefathers let Scripture speak:

- a. As God speaketh unto Abraham, the father of all the faithful, and therefore to us and our children. Do you appreciate the connection from out of Genesis until today? From a parent out of the Old Testament to the parents in a New Testament church? What a rich comforting instruction! Just as the Lord spoke to Abraham, He still does so today. “Jehovah’s truth shall stand forever, His covenant bonds He will not sever” is what we sing so fittingly at the administration of the Baptism of our little ones. “I am Thy God.” Abraham wondered about that for one hundred years and after that eternally, but now something is added: “I am also the God of thy seed.” Lord, how is that possible? I do not even have any children; therefore, it is completely impossible. Well, the Lord does know that. For today’s parents the difficulties are definitely not fewer. They are of all types, “Lord, when I look upon myself, when I look at the times in which we are living, how must it go? Even then we hear, “I am thy God...and the God of thy seed...” I do not end the possibilities when the parents are no longer there. I shall sovereignly show that I am the LORD, the covenant God throughout the generations.
- b. These were also the circumstances during Peter’s sermon on Pentecost (Acts 2:39). There stood stricken people with manifold sins and cares which they carried within them. They thought of what had they left behind, some in faraway lands, even all of the lands surrounding the Mediterranean Sea, where they lived in the midst of the heathens. Then God says, by the mouth of Peter exactly the same thing. God promised

willingly to perform the same work of grace through Jesus Christ in the younger generation. No matter how far they may have been driven or how deeply they have sunk away, there shall be as many as He shall powerfully call by His Word and Spirit.

- c. In the last place our forefathers pointed to the Covenant Mediator Himself (Mark 10). How apparent is it that He has an eye and a heart for little ones. His disciples were not in agreement with it. To them it would be better if He concerned Himself with more important matters than to bother with little children. He shames them by taking time out for these children, for He draws them near to Him, lays His hands upon them, and blesses them. The Mediator of the covenant of grace is still the same today. He is the God of Abraham and certainly the God of Pentecost. This is what God will show to parents and to the little ones. The riches of God’s covenant of grace, from child to child, is hereby emphasized.

Hereafter, our forefathers come to the conclusion, “Since then baptism is come in the place of circumcision...” It is the same from Abraham to Peter and even until today! Do you see how there is a continuous vein in the administration of the covenant of grace? Do you see that the new covenant definitely is not inferior to the old? That is what the Church of all ages wishes to emphasize—the biblical duty of infant baptism. It is because there is a continuous vein in the administration of the covenant of grace. It emphasizes that the covenant faithfulness shown to Abraham’s seed has not diminished through the ages. Also, the power of the blood of Jesus has definitely not become less. Notice the unity of the entire Word of God, the unity of the godly revelations in both the Old and New Testament. Do not sever this vein, for the church will hemorrhage to death. Then the church will suffer from lack of blood. Then we seriously minimize God’s faithfulness in the generations.

What must we still say to our children? We lose so much when we condemn infant baptism (Confession of Faith 34) as “they condemn the baptism of the infants of believers, whom we believe ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, as the children of Israel were formerly circumcised upon the same promises which are made to our children.” This is how we reaffirm with our whole heart the tried and faithful Scriptural confession about this vein. □

(To be continued)



Media Use

A Fearful and Overwhelming Onslaught from the Powers of Darkness

NRC Synodical Modern Media Committee

We live in exceptionally dangerous times. While it is true that there is nothing new under the sun, it is also true that Satan has never had more opportunities to reach directly into our homes, our schools, and our church communities—and there has never been a time in recorded human history where so many people have free access to such depraved and explicit sexual material. Meanwhile, the biblical truth of “redeeming the time, because the days are evil” (Ephesians 5:16) remains unaltered. Consequently, the following two verses (17&18) exhort, “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.” This should be motivation for us to strive to avoid all that is sinful and that which will distract one from seeking those things that are above as well as God’s honor and glory.

For decades, our church communities were largely successful in keeping TV out of the homes over concerns with the sinful nature of much of the entertainment (and even advertising). However, with the arrival of the Internet, it soon became clear that things would not be so simple. The Internet rapidly became an essential tool for businesses and society at large, and using the Internet became as ubiquitous as driving a car. In response to this new technology, our churches urged members to safeguard their laptops or desktop computers with filters to ensure that pornography and other sinful material would be blocked or be inaccessible.

Then, with the arrival of the smartphone—the first iPhone was released in 2007—everything began to change at lightning speed. Suddenly, the Internet was accessible through portable devices which soon became seemingly essential. Parents began to buy their teens (and even their younger children) smartphones at younger and younger ages, providing them with devices that offered them filter-free access to the Internet. The results have been catastrophic, with digital pornography of an increasingly violent and disturbing nature sweeping through our culture. Over 80% of males and nearly 50% of females now consume pornography regularly. This suggests that viewing pornography is becoming part of our culture, but we are exhorted in Exodus 23:2 with the words, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil.” Ephesians 5:16-18 referenced in the first paragraph also hints at this notion of not following the multitude to do evil.

To provide a chilling statistic: According to one investigation, the websites owned by just one major porn company, indicated that in 2016 people watched 4,599,000,000 hours

of pornography, amounting to 524,641 years—or roughly twelve porn videos for every man, woman, and child on earth.

Digital pornography is currently a very great internal threat to our marriages, our families, and our church and school communities. The size and scale of this threat cannot be exaggerated. In addition to digital pornography being an enormous problem, it also exacerbates nearly every other existing problem and, in many cases, metastasizes them into something nearly unrecognizable and far more dangerous. People are not taking this problem seriously enough despite the fact that one can state with confidence that if we do not combat this threat, it has the capacity to destroy our communities from the inside.

Again—it is impossible to overestimate the scale of this threat which is why the government of the United Kingdom is taking action, other governments are considering it, the Canadian Parliament struck a committee to research the connections between pornography and sexual assault, and sixteen American states have declared porn a public health crisis. Many social scientists, psychiatrists, therapists, and journalists are warning that the impact of digital pornography on the upcoming generation is so devastating that we cannot yet fully understand the implications.

The Bible deals extensively with sexual sin to warn us that we will face temptations in our life and that we should be prepared for them. Anyone who says he will not face this or is impervious to it is saying that he is stronger than Samson, the strongest man who ever lived, wiser than Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, and closer to God than David, the man after God’s own heart. If those men could fall and a man like Job was careful to “make a covenant” with his eyes, then we must recognize that our response to this digital world has been inadequate. Those who are not taking this seriously are either ignoring how severe the threat is, or they are being unrealistic about the condition of the human heart.

Pornography has been seeping into our communities almost uninterrupted for a decade and a half with devastating consequences. Over the next several months, we would like to detail the impact pornography has had on our communities in order to urge people to embrace this issue with the utmost seriousness, looking at the spiritual and emotional impact, the connections to sexual abuse, the dangers of smartphones, possible ways to deal with an addiction, and other key issues. We hope that this information and the suggested responses will be taken seriously. □



Current Events

Anti-religious Acts Increasing in France

France has an increasingly high number of anti-religious acts. It was reported this month that France saw a 27% increase of anti-Semitic acts. Although the number of anti-Christian acts remained the same from 2018 to 2019, anti-Christian acts are the highest at 1,052 of all anti-religious acts reported. Even anti-Muslim acts increased in 2019.

An online platform which will allow investigators to chat with witnesses and victims of hate is being set up. This is one among a series of new measures now in place or being developed to combat anti-religion.

—*TimesofIsrael.com*

Christians Being Killed in Kenya by Al-Shabaab

Three Christian men were killed by Al-Shabaab terrorists in an early morning raid on a boarding school in northern Kenya. A third man was abducted, while another is recovering in the hospital from gunshot wounds. It is certain these men at this school were targeted because they were Christians. It is believed that the raid was a conspiracy between the local Muslim community and the Al-Shabaab terrorists. The attack on this school comes against the backdrop of a series of Al-Shabaab terrorist acts in which a total of twenty-five Christians has been killed.

—*ChurchinChains.ie*

Attacks on Christians in India Continue to Rise

A mob of hundreds of radical Hindu nationalists attacked a house church in North India's Haryana state. The pastor was taken to a school where he was forced to sit before idols and was beaten with wooden sticks. In the evening he was then taken to the police station where he was falsely accused of forcefully converting Hindus to Christianity. After going to the hospital for his injuries, he was put into prison. Thankfully, due to the intervention of the Alliance Defending Freedom—India, he was released on bail a day later. Attacks on Christians and their places of worship continue to rise in both number and severity in India.

—*Persecution.org*

U.S. Department of State Issues Sanctions Against Iranian Judges Guilty of Persecution

International Christian Concern (ICC) has requested the US Department of State to issue financial sanctions against two Iranian judges complicit in violating the human rights of Iranians. The Department of State has now complied with this request. One of these judges, Mohammad Moghisseh, has a long record of specifically violating the rights of Iran's Christian minority. His record of persecution includes religious minority groups being penalized for exercising their freedom of expression and assembly, and then being sentenced to lengthy prison terms, lashes, and even execution. The judge is also complicit in encouraging medical abuse of imprisoned Christians. He rose through the judicial ranks because of his hardline stance in support of the regime's human rights abuses. With the new sanctions in place, all property and interests of these two judges are blocked. Any financial institution that facilitates transactions by these judges risks having the same sanctions applied and access to the US financial system severed.

—*Persecution.org*

U.S. Supreme Court to Take Up Church-State Separation in Christian Schools' Case

The U.S. Supreme Court took up the sensitive case of religion in public life this month, considering whether states violate the Constitution if they prevent religious groups from receiving some state benefits. A ruling is needed to find the right balance between the desire of a state to keep government out of religion and the claims of residents that religious faith should not freeze them out of state programs intended to help everyone. This case comes from Montana which provides a tax credit for those who donate to private schools. The state constitution, however, prohibits any direct or indirect appropriation or payment to aid any church or church school, but ninety percent of the private schools that signed up for donations had religious affiliations. The Supreme Court has never drawn a clear line between acceptable and prohibited public aid for religious programs. The court will decide this case in late June.

—*NBCNews.com*

President Trump Upholds Religious Freedom with New Executive Order

January 16 was National Religious Freedom Day. President Trump appropriately took action on this day when he signed an executive order that bolsters and protects the rights of students to pray and discuss God in their schools. Over the years, countless students and business owners were denied their constitutional rights when trying to express matters of faith. The President noted that the blame rests with previous government policies that have relegated religious freedoms. He also announced that his administration would be enacting rules that require federal and state governments to provide a level playing field for religious and secular organizations participating in government programs funded by federal tax dollars. Such actions reverse years of discrimination against religious organizations.

—*FoxNews.com*

Conversion Therapy Ban Proposed in Canada

In December 2019, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau directed Justice Minister David Lametti "to amend the criminal code (of Canada) to ban the practice of conversion therapy and take other steps to end conversion therapy in Canada." *Conversion therapy*, as defined by Bill-S202, refers to a wide range of practices and activities such as talk therapy, reparative therapy, group counseling, and even prayer, when it concerns how a person or organization deals with individuals who are either involved or struggling with same sex attractions, transgenderism, etc. If Bill 202 is passed into law, all of these practices, when dealing with LGBT individuals, will be criminalized.

This bill is a direct attack on the freedom of conscience and religion. This is very serious but not an unexpected development, for when a nation forsakes God and tramples upon His institutions, He will eventually give it over to the judgment recorded in Romans 1:26-32. Pray that the Lord will thwart the intentions of those who masterminded this legislation. May He yet work repentance and raise up leaders who acknowledge Him and the authority of His Word as the rule over all of life, leaders who are not afraid to promote the keeping of His law.

—*Submitted*



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

Of the Creation and Fall of Man and His Incapacity to Perform What Is Truly Good (Article XIV) (3)

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

In our last article we have seen that the Lord created man good and after His own image. Man was in such an excellent state that he possessed everything necessary to honor, know, and love God. Seeing the abilities and qualities of man by which he could resist all probable temptations, we may never blame the Lord for what happened in Paradise. Notice what this article of our Confession says: “But being in honor, he understood it not, neither knew his excellency, but willfully subjected himself to sin, and consequently to death and the curse, giving ear to the words of the devil.”

Calvin said that man had a free choice between good and evil, to stay obedient or become disobedient, as God had left room for sin in human life. How could that disobedience occur? God had made a covenant with Adam, which is the Covenant of Works, and he accepted this with his whole heart. In this covenant the Lord had invented a way by which man could attain the highest good, eternal salvation, or communion with Him, and this was then **Unchangeable**; by our works we would merit eternal life. Because man loved God above all, he accepted all that the Lord asked of him. In the state of innocence, man could refuse to sin, and after obedience for a set period, he would come to a state wherein he could not sin anymore. In this way man could come to a higher state, but it was also possible that he could leave the Lord; this is what happened—to our destruction.

The Fall did not take place unexpectedly for the Lord; it did not happen outside of God’s counsel. No, we may not say this, but neither may we make God the author of sin. We have left the Lord willingly. When we listened to Satan, we became a subject of death as the Lord had foretold. What a terrible moment it was when Eve took of the forbidden fruit, for there she ate herself to death. When Adam took of the forbidden fruit from his wife, it was not only

Adam who became a subject of death but also the entire human race whom he represented. Our article expresses it clearly; “For the commandment of life, which he had received, he transgressed, having corrupted his whole nature, whereby he made himself liable to corporal and spiritual death.”

The meaning of “the commandment of life” is clear; the Lord had said, “Do this and thou shalt live.” Not only obedience and life went together but also disobedience and death. How far-reaching are the consequences of the Fall; we must speak of it as a terrible Fall and not, as some foolishly say, a blessed Fall. From the moment we have taken the forbidden fruit, we have lost everything with the exception of temporal life with all of its sorrows. From that moment on we no longer have a knowledge of God, we no longer have happiness in God, and we no longer behold the countenance of God. We lost salvation; the excellency came to an end, and the righteousness and holiness of God filled men with fear because they were now sinners, and God could not have communion with them. Instead of knowledge of God, we had knowledge to do evil, inspired by Satan; instead of righteousness, the seed of sin is now sown which brings forth hatred and unrest. Instead of being holy, we are now covered with the mire of unholiness; instead of harmony, there is disharmony. It is as the waves on the shore which are never at rest; one wave follows another. There is no rest or peace, always a condemning conscience. Even the government over the animals was no longer the same in the life of man.

Thus, God’s wrath became public; the angels were indignant, but the devils rejoiced since they had overcome the jewel of Creation. Man, who was created to life eternal, is now subject to a threefold death. The spiritual life becomes evident in our lives as we sin in thoughts, words, and deeds. The Lord

fulfills His threatened punishment of temporal death when the separation comes between soul and body and we must give an account of all of our deeds. Without regeneration our life will end in eternal death.

How miserable we have become as it is written in our confession; “And being thus become wicked, perverse, and corrupt in all of his ways, he has lost all of his excellent gifts, which he had received from God, and only retained a few remnants thereof, which, however, are sufficient to leave man without excuses; for all the light which is in us is changed into darkness, as the Scriptures teach us saying, “And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not,” where St. John calleth men darkness. Oh, how great our misery has become.

From God’s Word it is evident that we must know our misery, not only by historical knowledge but also experientially. There is great danger in our days that so many are satisfied with a superficial religion wherein they comfort themselves with Jesus but without knowledge of misery. This is impossible; without knowledge of our sins there can be no place for Christ in our life. It is through the knowledge of our misery that the Holy Spirit will drive us out to the only Way of deliverance which is in Christ. By nature, we do not like to hear of our misery, but God’s people desire to be saved in an upright way.

After the Fall we remained man, a reasonable creature, responsible for our deeds although our nature is corrupt. We are under spiritual death, unable to please the Lord anymore, but we did not become a stock or a block as Luther taught. This is not true; man has fallen very deeply, but still we

have a mind and a will. There is also a remnant of the image of God so that we know there is a higher Being whom we call God. This is not sufficient for salvation, but we have some knowledge in order to see the difference between honesty and dishonesty so that we can do some morally good things. These remnants leave us without excuse before God to live without Him.

Directly opposite to the doctrine of Luther, we find everywhere in our days the doctrine of free will. This goes too far, teaching that we are able of ourselves to work out our salvation. Pelagius was the man who taught this. He was born in England in the year 354, the same year as his opponent Augustine. Pelagius taught that man could make up his own mind to choose between good and evil, and he denied original sin and the corruption of human nature. He left no room for free grace at all.

Augustine strongly defended the doctrine of free grace which led to the condemning of the views of Pelagius. This does not mean that his doctrine came to an end because we can still find in our own days the same dangerous doctrine throughout the world. Many say that there is some good left in man. It is true that moral good is left in man; we did not become beasts, but we are spiritually dead in sins and trespasses. This state of death is denied. However, just as Augustine taught, as long as we are not born again, we are dead in sins and trespasses. There are only two states—dead by nature or alive, by God’s grace. Christ has taught so clearly; “For without Me ye can do nothing.” Blessed are the people who may learn this.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Ten Plagues (5)

(Based on Exodus 9)

As King Pharaoh is walking by the river Nile, a man hurries up to him with a very worried look on his face. When the king asks him what is wrong, he says, “Oh king, something terrible has happened; a lot of our animals are dead. The cows, horses, sheep, and camels have all died out in the fields.” The king realized that what Moses and Aaron had predicted had taken place. When he asks about the cattle of the children of Israel, he is told that they are all fine and showed no sign of death or illness.

Moses had told Pharaoh that there would be a separation between the Egyptians and the people of Israel. Always remember that God cannot lie; He always speaks the truth.

When Pharaoh thought about these things, he still did not listen to the request of Moses to let the people of Israel go into the desert to worship there. The Bible tells us that Pharaoh “hardened his heart.” Do you realize that when Mom or Dad tells you not to do something and you keep on doing it anyway, that

you are doing the same thing that Pharaoh did? It is a terrible sin to not listen to the Lord (and your parents) and to keep going your own way. The king had been told what would happen, and he still did not listen, nor did he warn his people what would happen.

King Pharaoh continued to not allow the children of Israel to go and worship as Moses and Aaron had asked. The Lord, however, has His own way of making people listen to Him. He again sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. Do you think that Pharaoh was afraid when they came again? This time Moses did not say anything to Pharaoh. He went to the furnace, took some ashes, and sprinkled them into the air in front of Pharaoh. The Lord had told Moses that when he did this it would cause bad sores with blisters upon both man and the animals. The sores were even upon the king, and they were very painful. Just think if your whole body would be covered with mosquito bites, wouldn't that be terrible? The Bible does not tell us how long these sores lasted, but it was very bad. Even the magicians who had been able to bring on some of the same plagues as the Lord had done were now covered with these painful sores. Pharaoh still did not listen to Moses and Aaron; he refused to let the people go. What a terrible thing it is to go against the Lord. When we do that, He will surely punish us.

The Lord then sent Moses and Aaron back to Pharaoh to warn him that because he had hardened

his heart, He would punish him and his people severely if they did not listen. The king was told that all of the animals and the people should stay indoors, for the Lord would send a very severe hailstorm. It would be the worst hailstorm ever. Any person or animal that was left outdoors would be killed. The Bible tells us that the people who feared what the Lord would do listened to Moses, but many others did not believe that it would happen.

The Lord then told Moses to stretch out his staff toward heaven, and the Lord caused a very severe hailstorm with thunder and lightning, so severe that the Bible tells us that the fire ran along the ground. The hail was so bad that it even broke the trees. The Lord, however, took care of His people Israel, and no harm came to them since no hail fell in the land of Goshen where they lived.

As the hail continued and the fire kept coming, Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron, asking them to call upon the Lord to take away the hail and fire, and he would let them go and worship. Moses promised to do that as soon as he was outside of the city. Moses also said to Pharaoh that the Lord would take away the thunders and the hail, but he also told Pharaoh that he would change his mind again and not allow the people of Israel go. That is what also happened. As soon as the Lord took away the plague, Pharaoh again refused to let the people go. How unbelievable is it, that he should disobey God again?



Bible Quiz

Promises

Dear Boys and Girls,

Connor stood with his hands on his hips, feet planted sturdily on the front step, and glowered at the four boys standing in front of him. “You promised,” he accused, the furrow above his eyes becoming deeper as he saw his brother try to make a move past him. “I won’t let you indoors. You have to play cops and robbers—you promised.”

Trevor shrugged carelessly. “I don’t want to anymore,” he explained, shoving Connor aside. “Let me in. I changed my mind.”

His smaller brother Carson ducked under his arm and opened the door quickly. “I didn’t promise I would,” he explained quickly. “I just said ‘maybe.’”

Connor blinked back angry tears and turned pleadingly to the two remaining boys. “Jeff, will you play? Eric, I played hide and seek because you wanted to, so now it should be my turn to choose.”

The neighbor boys squirmed. Jeff eyed Connor uneasily and mumbled as he turned away, “Nope. You didn’t play fair before, so now I won’t play.”

Eric walked away, too. “I can’t, I have to go. I’m

sorry.” He quickly threw the words over his shoulder and hurried off.

Connor stood alone and watched them go. They had all promised they would play, but none of them had kept their promise. There was nothing for him to do but go indoors and find something else to do.

We often make promises which we later discover we don't want to or can't keep. We might not have truly meant what we said, or we might have thought quietly in our mind, “I will...maybe...” Sometimes it even turns out that it wasn't a good idea in the first place, so we break the promise. Breaking a promise makes others upset or disappointed. They counted on you, and you did not do what you said you would.

There are some very important promises which we make later on in life. We make these promises to God, and these promises we may not break. Adults promise God when they do Confession of Faith, are married, or have their children baptized. They often find that they cannot keep their promises perfectly, but they have to always remember that they promised to do it to the utmost of their ability. Most importantly, they have to ask the Lord to help them.

God also promises. Do you know that His Word is full of promises? There is a promise very early on in the Bible, right after Adam and Eve sinned so grievously against Him. He promised them that one day a Savior would come who would bruise Satan's head so that he will not win and sinners can be saved. Later, He gave the Law and promised long life in the fifth commandment to those that honor father and mother. He promises that those who seek Him shall find Him. He promises a crown of life to those who love Him. He promises that He will surely punish sin, but He also promises that those to whom He gives a new heart are forever safe with Him. He promises, “I will come... I will heal... I will lead...”

God promised Canaan, the Promised Land, to the Israelites. He promised a son to people who were too old to have children or had given up hope of ever having a child—Sarah, Rebekah, Hannah, the woman who built a room for Elisha, Zacharias and Elizabeth... Sarah even laughed because she did not believe what God had promised, but did it happen? Oh yes, it certainly did, each time! Israel came to live in Canaan... Sarah received Isaac... Rebekah received twins... Hannah received Samuel and more children... In the New Testament, God *promised* that He would send the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, and on the day of Pentecost, He was sent. God ALWAYS does what He promises.

Can he not change His mind? No. He does not and cannot, otherwise He would cease to be God. God is

unchangeable. What He promises, He will do. He knows Himself that He can and will and wants to fulfill His promises, in His time and in His way.

How different this is from an earthly promise. He does not say, “Maybe.” He does not say, “I can't.” He does not say, “I would have, but you are such a disappointment, you are so evil, you constantly transgress and grieve Me, no...no, I will not do it after all, and that is your own fault.” Nor does He say, “I changed My mind.”

Sometimes those to whom God has promised something have to wait a long time. God has His own reasons for that, and His way is the best way. Sometimes those people ask, “Lord, dost Thou still remember?” The psalmist says, “Remember the word spoken unto Thy servant...” They know it is all undeserved. They have nothing to offer, and they have no rights at all. They do not have a *right* to what the Lord has promised them. Still, sometimes, because they know the Lord is faithful, they ask like Hannah and like the thief on the cross, “Lord, if Thou wilt remember Thine handmaiden... Lord, remember me...Wilt Thou do it, for Thine OWN name's sake?”

*“The Lord is not slack concerning His promise,
as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering
to us-ward, not willing that any should perish,
but that all should come to repentance”*
(2 Peter 3:9).

Fill in the blanks.

1. Peter writes in his second epistle, “Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having _____ the corruption that is in the world through lust.”

2. Two chapters further, he writes, “Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth _____.”

3. In 1 John, we read, “And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even _____ life.”

4. Paul writes to the Romans about Abraham, “He staggered not at the promise of God through _____; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God.”

5. He continues, “And being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to _____.”

6. Paul writes in his second epistle to the Corinthians, “For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the _____ of God by us.”

Answers to previous quizzes were received in December from:

Benson Bakker (4) 4
 Anabelle Berkenbush 9
 William Berkenbush 9
 Britni Blom (2) 6
 Jenina Blom 8
 Lawrence Blom 3
 Marissa Blom (2) 8
 Riley Blom 6
 Gary Boon 5
 Jenny Boon 6
 Derek Brouwer (2) 8
 Thomas Brouwer (2) 7
 Colin DeJager 2
 Sawyer Dob 4
 Cody Driesen 8
 Kacie Driesen 8
 Toby Driesen 8
 Kaylynn Ekema 2 9
 Geralyn Engelen 7
 Kariena Engelen 6
 Shawn Engelen 7
 Trevor Engelen 7
 Kari Groen 5
 Kurtis Groen 5
 Ailene Groenendyk 9
 Ruben Groenendyk (2) 10
 Derek Hup 3
 Justin Hup 3
 Claire Kelderman 1
 Jason Kleyn 3
 Ashley Knibbe (2) 10
 Caylea Knibbe 9
 Courtney Knibbe (2) 10
 Donovan Knibbe 10
 Lindsey Knibbe (2) 10
 Quinton Knibbe 9
 Whitney Knibbe (2) 10
 Callie Koedam 2
 Rebecca Krygsman (2) 9
 Sarah Krygsman (2) 10
 Lydia Mol 8
 Olivia Mol 6
 Teddy Mol 8
 Marielle Neels 6
 Lydia Nieuwenhuis 1
 Deanna Okken 1
 Justin Okken 1
 Kirstin Okken 1
 Andrew Remijn 6
 Lauren Remijn 3
 Ale Rozeboom (5) 5
 Luke Rozeboom (5) 5
 Samuel Rozeboom 2
 Ethan Schelling (17) 17
 Megan Taylor 5
 Renee Taylor 2
 Colin Ten Hove 8
 Harley Timmer 10
 Hunter Timmer 8
 Kadin Timmer 8
 Sierra Timmer 9
 Skye Timmer 10
 Wyatt Timmer 8
 Andrew Van Brugge 1
 Anna Van Brugge 4
 Maurice Van Garderen 8
 Emmalyn Van Garderen 8
 Lydia Van Manen (2) 10
 Jozias Van Ravenswaay 9
 Naomi Van Ravenswaay 9
 Kayleigh Van Rhee 2
 Jace Van Voorst (4) 6
 Taya Van Voorst (3) 4
 Alyssa VandeBruinhorst 7

Jennifer VandeBruinhorst 8
 Alivia Vande Hoef 10
 Micah Vande Hoef 7
 Jake Vande Stouwe 6
 Jonah Vande Stouwe 6
 Heidi Vandenberg (2) 7
 Renae Vandenberg 5
 Esther Vanden Broek 7
 Ian Vanden Broek 7
 Treena Vanden Broek 7
 Helen Verhoef 2
 Shara Verhoef 2
 Brandon Vrieselaar (3) 10
 Brianna Vrieselaar (3) 10
 Kyra Vrieselaar (3) 10
 Noah Vrieselaar (3) 10
 Jonathan Wesdyk 6
 Laura Wesdyk 6
 Nathan Wesdyk 2
 Rebekah Wesdyk 6
 Arthur Wisse 8
 Joanna Wisse 8
 Lane Wisse 7
 Tonia Wisse 8
 Bethany Ymker (3) 6
 Jacalyn Ymker (3) 6
 Marcail Ymker (2) 10
 Nicholas Ymker (3) 6
 Pa ton Ymker 5
 Quentin Ymker 5
 Shauntae Ymker (2) 10

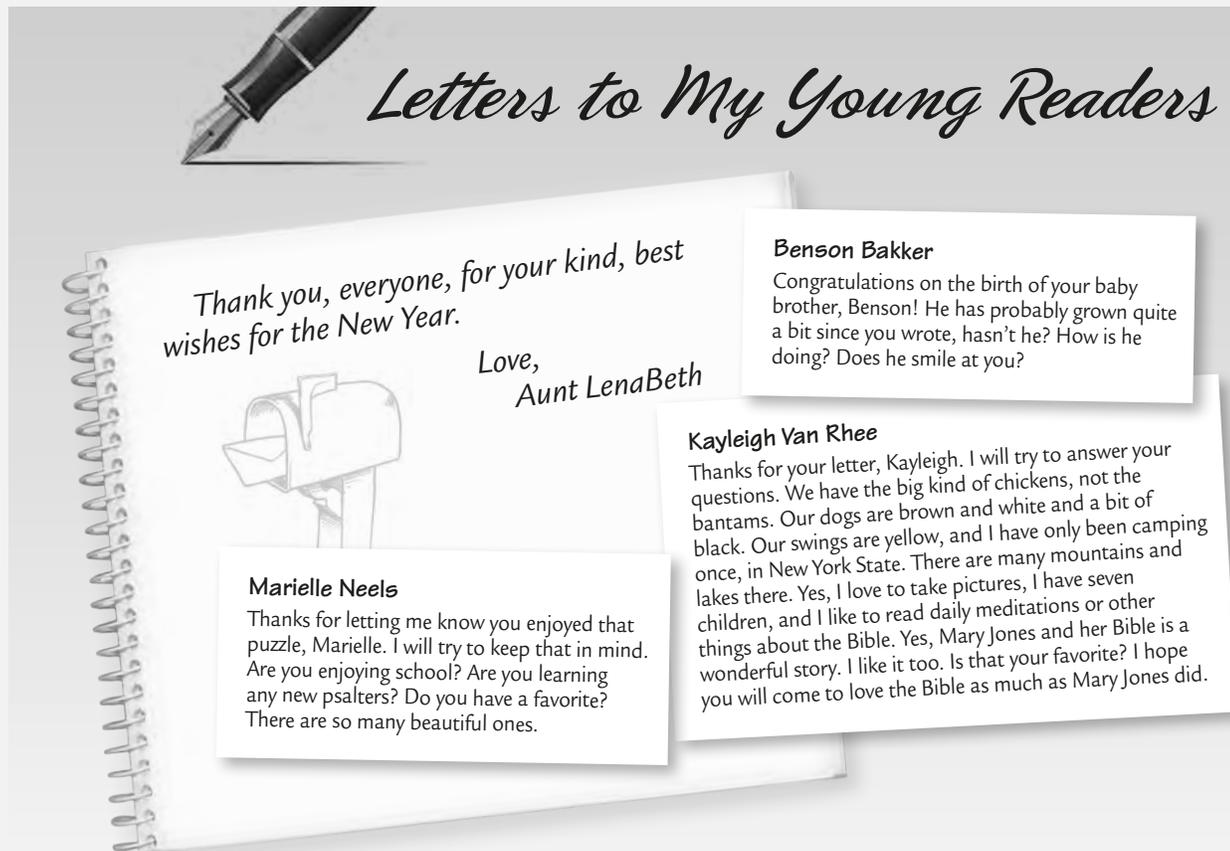
20 Bibles were saved up this month to send to Bolivia. The total is 119.

Answers to February's "Brothers" quiz:

- | | | |
|--------------|---------------|---|
| 1. Abel | Genesis 4:2 | 17. Peter |
| 2. Cain | Genesis 4:2 | 18. Laban |
| 3. Laban | Genesis 24:29 | 19. John |
| 4. Benjamin | Genesis 43:29 | 20. Jemuel, Jamin, Ohad, Jachin, Zohar, Shaul |
| 5. Simeon | Judges 1:3 | 21. Gershon, Kohath, Merari |
| 6. Othniel | Judges 3:9 | 22. Er, Onan, Shelah, Pharez, Zarah |
| 7. Andrew | Matthew 4:18 | 23. Shem, Ham, Japheth |
| 8. James | Matthew 4:21 | 24. Andrew, Simon |
| 9. Lazarus | John 11:21 | 25. darkness, stumbling
1 John 2:9,10 |
| 10. Jude | Jude 1:1 | 26. mount |
| 11. Cain | | Genesis 31:54 |
| 12. Caleb | | 27. youngest |
| 13. Judah | | Genesis 42:32 |
| 14. Lazarus | | 28. house |
| 15. Benjamin | | 1 Samuel 22:1 |
| 16. James | | |

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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



News & Announcements

Church News

MINISTERIAL CALLS

Extended:

To Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregation of Waarde, the Netherlands.

Declined:

By Rev. B.J. Van Boven of De Valk/Wekerom, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Brant County, Ontario.

By Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Brakel, the Netherlands, to the congregations of Lethbridge, Alberta, and Markham, Ontario.

Obituaries

DE PEUTER, Geertje (nee Slingerland) – Age 81, January 31, 2020; Picture Butte, Alberta; Husband – Bastiaan; Children – Meta (deceased), Martin, Jake, Bastiaan & Anna, Gonda, Aris & Yumi, Janie & Rob Bootsma, Michael; 14 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren; Brothers – Jake & Nell, Aris, Martin & Jeanette, Case & Rose, Adam & Annie, Hank & Arlene, Tony & Lisa, Marinus & Wilma, Willem; Sisters – Jannie & Jaap Stoute, Gonda & Kor Vanden Hoek, Judy & Chris den Hertog. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Hosea 14:9.)

RUS, Jacob W. – Age 94, January 10, 2020; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Wife – Frances (deceased); Children – Marion & Becky Rus, Darwin & Helen Rus, Shirley Van Voorst, Tami & Jim Van Beek; 23 grandchildren, 83 great-grandchildren, and 4 great-great-grandchildren; Brother – Lorn & Marilyn Rus; Sisters – Cora Starr, Hermina Van Veldhuizen, Jennie Van Bemden; Sisters-in-law – Judy Rus and Audrey Rus; predeceased by great-grandchild Jayda Fay Van Voorst, brothers Herman, Elmer, and Leon, and sister Nellie Fluit. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Romans 8:1, James 4:14b.)

VAN DEN TOORN, Joanne (nee Bazen) – Age 91, January 9, 2020; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Husband – William (deceased); Children – Ben & Wanda Van Den Toorn, Andy & Cindy Van Den Toorn, Marlene & Bob Bibby, Bill & Laurie Van Den Toorn, and Chuck Van Den Toorn; 11 grandchildren, 18 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild; Brothers & Sisters – Marinus Bazen, Marie & Jim Rosendall, Gertrude & Henry Rosendall, Jim & Barb Bazen; Sisters-in-law – Edith Bazen, Marge Bazen, Helen Oudendyk, Annette Van Den Toorn, and Marge Van Den Toorn; predeceased by brothers Dick, John, and Rev. Peter. (Rev. G.M. de Leeuw, Psalm 130:7.)

VAN ROEKEL, Hans – Age 85, January 15, 2020; Doon, Iowa; Wife – Wilma (deceased); Children – Willie & Glo Van Roekel, Henry & Trissa Van Roekel; 4 grandchildren, 5 great-grandchildren; Sister – Bertha Van Grootheest; Brother – Case Van Roekel; Sister-in-law – Betty Piscitella. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Luke 13:1-5.)

Change of Address

Managing Editor of *The Banner of Truth*

Dr. E. Nieuwenhuis
9119 Warrens Way
Wanaque, NJ 07465-1644
edfeetsr@gmail.com

New Titles from Bible Truth Books

The Naked Bow of God by William Huntington —Also entitled “A Visible Display of the Judgments of God on the Enemies of Truth,” this book is a collection of several smaller pieces written by William Huntington. The opening treatise, for which the book is named, is taken from Habakkuk 3:9. It relates several struggles that Huntington encountered with various persons, and how the Lord clearly supported and defended His servant. Paperback, 120 pages, \$4.00.

An Exposition on the Seventeenth Chapter of John by Martin Luther—In his verse-by-verse exposition, Martin Luther speaks of how, in the words of the prayer recorded in this chapter, we see the mystery and wonder of Christ and His two distinct natures in the one glorious Person of Emmanuel. As the great High Priest and only Mediator, He is fitted to stand between God and men, and by His prevailing intercession make the sinner’s prayer acceptable unto God. The publisher notes, “Those who feel the poverty of their prayers, their poor stumblings and stutterings as they try to plead with God, will find much to comfort and encourage them in this book.” Hardcover, 157 pages, \$11.10.

From the Upper Room, Volume 2 by Rev. P. Blok—A second volume of quiet, meditative reflections by Rev. P. Blok on his experiences after many years as a minister. The thoughts in the *Upper Room* also go back to the past—to the moments with the Lord and the times when He opened His Word. Hardcover, \$7.75.

In the Cleft of the Rock by J. Westerbeke—The author of the well-known “Young Singers” series has also provided us with the autobiography of Maria Wilhelmina Kamphuis

(1876-1941). At first glance, one might think that little of particular outward importance took place in her life. However, she is given to clearly describe the Lord’s dealings and leadings from her youth. In his traditional style, J. Westerbeke has added a few remarks at the beginning and some insightful historical notes at the end. Hardcover, 164 pages. \$17.50.

And I, With Voice of Singing by the Asaph Choir of Rock Valley / Sioux Center / Sioux Falls—A collection of 12 psalters recorded in 2019. CD, \$15.00.

O God, Our Help in Ages Past and *Our Hope for Years to Come*—Two new CD’s by the Brothers Four Quartet of Grand Rapids, with some tracks accompanied by their children. \$13.00 per CD or \$20.00 as a 2-CD set.

Prices 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 2020-2021 school year and welcomes applications for qualified teachers interested in any position, including:

- Elementary teachers
- Middle School (grades 6-8) teachers
- Secondary teachers (especially in high school English language arts and social studies/history, though teachers for other specialties are also invited)
- Learning support/Special Education teacher
- Trades/shop teachers (construction, cabinetry, mechanics, welding).

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 resumé or CV to office@ccsschool.ca. For more information about the vacancies, available immigration supports, or the application process, please contact the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland, at 403-381-3030 or marc.slingerland@ccsschool.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@nrnsnj.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@nrnsia.org for further information.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN ELEMENTARY AND HIGH SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, are accepting applications for possible openings in the elementary and high school for the 2020-2021 school year. Interested K-6 applicants should send or email their resumé and/or questions to Mr. Nathan Bleeker, nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us. Interested 7-12 applicants should send or email their resumé and/or questions to Mr. James Bazen, jbazen@plymouthchristian.us.

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 currently accepting applications to fill several elementary and secondary teaching positions for the 2020-2021 school year. Secondary openings especially include the subject areas of mathematics, humanities, and the industrial arts. In addition to welcoming applications from certified teachers, those with a bachelor's degree interested in our teaching training program are also encouraged to apply. Our program allows for a blend of paid teaching together with — support and training. Inquiries are welcome! We are also accepting applications for para-educator positions in the Special Education department. Visit us at www.rcsnorwich.com for more detailed information or contact the director, Mr. John Heikoop, at director@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 223. Please submit cover letters and resumes to hr@rcsnorwich.com.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is seeking British Columbia certifiable teachers who are interested in joining us in a motivating and exciting learning environment. We have implemented an interesting new curriculum that focuses on knowing, doing, and understanding while including self assessment strategies for learners. Teaching this curriculum through a Christian worldview requires teachers who thrive in a dynamic educational environment. We are seeking applications at all levels of interest from Kindergarten through Secondary as well as in a variety of electives from IT to Business and Physical Education. The teachers at Timothy Christian School are excited about teaching and have a particular love for the hearts of young people. If you are such a teacher and are a member of the NRC or a conservative Reformed denomination, please apply to join our team. For certification requirements and more information, and/or an application form regarding the above positions, please do not hesitate to contact either the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at 604-794-7114 or dstam@timothychristian.ca, or the school board president, Mr. Wim Neels, at 604-858-8834) or wimneels@timothychristian.ca.

To All Candidates for Teacher Positions

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

User Name:
advertising@nrcea.education
Password:
SchoolJobs!

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

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

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

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

Finished Salvation

“’Tis finished”—the REDEEMER said,
And meekly bowed His dying head;
While we His sentence scan;
Come, sinners, and observe the word!
Behold the conquests of our LORD
Complete for helpless man.

Finished the righteousness of grace;
Finished for sinners, pardoning peace;
Their mighty debt is PAID:
Accusing law canceled by blood,
And wrath of an offended GOD
In sweet oblivion laid.

Who now shall urge a second claim?
The law no longer can condemn;
Faith a release can show;
Justice itself a friend appears;
The prison-house a whisper hears,
“Loose him, and let him go.”

O unbelief, injurious bar;
Source of tormenting, slavish fear!
Why dost thou yet reply?
Where’er their loud objections fall,
“’TIS FINISHED,” still shall answer all,
And silence every cry.

His work divinely FINISHED stands;
And O! the praise His love demands,
Careful may we attend!
Conclusion to the whole be this;
Because salvation FINISHED is,
Our thanks shall never end.

— *Augustus Toplady*