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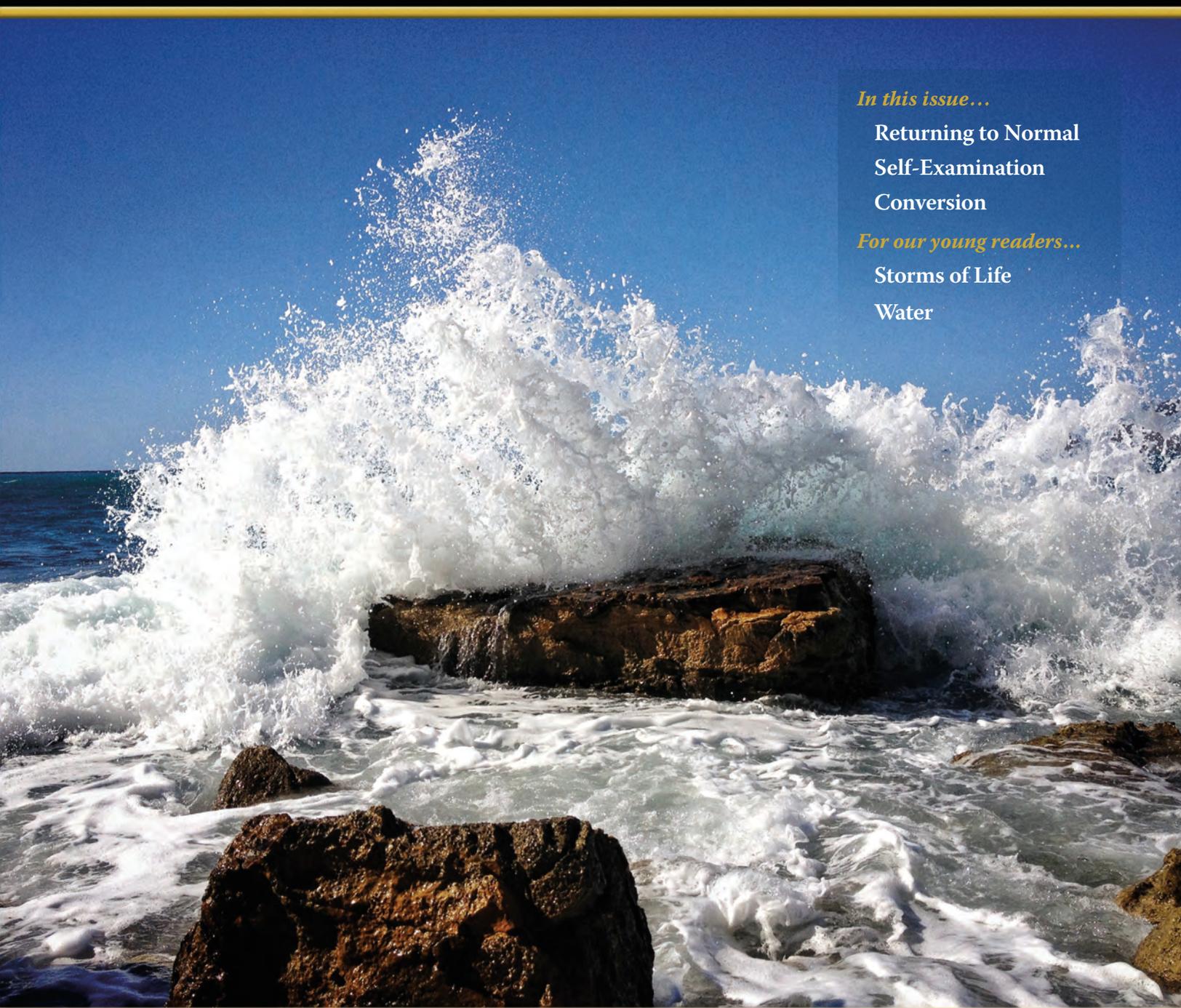
The Official Periodical
of the Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the
United States and Canada

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Self-Examination
Conversion

For our young readers...

Storms of Life
Water



*“Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of Thy waterspouts:
all Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.” PSALM 42:7*



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Meditation

Returning to Normal

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

“So Ahab went up to eat and drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees” (1 Kings 18:42).

The history related in our text took place during the time that Israel was still under the judging hand of the Lord. The nation with a history like no other nation had left their God by renewal. The Lord saw fit to judge them with a famine. This famine was prophesied by Elijah, as we read in 1 Kings 18:2, “And Elijah went to shew himself unto Ahab. And there was a sore famine in Samaria.” The reason for this judgment is revealed in 1 Kings 16:30-33. King Ahab was a wicked king, who awakened the judgments of the Lord which as we read in chapter 18, are going over the land of Israel.

Do we see how clearly the Bible points to the origin of the judgments? The Lord declares that He changes not, also in light of His judgments. How fearful then are the times that we live in. It is a time that our sins have awakened the judgments of the Lord to be upon us and our loved ones.

Are there Ahabs in today’s world? No doubt there are, but, my dear reader, have we not become the Baal worshiper? What is in the center of our homes and hearts? Is it God or is it the world? Is it God or my family? Is it God or my church and religious activities? Is it God or myself? The Ahab lives within. We all need to be uncovered to that Ahab; we then read of such people that they will learn to loath themselves.

Elijah, the servant of the Lord, has to go and show himself to Ahab (verse 2). Would that not be a dangerous thing to do? Would that not be a waste of time? The Lord desired that this wicked king would receive a visit from one of His servants. This meeting is described in verses 17 through 20. The wicked king calls out the righteous Elijah as the one who troubleth Israel. Oh, the blindness to the cause of God’s judgments. How clearly we see in the most troublous times and under the clearest judgments that there is always a searching and a pointing away from self to find the cause of guilt and to direct blame to somewhere or someone else.

How many have found their refuge among the political leaders who, according to their opinions, should have known better how to deal with this epidemic. How many have pointed the finger to all kinds of conspiracy theories as the source for the credible information when in all reality their own poor, guilty soul is by-passed. How necessary it is that we are uncovered by the Lord Himself; otherwise, we will always find the cause of the judgments somewhere else.

The Lord arose for His own honor to help His servant and to prove over against a guilty people that yet He is LORD. There on Mt. Carmel the justice of God consumed the burnt sacrifice. The Baal worship suffered major defeat. Baal is not a God. Also, today, the Lord has clearly revealed that Baal still is not God. Should we not hearken and consider?

How does the history of King Ahab and Elijah unfold? Ultimately, it becomes a very personal matter. I read, “Ahab went up to eat and to drink.” What does that mean in the context? Ahab suffered a major defeat on Mt. Carmel. His prophets are dead, and his religion has been defeated. God has clearly proved that He is LORD, but Ahab goes on. Ahab hardens his heart. With the clear judgment of famine for the past three years and now with the promise of rain, all held in light of his major defeat on Mt. Carmel, Ahab goes to eat and drink. What a poor, rebellious king.

How is it with us while the restrictions are being lifted? We return to normal. What is normal? Is that to eat and to drink from the menu of world conformity? May the Holy Spirit then convict you and me for the first time or by renewal that we are no different from a wicked and rebellious King Ahab.

I see another man in our text who follows a different way. He returns to the top of Mt. Carmel. Oh, how clearly the LORD has upheld him over the past three years of famine. How distinct a victory had the Lord given on that mountain. There on that mountain he implores the LORD earnestly in prayer. What is his prayer? This man of God begs the LORD for the fulfillment of the promise because with the promise the curse is not removed. Elijah cannot continue with only the promise of rain; Elijah cannot go on like Ahab. Elijah is bound to the throne of grace, imploring the God of grace, for the fulfillment of grace. Oh LORD remove the stroke, O LORD upon the grounds of satisfaction, remember Thy own word.

Is there a remnant for whom the Lord has been gracious and kind and has spoken that He would remove the curse and that they would receive the blessing? Such people bear the curse; such people are the curse. They cry to heaven. They find no worthiness in self because they cannot find in self the source to fulfill the promise. Elijah also looks. To what does he look? To the source! From the sea the clouds must come to remove the curse. His eyes are longing for the salvation of Israel. The source, troubled soul, has been given by the Father for the fulfillment of all the promises of God and so to remove your curse. That source is Jesus Christ; He has credibility with God. This gracious source is God Himself; He is the blessed Immanuel.

Perhaps there is one reading these lines, praying and looking but seeing nothing. Thus, six times Elijah hears the same words, “There is nothing,” but “Go again.” Why go again? Because the source is credible, and the promise was given, but the fulfillment? It came on the seventh trip. “Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man’s hand.” Then that cloud in the next verse is not visible anymore because the heavens are black with clouds, but above all “and there was a great rain.” The fulfillment of the promise is provided; the curse is removed. Oh, what an eternal wonder, the day of a new song, the day of joy and of gladness; the day of restoration has arrived.

Ahab went back to his feasting, but Elijah returned to Mt. Carmel. Ahab is content with his food and drink, but

Elijah may end in the Benefactor of the great benefit; the curse was removed.

I conclude with a question, “Are you an Ahab or, by grace, are you an Elijah?” Ahab went back to his normal life, but Elijah returned to Mt. Carmel. Oh, Ahab, bow now. Oh, sinner, you are happy that things are back to normal so that you can resume living as you did in the past, but living without God? Bow now and ask Him to be King over you, also. Perhaps there is a soul who during the past months has been filled with the fear of returning to normal because he or she has seen that the old normal was without God. Seek, then, the God of Elijah, who even in 2020 upholds His sighing inheritance—seek Him in the inner chamber to give you the lessons of free and sovereign grace. □



Bible Study

The Life of Daniel (6)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king’s word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God” (Daniel 3:28).

Christ has dominion over all the rulers and countries of the world. That was also the strength of these three young men. They could not obey the command of the king to bow before the idol that was erected in the valley of Dura. The king was in a rage when he heard that they had not regarded him nor served his gods or worshiped the golden image which he had set up. We read in Proverbs 19:12a, “The king’s wrath is as the roaring of a lion.” However, the young men were not afraid of this lion. God was their strength and refuge, and God would manifest His work in the flames of the burning fiery furnace. They had taken refuge to the Lord and bowed before Him.

The king wanted to give them another opportunity. After having questioned them, he said, “When you hear the sound of the music, fall down and worship the image which I have made. If you worship not, you shall be cast into the midst of the burning fiery furnace.” In his arrogance and pride, Nebuchadnezzar even dared to say, “Who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?” That is the same Nebuchadnezzar who had said in chapter 2:47, “Of a truth it is, that your God is a God of gods and a Lord of kings, and a revealer of secrets, seeing thou couldest reveal

this secret.” It had just been a fleeting conviction, and we see that his heart had not been renewed and that the king continued in his foolishness.

The Young Men’s Reply

What would these young men say when they heard this terrible threat? Were they not afraid of that burning furnace? We see the power of faith. It was God’s grace that made them say, “O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter...If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.” What a clear testimony of faith this was. It was a resolute refusal to bow before the idol. This was no arrogance. This was a simple trust in the Lord as His precious gift to them because either God would deliver them and would prove His power, or even if He would not do so, they would bow under Him. His counsel will stand and they knew that God is just in all His works. He will not forsake the works of His hands. They said, verse 18, “But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

The unchangeable God was their strength and they may say of Him, “Our God, whom we serve.” He is almighty and sovereign. We are in His hands. He may do what is good in His sight. He can deliver or He can consume, but blessed be the name of the Lord. The honor of God is bound upon their hearts. They have wrestled with the Lord in their inner

room, and He has given them courage. What a precious place these young men occupy. God can do no wrong and He will take care of His honor. That is a place where we will not come by nature. Though there may be convictions and promises made unto God, they are like a morning cloud that soon vanishes away, but what God does will stand forever. God's children may be attacked by a mighty enemy who tells them that everything will come to nothing, that the Lord now has forsaken them, or that they will not be able to endure and to be steadfast in the hour of temptation and affliction. However, by faith, they may be given to believe that God surely will be honored and glorified, for He takes care of His work Himself, so that they may trust in Him.

The furnace

Soon the king, who was full of fury, commanded that the furnace should be made seven times hotter. The young men were bound and cast into the midst of the furnace. The fire was so hot that the men who carried them to cast them into the furnace were killed by it. The executioners perished. How would it go with these young men in such a furnace? We read in Isaiah 43:2, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." They are not alone. The eternal Son of God appears for He is the fourth person that is seen in the fire. Christ Himself would be in the fire, and the wrath of God would be upon Him. He has quenched the fire of God's anger against His people. Now it is true for them, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee," for nothing will separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. God's work will be manifest to the enemies.

The king is profoundly startled because:

- a) he does not see three but four men.
- b) they are not bound but free.
- c) they are not lying down or standing but walking.
- d) they are not roasting in the fire but are unhurt; literally, harm was not upon them.
- e) the appearance of the fourth was like unto the Son of God.
- f) these men were not hastily searching for a possible exit from the furnace. Since it was pleasing to God to deliver them, they were submitting themselves to His pleasure and His mode of deliverance.

The king was astonished and said to the young men, "Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, ye servants of the

Most High God, come forth, and come hither," so they came forth out of the midst of the fire. The Lord had shown His faithful preserving power.

Deliverance

What a difference with how the king now speaks about the Lord. First, he had said, "Who is that God that shall deliver you?" Now, he calls Him the Most High God. He is overwhelmed by a mystery that he cannot understand. It even brings him to a kind of acknowledgement in which he seems to praise the Lord. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who has sent His Angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God." The king even acknowledges in verse 29, "There is no other God that can deliver after this sort." He promoted the young men to a higher position. However, Nebuchadnezzar does not acknowledge that the Lord alone is God, He is only the highest of gods. Even the performance of

this mighty miracle does not convert him. He does not command the idol to be destroyed.

If we praise the Lord with our lips but serve the idols of the world, then our religion is in vain. We may well search our hearts because we can be almost a Christian. We can have a beautiful confession but still cling to some idols and do not completely surrender to God. The Lord makes a new creature who wants to be delivered from all sins. His faith

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will be tried, but God will give them the crown of life at the end of the battle.

The fire had consumed the bonds of these young men. Sometimes trials are used that the people of God may walk at liberty. The fire consumes the bonds of sin, the love of the world, and in the midst of trials, men may lift up their head, if the Lord gives it, and boast in free grace alone. Isaiah 12:1, "And in that day thou shalt say, Oh LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and Thou comfortedst me." In prisons and furnaces, they may sometimes have fellowship with Christ. The Lord uses the afflictions and the trials to cleanse, prune, and purify them; once they will be presented as a pure virgin without spot or wrinkle. Should we not be jealous of these young men? Would we be able to stand the test? No, never in our own strength even after having received grace. Though they halt and stumble, they will not be ashamed who put their trust in Him. □

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

Self-Examination

Rev. J. Van Haaren (1933-1983)

“And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?” (Matthew 26:22).

Before the onset of Christ’s bitterest suffering, He first desired to celebrate the Passover with His disciples. Once more He will point out to them that the bitter suffering and death which He will undergo will be to their eternal welfare. He will enter into death, and in so doing He shall obtain life for them. Oh, what will have transpired in the heart of Christ when He ate the Passover with His disciples, for it pointed to Him? He was the Lamb of God who should take away the sins of the world. No matter how terrible the suffering would be, He was prepared to give Himself because His love and His zeal burned within Him.

Would the disciples not have noticed that? Even though they have not understood it fully, yet His love has touched their heart. Yet, what sorrow will have been present in the heart of Christ, for one of His

disciples was a devil. John writes that with a troubled spirit He said, “Verily, Verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.” What must that have been for Jesus? One who ate bread with Him, who was so closely allied with Him—one who had walked with Him, had heard His sermons and had seen His miracles—would betray Him and deliver Him to the Sanhedrin.

Judas never knew anything of a hearty sorrow for God which works a repentance not to be repented of. He was in the circle of disciples, but he did not belong with them. Where must we seek hypocrites? Among the disciples, among attendants at the Lord’s Supper, under those who have the name of Jesus upon their lips? Oh, how many will go eternally lost with this name upon their lips? Christ Himself has said, “One of you shall betray Me.” Should this not frighten us? Should it not bring us to a stringent self-examination?

Such examination happened with the disciples. No, they did not jump up indignantly, and they did not say, “Lord that is not possible”; they became sorrowful. Should one of them betray Him whom they love so dearly? That filled their heart with sorrow. Had they not found in Him life and salvation? Peter spoke for all of them when he said, “Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.”

Yea, when they might taste something of His love, they have called out, “I will heartily love Thee, O Lord, my strength!” Would now one of these betray Him? They are sorrowful because of the derision which shall be cast upon Him.

God’s true people understand this. How often do they fear that one day they will be revealed as a hypocrite? What that means is to one day be removed from communion with God. The worst, however, is that when they are revealed as a hypocrite, God’s dear name will be slandered. That causes them pain. What did the disciples do now? One by one they placed themselves before the Knower of hearts and asked, “Lord, is it I?” Or as it is actually written in the original, “Lord, that is not I, is it?” Oh, spare me from that; let that not be I. It is not just a few of them who thought this way; no, they all did, Peter and John included. It lived in their heart, “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

God’s true people do not avoid the uncovering. According to them, uncovering preaching can never be preached too much. No, the disciples did not suspect each other; they suspected themselves, but what about Judas? He felt that the Lord saw through him, yet he hardened himself in his evil design. In order not to be revealed before the others, he also bowed down and asked, “Rabbi, is it I?” He imitated the other

disciples, but he did not mean it. Neither did he acknowledge Christ as Lord but called Him Rabbi! Even when Christ said, “Thou hast said,” he did not repent. He ran further upon the way to destruction. He continued to pretend even into the Garden of Gethsemane. There the betrayer of Christ presented himself as His true friend when he came up to Him and gave Him a kiss.

How heavy shall his judgment be. Christ said of him, “It had been good for that man if he had not been born.” Should this not move us? Should it not bring us upon our knees? Let this be our continual prayer: “Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.” □

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Conversion

Rev. A.W. Verhoef (1917-1996)

“Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned” (Jeremiah 31:18b).

Conversion is necessary for everyone, both old and young. As the Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor a leopard his spots, so a sinner cannot convert himself by his own power. A person who is spiritually dead cannot convert himself any more than a corpse can raise itself from the dead. A stone which is rolling down a hill cannot by its own efforts reverse its course, so fallen man cannot by his own strength return unto God. Therefore, the Lord must turn us and then we shall be turned. Do not forget: we are born with our backs turned away from God and our faces toward sin and hell until sovereign grace converts and turns us. My dear reader, conversion is not a repairing of the old building, but the old is torn down and a new structure erected. The Lord has to take away our stony heart and give us a heart of flesh.

In conversion, the process begins with light, by letting light shine in upon the godlessness and ignorance of the heart. We are fallen children of Adam, and we have lost what we had in Paradise and have become enemies of God. Let us not forget that free will in conversion is a downright lie. Like the woman in the gospel, the more we attempt the cure by physicians, the worse it is made. The miracle is that the Lord can make the unwilling willing. He can turn us, and we shall be turned.

Conversion is more than an external reform. A man who is “externally” converted is like an empty vessel. When struck, such a vessel will make a great noise, but it is without content. It is therefore most necessary that the Lord opens our ears, our eyes, yea, our hearts. Conversion is not a change of habits but a total change of heart. A lion does not become a lamb when he has lost his teeth. That is why we must learn that conversion is not merely an outward reformation; it is an inward transformation.

If we still have a speaking conscience, then we know that it is very dangerous to postpone repentance until our death-bed. One who delays conversion is like a man stricken with a deadly disease; the longer he delays to call a physician,

the harder it is to cure him. He is like a bird whose feet are caught in a net. We must all learn that conversion is a work of God. We are not like the animals; we are human beings. We are responsible before God. Was there ever a time that you could not sleep because you saw how awful your state was for eternity? Has there ever come a time that you had to beg, “Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned”? Or are we still indifferent, are we still careless? Do not forget, we only have one soul, and soul lost, all is lost.

Oh, parents, God grant you to pray for your children who are growing up in such a sinful age. The Lord will hear the cry from a father or a mother, if by grace we might learn to pray for the well-being of our off-spring. Monica, a devout Christian woman in the early centuries of the Church, incessantly prayed for the conversion of her ungodly son, Augustine. Years elapsed before God answered her ardent prayers. It was in the spring of the year 372, when her son, who was then in his thirty-first year, entered his garden in great distress of soul. The sins of his youth spent in sensuality and impiety weighed heavily upon his soul. Lying under a fig tree, moaning and pouring out abundant tears, he heard from a neighboring house a child’s voice saying, “Take and read! Take and read.”

Regarding this as a divine admonition, he procured the roll of Paul’s epistles. He describes what followed. “I opened it and read in silence the chapter on which my eyes first lighted (the 13th chapter of the Book of Romans): ‘Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.’” In a moment, by the grace of God, Augustine came to repentance, and by faith he saw Christ as the only Saviour. After the Day Star had thus risen in his heart, he not only began to walk in newness of life but also became one of the most gifted ministers of the ancient church.

My dear reader, beg that the Lord might give us to cry unto Him, “Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned.” □

Curatorium Announcement

As of July 5, 2020, the Curatorium of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of North America has given permission to Student J. Slingerland to begin speaking an edifying word in the congregations. For the time being, due to the continued difficulty and even danger in traveling, he will be limited to serving those

congregations which he can reach by automobile. May the Lord graciously remember Student Slingerland with His presence and blessing as he begins his labors in the congregations, and may all these decisions meet with His divine approval.

—Rev. H. den Hollander, Clerk



Doctrinal Studies

Separating Preaching (2)

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

We saw in the foregoing article that preaching must separate according to state and standing. The line of separation between God's children and those who do not fear God must be drawn; the preacher must also take into account the different standings which, according to God's Word, exist in spiritual life. We are not finished yet. The right separating preaching is still more than what we have written about previously. After all, not only on the right-hand side of the great line of separation are different shades, namely, those among God's children but also on the left-hand side of the line of separation; not everyone's condition is the same.

It is interesting to hear what our fathers have remarked when they were together at Wesel on November 3, 1568, under the leadership of Petrus Datheen, to draw up a few initial rules for church life. We read in Article 23 of the [second chapter] of the "Articles of Wesel" the following: *"Everything shall be directed towards these two chief chapters of the gospel, namely, faith and repentance. And therein the preachers shall aim as their only goal the knowledge of Christ and diligently teach the true mortification and quickening of the people. They shall labor to penetrate with their sermons, as much as is possible, into all covered veils and hiding places of the souls of the hearers, and rebuke all false opinions and heresies and evil morals; and not only pause at gross offences and evident sins, but also shake out that hidden hypocrisy of the heart, and bring to light from it and destroy most thoroughly the seed and that miry pool of all kinds of wickedness, pride, and unthankfulness, which still have their nourishment and motion even in the very best."*

One can find the above quotation in the *Kerkelijk Handboekje* (Church Handbook), published by Rev. G.H. Kersten, pp. 19&20. The italics are mine (A.M.). It is certainly clear what Datheen and his brothers have wanted to say with this article in Wesel. Preaching has to be discovering. The minister should not just speak to the unconverted in general as if they are all alike; also, in pointing out sin he should not be superficial and stick to "evident sins." No, preaching has to penetrate into the hiding places of the souls of the hearers, and the secret hypocrisy of the heart has to be "shaken out." The Convent of Wesel did remark on this "as much as possible." After all, breaking and converting hearts is God's work.

By quoting the Weselian article just mentioned, we wanted to make clear that preaching must also separate on the left-hand side, that means among those hearers who do not fear God. Just like there are so many shades among God's children, we find among the unconverted hearers

many different types as well. There are indifferent people. They are present in every congregation. They are among the baptized members, but they are also among the confessing and professing members. There are some among our young people who, at house visitation, say, without a trace of emotion, that they do not believe there is a God and admit that they no longer pray or thank. Many of them turn their back to the church and become fanatic enemies and religious nihilists. Sometimes they are listed on the register of baptized members; sometimes they were already removed. Such people have always been there, but their number increases in these "last days." Some of them still come to church for various reasons and are sitting under the Word.

We may not forget, however, that indifference is not limited to our baptized members. The "Gallio-types" can also be found among the confessing members. Is it not frightening to hear a ninety-year-old, when asked during house visitation where the journey is going, answer that he does not bother with that? Well, the preaching shall also have a message for such people. It will have to be the awful message of Amos 6:1a: "Woe to them that are at ease in Zion, and trust in the mountain of Samaria."

On the other hand, there are the emotional types. These are the Orpahs, who go along, oh, so far out of the Moab of the world. When a word to the heart is spoken, they are quickly touched. They sometimes even love God's people, just like Orpah had a certain respect for Naomi. Sometimes they cry under the preaching. They are certainly not indifferent about death and eternity. During house visitation you can speak easily to them.

Yet—all these things can be present without the true renewal of the heart. The danger is so manifestly present that such types are going to interpret their feelings as faith. Usually they do not care much for a preaching that cuts off, in which everything that is outside of Christ is marked as insufficient. Such daughters of Jerusalem, who can weep so feelingly about Jesus' suffering but forget themselves and their children, are sitting under the Word every Sunday. In the rightly separating preaching, they will also be addressed.

There are hypocrites, the people who feign. These are the ones who consciously pretend to be different from what they are. They are, says Smytegelt so often, different before God than before the people. For all kinds of reasons, they attempt to show an appearance of godliness. Judas did it for money; he thought that godliness was gain.

Others are willing to do everything in order to obtain a name among God's children. For this purpose, they partake of the administration of the Holy Supper; for this purpose,

they visit the conventicles of God's children; they exercise themselves in the language of Canaan, but with all that under the sheep's clothing they carry a wolf's heart. The minister of the Word may not forget to address them either.

There are those who deceive themselves. They should be distinguished from the hypocrites. The hypocrites mentioned above consciously deceive others; the people, whom we mean now, unconsciously deceive themselves. They think to possess grace but build upon a wrong foundation. Saul of Tarsus, for instance, was no hypocrite before the Lord stopped him on the way to Damascus. He was not someone who pretended to be different from what he was. In all sincerity he was jealous for the traditions of the fathers, and in his raging against the Lord's congregation he thought to do God service. Alas, he deceived himself in his legalistic religion in an awful manner. If God had not opened his eyes, Saul would have perished forever in outer darkness with an imagined heaven, thinking to be a son of Abraham. Every minister has to realize that in every congregation there are still such rich young rulers. All this does not mean, of course, that a minister of the Word is a knower of the heart.

There is but One who knows in a perfect manner who are standing on the right-hand side and who are standing on the left-hand side of the invisible line of separation. The Lord knoweth them that are His! Neither may a preacher ever allow himself to be tempted on the pulpit to picture someone, whom he thinks to be a hypocrite, in such a manner that everyone realizes who is meant by it. Dr. T. Hoekstra, already quoted a few times by us, says about this: "In this case the application has opposite effects and does not reach its goal. Most of the hearers let the application go past them. They do not take the spiritual medicine, because they think that this is intended for someone else. And the person whom it concerns becomes bitter in most instances, instead of improved" (*Gereformeerde Homiletiek*, p. 305). Nevertheless, every minister who understands the necessity of a separating preaching will have an eye for the fact that everyone of the types mentioned (and still more than those) are found in his congregation, and this realization will have to drive him out to the throne of grace in order to understand what message for every kind of hearer is contained in each text preached by him. □

(To be continued)



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

I know that everything in the Bible has a purpose, but what is the purpose of the genealogies?

I think this is a question not only of young people but also of older ones as well. It is a good custom to read through the entire Word of God from cover to cover, but who does not stumble when in faithful Bible reading one arrives at 1 Chronicles 1 through 9, Nehemiah 7, and several other chapters? Do we skip them because we have no use for them? Can we say that such a chapter is edifying? What about children at the table who are trying to listen to what father or mother reads and not one word is remembered? What if the names are nearly unpronounceable? I will be the first to admit that this can be cumbersome, to say the least. Strangely, perhaps, I find such chapters easier to read in Dutch than in English, but that does not help readers who read only English...

Let me point out first of all that this is a legitimate and understandable question. I would like to answer it by simply sharing some thoughts for you to keep in mind, hoping they will be helpful.

1. Let us remember that behind every name *hides the history of a human being*—a person who lived a life, received dealings of the Lord, and fulfilled God's counsel. We may never know more about this person than just his—for us, maybe—unpronounceable name, but to the Lord this person was known and ordered ere his life began, and the Holy Spirit deemed it necessary to have this name recorded in the Holy Scriptures. In Psalm 33:13-15 we read: "*The LORD looketh from heaven; He beholdeth all the sons of men. From the place of His habitation He looketh upon all the inhabitants of the earth. He fashioneth their hearts alike; He considereth all their works.*" So it was with each name mentioned. This is a solemn thought. If the Lord deemed it necessary to record that particular name in the Bible, shall I then skip reading it?
2. Sometimes we notice important, surprising, comforting, instructive texts which are almost hidden between the sea of names. It would be a good activity for a Sunday afternoon to page through the chapters with names and seek to locate such texts. I will give you one

example: I read of a person who was particularly comforted with the very last verse of Joshua 21: *“There failed not ought of any good thing which the LORD had spoken unto the house of Israel; all came to pass.”* This text is written in a chapter full of names. What if this person had skipped reading this chapter because of all the names?

3. Let us also remember that genealogies show how accurately and soundly the Holy Spirit has recorded (historical) detail. Just because we may not grasp that part of history, it still reminds us of the book of remembrance that is before the Lord’s countenance. If the Lord tells the wanderings and records all David’s tears (Psalm 56), would He not record names? I could therefore even understand that the long record of names in the Bible could be an encouragement for *lonely* people, and there are numerous lonely people in the world. The majority of these names may remain unknown to us, but they are known to the Lord. Isaac DaCosta, a converted Jewish poet, called the genealogies the skeleton of the Bible, over which the Holy Spirit drew sinews and flesh. *“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (2 Timothy 3:16).
4. Another thought that comes to mind is that it may not be left up to us how we read the Bible. I believe this touches upon an important but sensitive point today. More and more we sense the spirit of *individualism* in our day. With individualism is meant the habit or principle of being independent in freedom of action or opinion. No, this does not mean that ministers limit the freedom of their hearers to think or have an opinion, but Scripture does. “I skip reading this or that in the Bible...because I don’t like it” does not reflect humble reverence for *“thus saith the LORD.”* The same counts for: “I skip reading because I feel it is...” Unfortunately, this habit seems to extend further than just genealogies. I am afraid—as a sad result of the corona crisis—that *sermon or minister-shopping* has skyrocketed. Dear reader, the Bible, the sermon, or the preacher (I say it hesitantly and with reverence) is not a grocery store item: we like it, we leave it, or... are not interested. Let us never choose only certain

sections when we read God’s holy Word, nor read the Bible according to what suits us or is easier or more pleasing. Then we act as if we are wiser than the Lord.

5. On another note, are there not many other portions of Scripture that are difficult to understand besides difficult-to-pronounce genealogies? It shows that our understanding is darkened, by nature, and that the Holy Spirit is necessary to give indispensable light and understanding.
6. Let us also remember that in the midst of the *most important* genealogy, the family tree of the Lord Jesus, only names of *sinners* are listed...Only sinners, all the way to Adam. Has it ever become a personal wonder that the Christ-child was willing to be listed among Judah and Tamar, an outside Gentile like Ruth and evil kings like Amon, Manasseh, and Uzziah? While of Christ we read in 1 Peter 2:22, *“Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth.”* When by the Spirit’s leading and instruction I begin to learn something of what it is to belong to an evil and adulterous generation, how sweet it then becomes if I, by faith, may see One, the Chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely, the Rock whose work is perfect, but in the black background of a corrupted genealogy which Moses called a perverse and crooked generation (Deuteronomy 32:5).
7. Finally, on an interesting note, I read somewhere that the question of genealogies in the Bible is much less of an issue in certain countries, e.g., Africa. Africans, as well as other old cultures of the world, cherish a deep respect for their ancestors. Names are important because in a genealogy a name is preserved. Currently, we are living in a time where slogans like “black lives matter” are heard all over and have caused riots and anarchy in many places. Vice President Pence said it differently a while ago: “All lives matter.” I am sure Mr. Pence was not thinking of genealogies at that moment, but, in my opinion, it is another explanation of the purpose of genealogies. ◻

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

We are only safe when we wisely make use of all the good advantages that we have access to. By going out of God’s ways we go out of His government, and so lose our good frame of mind, and find ourselves overspread quickly with a contrary disposition. When we draw near to Christ (James 4:8) in His ordinances, He draws near to us.

—Richard Sibbes



For Young and Old

Storms of Life (1)

Author Unknown

(Translated from “The Friend of Old and Young”)

When, occasionally, we let our thoughts have free reign, there may be times and places which come to the foreground from many years ago. It is our nature to extract some benefit out of the past for the present, and then the thoughts which we have may be serviceable for ourselves and for others.

Many years have passed since the story which follows was related to me by a dear girlfriend, who because of her spiritual discernment and tender godliness was frequently used to instruct me. Despite the strife of life, which for her was often quite heavy, she had a calm life. This calmness was neither the result of the circumstances surrounding her nor because of her nature but was the result of a humble faith—faith that even in the greatest strife caused her to raise her head, knowing that all things work together for good.

She was alone in the world. Her husband, whom she had loved intimately, and her child, who was the apple of her eye, had both been taken from her by death. For a long time she bewailed her loss with great outward grief until she was finally favored with so many, powerful influences of the Spirit, that she was loosened from her departed loved ones, and enjoyed a sufficiency in her God. I was privileged to spend many an edifying, necessary, and instructive hour with her when she could bring forth both new and old particulars out of the rich experiences in her life.

On a certain winter evening when I was free, I again visited her and found her alone. As was customary she sat in her easy chair and kept herself busy with some handwork. During our speaking together, unintentionally the conversation led to the judging of others, and how sometimes the illusion of a wrong is cast upon someone, even though there are no grounds for passing judgment upon such a person.

She then laid down her knitting on her lap, took off her glasses, and folded her hands while she, as was her custom, continuously twirled her thumbs when she wanted to relate something special. It did not take long before she began to tell a story which interested me so much that I wish to re-count it as I received it from her, and I will let her tell the story herself.

“I had a dear girlfriend with whom I grew up. We were a pair of good and faithful friends, two real honest Marys who were continuously committed to please our heavenly Father, and we thought that there were no better children then we were. We did not argue, did favors for the poor, were obedient and diligent; in short, we were model children.

“When she was eighteen years old, Mary, that was the name of my friend, became seriously ill. During this time, I did not leave her sickbed. She recovered, and it pleased the Lord to use this illness as a means to convince her that what she possessed was insufficient for the great eternity. Since that time there came some distance between us. Mary was more and more uncovered regarding her state, while my soul’s eyes were still closed.

“I cannot relate this in great detail, for then we would have to take up a number of evenings to complete it. To be short, approximately one-half year later the Lord also opened my soul’s eyes, and since that time the ties that bound us

together became even closer. The change, however was great. The two courageous Marys were powerfully uncovered to the fact that their proud possessions were corrupt and that they were poor sinners who had deserved eternal death. Yet, they learned of a righteousness wherewith they could appear before a holy and righteous God which was applied to them through the merits of the atonement and suffering on the cross of their Surety and Mediator.

“Marriage made, as is natural, some separation between us. We both started on our marriage journey at approximately the same time. Mary had a good marriage. Her husband, as the world would say was a man without a fortune, but he had a treasure which the world and death could not take from him. Her marriage was blessed with a child, a sweet pleasant boy; when that happiness also became my portion, we debated with each other whose offspring was the most loving.

“When little Carl was twelve years old, he lost his father through death, and Mary remained behind as a widow, with few means and facing a dark future. My dear friend, however, had a strong support. Her Maker was her husband, and even though she was led through dark and deep ways,

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she could experience time and again time her dependence upon God. Her greatest concern was for her son, whom she was able to raise at the feet of the Lord Jesus, so that already at an early age he had deep impressions of the weightiness of his undying soul and eternity.

“While undergoing great sacrifices, Mary had been able to have Carl educated so that one day he could be a profitable member of society. When he was twenty years old, a favorable opportunity presented itself, and he was employed in a promising position whereby the concerns of his mother were markedly alleviated.

“Mary had a blood relative in a certain Mr. Vroon, a rich banker, who, as a widower, lived with his daughter. He was a man with a very good-hearted character who did not keep his wealth just for himself. Mary had also frequently

experienced that in her widowhood, for when it came into his thoughts, he said—while Mary said that the Lord placed the thoughts in his heart—from time to time he would send her either a greater or smaller financial gift, with which the giver was as pleased as the recipient. Mr. Vroon was always also ready to give her good advice, which often was worth more to her than the monetary gifts.

“Carl at this time had to make a choice about following a career. He would have liked nothing more than to obtain a position in the office of Mr. Vroon because all those who worked for him had a good future. He did, however, not dare to hope to be offered a position, even though Mr. Vroon always greeted them in a most friendly manner when Carl and his mother visited him.” □

(To be continued)

Remember the Sabbath Day, to Keep it Holy

Rev. H.J Kohlbrügge (1803-1875)

Translated from *De Gouden Scepter Toegereikt* (The Golden Scepter Extended)

When we open and read the Holy Scriptures, it is striking how the Lord our God places a special emphasis upon the fourth commandment and how all of His saints have seen in this commandment a distinct privilege. It must, therefore, become clear to us how the blessing or the curse upon an entire nation is dependent on the keeping of this commandment. In the fourth commandment God requires that we rest from all of our labors which we may have performed in six days, and not only we, but also the members of our family, even our servants, and not only that, but also our livestock. This resting from our labors does not exist in a passive rest, but we must rest from all of our labors in order to together worship God, to serve Him, to praise Him, to love and to glorify Him. In other words, we withdraw ourselves on this feast day for the promotion of His service.

This does not mean that we may live on in the previous six days without serving God and to do our work without God. No, we must serve God night and day, to honor Him and to fear Him while performing our

labors. This is demanded of us in the first commandment, and no less in the second and third. It is meant in such a way that on this day we purely and only keep ourselves busy in the communal service of the Lord and the laying aside of all of the work of our hands. How the love towards God and His commandments in this again is helpful, I do not have to explain in great detail. For the instruction of all of us, and the establishing in the doctrine of true godliness it should be said; the fourth commandment belongs to the Ten Commandments of God's Covenant and is, as are all of the other commandments, a constant rule governing the walk of the followers of the covenant.

*Come, all ye servants of the Lord,
Lift up your voice with one accord
Jehovah's name to bless;
Ye that are standing night by night
Within the house of His delight,
His glorious name confess.*

—Psalter 372:1 (Psalm 134:2)

How many of you would be in chapel today if you knew that you would be flogged for it in the market-place tomorrow. If you were flogged for it tomorrow, how many of you would be here next Sabbath?

—William Tiptaft



Reflections

A Letter from Mientje Vrijdag

Mientje Vrijdag

(Mientje Vrijdag of Rijssen, the Netherlands, was a deeply exercised child of God, who also had a rich correspondence with several soul friends, among whom was Aaltje Smelt who lived at Vriezenveen, the Netherlands. Here follows a translation of one of her letters.) —Ed.

Dear soul's friend with your husband and Aaltje,

It is Monday evening. This morning I received your note and invitation. On Friday afternoon I heard from Aaltje that the minister would be celebrating the Lord's Supper in your midst. Oh, my beloved, that opened up a hearty desire, but there is much which keeps us bound to our place. We should have done the laundry tomorrow but have moved that back to Wednesday since the minister will be preaching for us tomorrow afternoon. Thus, my dear friend, this makes it impossible to meet, much to our sorrow. May the Lord be in your midst as the great Administrator of the sanctuary.

Yesterday afternoon we were able to listen to a sermon on Lord's Day 12, "Why is He called Christ, that is Anointed?" Rev. Justus Vermeer is so precious in his explanation. Just listen to the answer: "Because He is ordained of the Father, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, to be our *Chief Prophet and Teacher*," etc. Oh, who is a teacher like our Lord Jesus?

Oh, beloved, if I could only for once worthily praise and adore Him! Is He not our next of kin, our Deliverer? Oh, what will it be one day when faith shall be exchanged into beholding and then as with Thomas to cry out, "My Lord, and my God!"

Saturday, we received a message that a young girl of twelve years old was converted, or powerfully changed, as they wrote to us, and that there were also several young people in whom the Lord was working. Oh, Aaltje, how happy we were, and faith was so strengthened that there were still sheep to be added which belong to the sheepfold. Oh, then it is within our soul, give the honor eternally to

our God and Lord. Oh, Aaltje, it is a wonder, but then do not think, why isn't it mine? Oh no! It would be an eternal wonder if that would yet one day happen, for there is nothing too wonderful for Him.

Oh, our deeply sunken people and nation. Is it not an eternal wonder that the Lord still has His covenant people among them? It was such a wonder to me that I sank away under it and derived courage; there will certainly more be drawn, led by the godly light, even though it may be in these oppressive times. There is nothing more glorious upon earth than to hear that the kingdom of King Jesus is enlarged and the kingdom of Satan is troubled and broken down. What will we yet see in these days, Aaltje, for again there are so many nations at war, almost the entire world?

Yesterday morning I was reading in Johannes Avink, the wife of Hendrik Luden, from 1782. That is such a precious book. What exercised meditations, what a clear knowledge of God, a clear self-knowledge, and very instructive in deep ways. It was surprising to read the passages to which the book was opened, and I saw the Lord's hand in it. Oh, Aaltje, how great are His thoughts to usward.

On Sunday, after Dekker had been here, we were exercised in our faith. What a blessing to be able to lean and rest upon that eternal faithful covenant—upon that intercessory prayer of the great High Priest at the Father's right hand and that precious blood of atonement. I would tell you more of it if we could just speak together for a few minutes, but duty calls. Beloved, we ask of the Lord if it may be granted us to be together with you in spirit; that could yet be possible even if we are separated bodily from each other. The communion of saints is so sweet. I was able to experience it this past Saturday when Dekker was here.

Receive, both you and those of your household, our hearty greetings.

From your loving soul friend,
Mientje Vrijdag ◻

The torments of hell abide forever...If all the earth and sea were sand, and every thousandth year a bird should come and take away one grain of this sand, it would take a long time ere that vast heap of sand were emptied; yet, if after all that time the damned may come out of hell, there were some hope; **but this word EVER** breaks the heart.

—Thomas Watson



Current Events

Deaths of Nigerian Christians Increasing

As previously shared, Nigeria is a very dangerous place for Christians in recent years, but the situation is worsening; in only two months the number of Christian deaths so far in 2020 has doubled. Most of this has happened in small isolated attacks carried out by Fulani radical herdsmen and Boko Haram Islamic terrorists. Hundreds of houses and churches have been burned or otherwise destroyed. It was also reported this year that almost 12,000 Christians have been killed in Nigeria by these two groups since June 2015.

—*ChristianPost.com*

Israeli Bus Driver Harassed for Sharing the Gospel

An Israeli bus driver was fired for sharing the gospel on his bus. The majority of Israelis responding to the news, however, insist the gospel-preaching driver did nothing wrong. An anti-missionary organization celebrated the driver's dismissal and once again falsely asserted that it is illegal to share the gospel publicly in Israel. Others blamed him for breaking the law because children were present on the bus. In fact, it is not illegal for someone in Israel to publicly share his or her faith, no matter what it might be. It is illegal to specifically target minors for conversion.

—*IsraelToday.co.il*

New Evidence of Increased Persecution of Christians in India

As India gradually emerges from its national lockdown, a sudden spike in attacks on Christians across the country has been documented. Since the lockdown has lifted, at least eight incidents of persecution were recorded in just two weeks. These incidents include physical assaults, damage to Christian properties, and threats issued by radical Hindu nationalists.

In one of several such incidents, radical Hindu nationalists threatened members of a church as they were preparing to reopen their church after nearly three months of lockdown. According to the pastor, the radicals told the Christians they were not allowed to conduct any prayers or even congregate on the church premises. The radicals claimed that the Christians were all carrying COVID-19 and infecting non-Christians with the virus. Recently, the Supreme Court of India permitted the public observance of a major Hindu festival amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The court cited the importance of faith and religious rituals in rendering its decision. As India continues to emerge from COVID-19 lockdown, many Christians fear that a spike in persecution will follow. Sadly, these fears appear to be warranted.

—*Persecution.org*

Church's Benevolent Deeds Thwarted by Authorities

In an unnamed Muslim country in Southeast Asia, a pastor and his church have recently been persecuted after they diligently delivered food packages to impoverished fellow citizens who suffered from COVID-19. Leaders of a nearby mosque questioned their motives. They were afraid that they would convert the Muslims in their neighborhood. Not surprisingly, the permit for the church was suddenly called into question by the authorities. A new permit now needs to be approved, something which is a difficult process. Now the food will be provided to the local leaders so that they will do the distribution to the church's fellow citizens.

—*Persecution.org*

Guidelines for Reopening of Churches

A Christian global health professional who has worked for twenty-five years to control diseases around the world provided guidelines for the reopening phase of churches. A partial sampling of what he wrote follows: Over the past four months most governments implemented strict stay-at-home orders to avoid spread of COVID-19. This very blunt instrument was necessary because many countries were simply unprepared for the rapid spread of this virus. If nothing were done, deaths would have quickly escalated. During this period, churches across the U.S. and around the world have closed their doors to in-person worship. As with many preventive actions, we may never know how this has limited the spread of this virus, but I am certain that this has prevented many infections and deaths that would have occurred among congregants and their families and friends.

There is good evidence that wearing a face mask substantially reduces the release of respiratory droplets and aerosols into the surrounding air, even when a person coughs or shouts. The primary benefit from using a face mask is to reduce the spread of COVID-19 from the source of infection as soon as possible. As was stated by a noted health official: **"Your mask protects me; my mask protects you!"**

—*ChristianityToday.com*

Ohio Bill Protects Religious Expression by Students

A bill that protects the religious expression of public-school students throughout the school day, even with homework and other assignments, was signed into law by Ohio's governor last week. The bill passed the State Congress 32-0 and 90-3. The bill says students, "may engage in religious expression before, during, and after school hours in the same manner and to the same extent" that "a student is permitted to engage in secular activities or expression before, during, and after school hours." Supporters of the bill applauded legislators, "No student should have to hide his faith just because he enters a public school." The [law] is carefully crafted to ensure school administrators cannot unfairly penalize students of all faiths, or no faith." Further, the new law prevents school districts from prohibiting a student from "engaging in religious expression in the completion of homework, artwork, or other written or oral assignments." Teachers "shall not penalize or reward a student based on the religious content of a student's work," the law says.

—*ChristianHeadlines.com*

Navy Rescinds Disturbing Directive

The Navy has issued a directive that prohibited all Navy personnel, including chaplains, from attending in-house church services. Ironically, the directive specifically allows people to gather in other places including unlimited social events, mass transportation, and long lines at the post office. Said Abraham Hamilton III, general counsel for the American Family Association, "We have entered upside-down land." (AFA Action Alert 7-6-2020). It is heartening to note that within 72 hours of the issuance of the directive, it was rescinded because of the large number of calls and letters sent to the President. (*Ed.*)



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (8) **Article XVII: Of the Recovery of Fallen Man**

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

Thus, we have seen that there are two covenants—the Covenant of Works before the Fall, and the Covenant of Grace after the Fall. The Covenant of Grace was made between God the Father and God the Son, who represented the elect. This took place in the Counsel of Peace and was necessary, for otherwise no one could be saved.

Since we left the Lord, we are, by nature, in a state of death. Our article speaks of this: “We believe that our most gracious God, in His admirable wisdom and goodness, seeing that man has thus thrown himself into temporal and eternal death, and made himself wholly miserable, was pleased to seek and comfort him, when he trembling fled from His presence.” After he left the Lord, man wandered over the earth. He was, as it were, pursued by the wrath of the righteous Judge, was a prey to all kinds of misery and pain, had been driven out of Paradise, and was an object of death. The greatest misery was a separation from God forever. Sin had done its work and the Creation was under the curse of God.

How terrible is the situation into which man came after we began to war against God. Now peace on earth is no longer possible, and there is war between nations, divisions in families between parents and children, between brothers and sisters, and schisms in churches. The entire human race gathers the bitter fruit of sin. If it were only on the outside and there were peace within, then it would be bearable, but there is also unrest within the conscience. It is not only a struggle for life but also a greater struggle between flesh and spirit. Sin brings separations and struggles, blinds our morals, and causes us to misuse our strength for unrighteousness. It is clear that we are in a state of death, and we cannot deny it.

What a wonder that the Lord is the first to deliver and save His elect, whom He has chosen from eternity. They are bought by the mediatorial works of Christ, and the Lord will also seek them at His time,

no matter how miserable and sinful they are. Adam did not seek the Lord, but the Lord sought him. God begins the good work. Who of God’s children can say that they sought the salvation of their souls? No one can say this, but the Lord begins and will finish this work.

The salvation of mankind is a deed of His seeking love, a revelation of His hidden pleasure and eternal intention. He who loved His children from eternity and elected them to salvation will also gather them at His time. God was pleased to seek and comfort Adam when he, trembling, fled from His presence, promising him that He would give His Son, who would be made of woman, to bruise the head of the serpent, and would make him happy. This Covenant of Grace was made from eternity but was not revealed before the Fall as there was no place for grace in Paradise.

After the Fall, the Covenant of Grace was revealed, immediately after the Covenant of Works was broken. Then God came to man, as it is written in Genesis 3:15, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed.” Although He was hurt by the disobedience of Adam, the Father here speaks. He explained the covenant to man, according to 2 Corinthians 5:19: “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”

In John 10:28, the Son explained Himself as Mediator, “And I give them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand.” The Holy Spirit, as the Spirit of Christ, applies these merits, as in 1 Corinthians 12:3, “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” Thus, the Lord has revealed Himself not only as a merciful and gracious God but also as perfectly holy and righteous. Where man fled

from the Lord, expecting a threefold death, the Lord came to comfort man with the promise of Christ, who would destroy the head and works of Satan. This was the first revelation of the Covenant of Grace, to the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

The question now arises, "With whom is the covenant made?" As was said before, if we speak of three covenants, we come to the error that all baptized children are in the Covenant of Grace, giving evidence of this in their life. This means that each child of believing parents is in the covenant and has the rights to receive the benefits of the covenant. It is only necessary to accept it, and then you are a partaker of it. This is a doctrine which is against God's Word. By nature, we are children of wrath, and only by regeneration do we come into the covenant.

This covenant is established with the elect, "And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee [...] Live" (Ezekiel 16:6a). This Covenant of Grace is the way by which God through Christ becomes the property of the sinner, and by which, in turn, becomes the property of God. Then the wonder is that the Lord, who requires faith and conversion, also works this in the heart of the elect by Word and Spirit. As the Lord came to Adam to seek and comfort him, so the Lord also works throughout all ages by His servants: the prophets, the apostles, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, according to 2 Corinthians 5:20b, "We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

Many refuse to listen to the message which they receive, but this is not the fault of the Word or of the servants, but the hardening of their hearts. Still the Lord is calling, "As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" From our side there is no hope, but the Lord calls out of free grace from death to life just as Lazarus was called out of the sepulcher. The Lord draws them with cords of a man and with bands of love. The internally called sinner, elected by the Lord his God, surrenders himself to God.

This is, in a few words, what happens when a sinner is incorporated in the Covenant of Grace. He has no knowledge of all these things because he becomes a poor sinner, but in the exercise of faith, he is taught this. It is often a question for God's children whether they are in the covenant or not. These covenant people are not rich but are poor in themselves as Peter says, "Be clothed with humility." They esteem others better than themselves. David cried out, "I am a worm and no man." Though a saint, though a king, yet a worm. When Moses' face shone, he covered it with a veil; when God's people shine most, they cover themselves with a veil of humility. Thus, they remain poor and miserable sinners in themselves, but they are rich in the Lord, for they are on His account.

I hope that all readers may become jealous of this work of God.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

God Helps the People

(Based on Exodus 17b and Exodus 18)

The people of Israel continued to march onward and forward. The Lord had provided plenty of food and water for them, and they were happy. Then, suddenly, they received terrible news. There were some people who wanted to fight and make war with them. It could be that these people, who were called Amalekites, were angry with the Israelites for walking through their country. They may also have been afraid of these strange people who were traveling so near to the borders of their land. The Amalekites sent out soldiers to fight against the Israelites.

The people of Israel were afraid, but Moses told them that God would help them. Moses told Joshua,

one of God's chosen captains over the people, to get some men ready to fight against the Amalekites. "Tomorrow we will send them out to fight against them while I go up on top of the hill with the rod of God in my hand." (Moses had used this rod before Pharaoh to do many wonders.)

The next day the two armies met and the battle began. In the meantime, Moses, and Aaron his brother, and a captain of the people with the name of Hur climbed to the top of a large hill. There on the top of that hill Moses held up his hands holding the rod toward heaven. What happened when Moses did this? As long as his hands were lifted up towards

heaven, the Israelites were winning the battle, but as soon as his hands lay down, the Amalekites began to win.

Why was that? Try yourself to hold up your hands above your head for a long time. You will notice that your hands get very tired, and they may even begin to hurt. Then you have to put them down to feel better. That is what happened to Moses. He began to be tired holding his hands up in the air. He soon had to put them down to rest, but he could not do that. Every time he let his hands come down, the Amalekites began to win the battle.

Then they had an idea. Aaron and Hur helped him, and let him sit upon a large rock while they held up his hands toward heaven. In this way Moses was able to keep his arms held high with the rod of God in his hands, and the people of Israel soon won the battle.

Moses realized that the battle was won with the help of the Lord, and he remembered to give thanks to God for helping them in the fight against the Amalekites. This is an example for us; we should also thank the Lord when He helps us.

Shortly after that a special visitor came to see Moses. His name was Jethro. He was the father of Moses' wife. Jethro was happy to hear how the Lord

had helped and blessed the people of Israel, but Jethro saw something that bothered him. He saw how all of the people came to Moses with their problems. He was busy all day long solving their problems and difficulties. He had no time for rest or to do other things.

"This is not good," said Jethro. You are helping people all day long. You cannot continue to do that. It is too much for you." Jethro had an idea. "Why do you not find some men to help you?" he asked. "Find some God-fearing men to help you to listen to the people. You can teach them what God wants the people to do, and then they can help you with the smaller problems, and you can help the people with the big problems."

Moses went to ask the Lord if he should do that, and the Lord gave His approval to the plan. Moses chose men to help him, and they handled all of the small problems, but the hard and difficult ones were dealt with by Moses.

Moses was glad for Jethro's help and was sad to see him go home. Soon God would speak to Moses again. In the next issue, we will hear about the important things which God told His people through his servant Moses.



Bible Quiz

Water

Dear Boys and Girls,

When you live in the woods, there are many little animals living around you. On a trail camera, we capture pictures of raccoons, foxes, coyotes, bobcats, black bears, and deer, but we rarely see one come into the yard. We have plenty of hawks, too, and a few woodpeckers, but I seem to hear few birdsongs early in the mornings. This all changed, though, when we built a little waterfall garden. Within a few days after the sound of steadily trickling water began, we noticed something.

A toad peered up at us happily from the wet edges of the little pond, a small frog splashed into the water, and a sudden buzz made me look up to see a tiny green hummingbird flitting first here and then there. Various birds were whistling and singing overhead, and a mourning dove cooed not too far away. I was

sure I had never heard some of these sounds here before. A beautiful blue butterfly fluttered past, and a yellow and black swallowtail butterfly landed on a flower. Two cardinals answered each other in the trees, and chipmunks scolded from a safe distance. Bumblebees sipped busily, and shimmering dragonflies hovered. A twig snapped. Looking up, I saw a deer gazing hesitantly through the underbrush. Our front yard seemed to suddenly have become a little oasis, a sanctuary for all the animals and pretty birds.

It made me think of David's longing. In the Bible, we read that he was longing just like a deer thirsts for the water brook. For what was he longing? He was longing for God's house. To David, God's house was like a little oasis where he could rest. Have you ever thought of the church this way? You were not

able to go to church for quite some time. Were you thankful that you could still listen from your living room? Perhaps Sunday was just a day that split up the other days for you. Instead of doing your schoolwork at the kitchen table, you sat on a chair or on the couch while Mom and Dad turned on the speaker so you could hear the minister preach. It was a day you did not do some of the things you do on other days, and on Monday, you would be able to do those things again. Sunday was a kind of habit, a tradition for you, but nothing more.

When the Lord changes a heart and makes it new, He gives that person new longings. Now the person seeks God, and he knows that in church God speaks. He knows that perhaps, a word from the Lord might comfort and instruct his heart and give him a moment of rest. He is now attracted to God's Word like the little birds and butterflies attracted to water. Listen, the Bible tells us so: "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul thirsteth for Thee;" "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?" "He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul;" "LORD, I have loved the habitation of Thy house, and the place where Thine honour dwelleth." "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple."

What attracts people to those sermons that might seem quite long to you? To them church is like how the beauty of trickling water is to the little animals. The sound makes the birds and butterflies happy and makes the deer, frogs, and chipmunks think of refreshment. That is what a sermon can do. God's Word, when the Holy Spirit presses it into someone's heart, can make a person happy and give him strength to go on. The sermon can make a person feel refreshed, and it can make him bow honestly before the Lord and tell Him everything, also how black and sinful his heart is. He does not know how to fix it, but he hears that God is able. When the sermon is over, he does not go home and have enough for a few months. No, whenever God's Word speaks to him, he seeks for more and longs for the next time. Hearing of what he needs makes him long to receive and have it. It is just like the little animals and birds which come back again and again, and, at times, sing a song of gratitude.

In our back yard the dogs play and the farm animals lie lazily in the sun, but along the edge,

near the woods, feathers, clawed-up dirt, and a large half-hidden trap tell a different story. These signs tell of a secret nightlife. When everyone is sleeping and the little birds have their heads tucked under their wings, the foxes and raccoons come out. An opossum is attracted by the rotten smell in the trap, a red fox slinks around the edges of the chicken coop, and a coyote skims stealthily across the grass. A bobcat leaves only a few telltale prints in a muddy patch before disappearing again. Whatever these animals do remains hidden from our sight in the darkness of the night. They are not attracted by beautiful flowers and clear water splashing over the rocks. They are hunting; they are drawn by ugly smells. They dig up dead things or try to catch and kill what is alive. The sun does not shine on their stealthy but deliberate actions.

What a contrast there is in my front yard and back yard. To what are you attracted? Are you, perhaps, attracted to sinful things? Sin is ugly, and it is grievous—like a bad stench—in the sight of the Lord. He never shines His favor on even the smallest wrong thought. We try to hide sin. We don't want anyone to see our hearts, even if we don't act out our sins for others to see. We are like the fox in the dark, thinking no one will see. Our hearts are, by nature, inclined to all sin and evil. Just as the fox can smell from far away and come with evil intentions, so our heart is drawn towards all that pleases ourselves instead of what pleases God.

Maybe you say that you don't look for sin but try to stay away from it. Ask the Lord to help you in this. Yet...to what are you most attracted? Is your biggest enjoyment in the things, places, and activities of this earth? Are you more attracted to the fun you can have during the week than to the Bible reading or going to church? The Bible tells us, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Only if our hearts are made new will we long for the water of life, for a little sip from the Word of God, for the beautiful, refreshing sound of the sermons that are preached.

The Lord is worthy not only that we acknowledge and praise Him for the beauty we see in a small hummingbird or a sweet-smelling flower but also that we would need Him, long for Him, and wish to serve Him with our whole heart and being. Have you ever considered that many have died of the coronavirus, yet the Lord spared you? Should you then not ask for a heart that wants to run away from sin and receive rest by the Lord?

1. "But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into _____ (nlteivasegr) life" (John 4).

2. "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his _____ (sneoas); his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1).

3. "He maketh me to lie down in green _____ (utpssare): he leadeth me beside the still waters" (Psalm 23).

4. "As the hart panteth after the water _____ (bkoros), so panteth my soul after Thee, O God" (Psalm 42).

5. "O God, Thou art my God; early will I seek Thee: my soul _____ (shtehirtt) for Thee, my flesh longeth for Thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Psalm 63).

6. "Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so _____ (veipdrod) for it" (Psalm 65).

7. "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as _____ (srwheos) that water the earth" (Psalm 72).

8. "He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into _____ (gsspwratiennr)" (Psalm 107).

9. "He sendeth out His word, and melteth them: He causeth His _____ (dinw) to blow, and the waters flow" (Psalm 147).

10. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the _____ (prlees) are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Matthew 11).

11. "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the _____ (argcpnehi) of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here" (Matthew 12).

12. "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all _____ (tnnaosi); and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24).

13. "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore _____ (reah) them not, because ye are not of God" (John 8).

14. "So then _____ (tifah) cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10).

15. "But whoso keepeth His _____ (dowr), in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him" (1 John 2).

For the Younger Children

Draw a line to match the picture to the sentence.



And God called the dry land _____; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good (Genesis 1:10).

And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving _____ that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven (Genesis 1:20).

So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, the widow woman was there gathering of sticks: and he called to her, and said, Fetch me, I pray thee, a little water in a _____, that I may drink (1 Kings 17:10).

There cometh a _____ of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink (John 4:7).

Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to _____; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water (John 4:10).

For the Older Children

Unscramble the word groups to form two verses.

I am Alpha

water of life

athirst of the fountain of the

and Omega, the beginning

give unto him that is

freely

and the end. I will

And He said unto me, It is done.

and of the Lamb.

as crystal, proceeding out

And he shewed me

of the throne of God

a pure river of water of life, clear

Fill in the blank.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is _____ come. And whosoever will, let him take the **water** of life freely.”

“And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every _____ of God.”

“But He said, Yeah rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and _____ it.”

Answers to July’s “Alone” quiz:

Code puzzle:

Mountain
Sparrow
Wine press
Hand
Silence
Father
Righteous
Cast
Greyheaded
Ninth
Persecuted

Answers to previous quizzes were received in May from:

Alaina Baum (6) **8**
Andrew Baum (3) **3**
Julie Baum (5) **5**
Anabelle Berkenbush 14
William Berkenbush 14
Britni Blom 13
GaryJon Blom (2) **6**
JeninaBlom (2) 13
Lawrence Blom (2) **7**
Marissa Blom 13
Martena Blom 16
Willem Blom (2) 9
Kyle Bouman (5) **5**
Nicholas Bouman (5) **8**
Stephanie Bouman (5) **7**
Sarina Den Bok 10
Thomas Den Bok 11
Cody Driesen (2) 12
Kacie Driesen 12
Sam Driesen (2) 10
Toby Driesen 12
Kaylynn Ekema 14
Julie Geuze 1
Ronna Geuze 4
Kyal Grisnich **6**
Logan Grisnich 7
Taryn Grisnich 3
Charity Hup 1
Derek Hup 10
Justin Hup 10
Claire Kelderman 3
Caylea Knibbe 23
Donovan Knibbe 13
Jarynne Knibbe (3) 14
Rebecca Krygsman 14
Sarah Krygsman 16
Lydia Mol 12
Madeline Mol 3
Olivia Mol 8
Rachel Mol 8
Teddy Mol 12
Colin Overbeek
Jayden Overbeek (6) 14
Gabe Post 4
Logan Rozeboom 14
Mindy Rozeboom 14
AleRus (3) 11
Jessa Rus (4) 14
Kaela Rus 2
Lakia Rus (2) **3**
Bethany Sporte 11

Megan Taylor (2) 9
Renee Taylor (2) 4
Colin Ten Hove 10
Esther Teunissen (4) 13
Aaliyah Timmer 11
Drake Timmer 12
Ashton Timmermans 3
Lydia Van Manen 17
Rosalee Van Manen 15
Kaiven Van Middendorp (4) 13
Konner Van Middendorp (4) 13
Jozias Van Ravenswaay (2) 15
Naomi Van Ravenswaay (2) 15
Brett Van Velthuisen 2
Kason Van Velthuisen 2
Trent Van Velthuisen 2
Taylina Van Wingerden 1
Caleb Vogelaar (2) **6**
Matthew Vogelaar (2) **6**
Brandon Vrieselaar (4) 13
Brianna Vrieselaar (4) 13
Kyra Vrieselaar (4) 13
Noah Vrieselaar (4) 13
Jonathan Wesdyk 12
Nathan Wesdyk 9
Rebekah Wesdyk 12
Arthur Wisse (2) 13
Emily Wisse 2
Joanna Wisse (2) 13
Lane Wisse (2) 12
Tonia Wisse (2) 13
Allyson Ymker (2) 10
Cameron Ymker (2) 14
Heidi Ymker 14
Paxton Ymker 10

7 Bibles were earned for Bolivia this month. The total is 146. Thank you!



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, by the congregations of Sheboygan, Wisconsin; and Kapelle-Biezelingen, Lisse, Moerkapelle, and Rotterdam-Alexanderpolder, the Netherlands.

To Rev. A.T. Huyser of Sliedrecht, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta.

Declined:

By Rev. H. Brons of Vlaardingen, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Waupun, Wisconsin.

By Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregations of Corsica, South Dakota; Sheboygan, Wisconsin; and Kapelle-Biezelingen, Moerkapelle, and Rotterdam-Alexanderpolder, the Netherlands.

Obituaries

ALEMAN, Barry – Age 59, July 2, 2020; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Ruth; Children – Tony & Carolyn, Kevin & Jacki, Bart & Rachelle, Ryan & Kelcey; 7 grandchildren; Sisters – Anita & Ben Oudshoorn, Corina & Matt Grisnich, Wendy & Gary Aleman; Mother-in-law – Gery Grisnich; Tony & Nellie Kreft, Frank & Joanne Brilman, Dale & Joan Sullivan. (Rev. E.C. Adams, James 4:14&15.)

DE BRUIN, Klazina Adriana (nee Droogers) – Age 93, July 5, 2020; St. Catharines, Ontario; Husband – Arie (deceased); Children – Jane & Art de Blink, Johanna & Anton Nieuwenhuizen, John de Bruin, Anne de Bruin, Nell & Ken Overbeeke, Marianne de Bruin, Kathy & Ross McLachlan, Bill & Lynn de Bruin; 18 grandchildren, 33 great-grandchildren; Brother – Adriaan Droogers; Sister – Dientje Hovestadt. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Proverbs 16:14&15.)

DE WILDE, Stephanie Joanna – Age 19, July 17, 2020; Nobleford, Alberta; Parents – Willard & Monica de Wilde; Siblings – Sara & Kyle Maljaars, Lindsay, Lauren, Ethan, Aidan, and Serena; Boyfriend – Sylvan Middlekoop; Grandparents – Adrian & Grada de Wilde and Gerrit (Oma deceased) Schipper. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Ecclesiastes 12:1.)

HEIKOOP, Samuel – Age 93, July 13, 2020; St. Catharines, Ontario; Wife – Anne; Children – Rita & Rick Brown, Herman & Anne Heikoop, Dick Heikoop; 4 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren; Sisters-in-law – Cornelia Heikoop and Trudy Heikoop; predeceased by brothers Henk & Coby Heikoop, William Heikoop, and Adrian Heikoop. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Romans 6:23.)

In Memoriam

Mr. Samuel Heikoop

On July 13, 2020, it pleased to Lord to deliver Mr. S. Heikoop at the age of ninety-three, after a long period of decline. The Lord visited him with saving mercy later in life, while in his sixties, when faced with serious heart surgery for the second time. In 1999, when he was already seventy-two, he was still called to serve as elder. For eight-and-a-half years, until 2008, he faithfully laboured among us with the love of his heart and the gifts which the Lord granted unto him. May this work still be blessed and his prayers answered. The Lord remember the mourning widow and family.

—St. Catharines NRC Consistory

Anker Obituary Correction

The obituary for Gilbert Anker in the June issue omitted naming his surviving brother Gary Anker. We apologize for this oversight.

—The Banner of Truth Editorial Staff

Correct Lynden NRC Evening Service Time

On page 107 of the 2020 Church and School Directory, the time for the Lynden congregation's evening service is listed as 7:00 PM.

This is incorrect. **It should be 6:30 PM.**

—The Lynden NRC Consistory

150th Anniversary of the Beckwith Grand Rapids, Michigan Congregation

The Lord willing, on Wednesday, October 28, 2020, there will be a commemorative service in the First Netherlands Reformed Congregation, 1261 Beckwith NE, Grand Rapids, Michigan, to remember the Lord's faithfulness and mercy toward us for the past one-hundred-fifty years. We wish to extend an open invitation to all who would like to join us for this special occasion.

Farewell Service for Rev. A.T. Vergunst Waupun, Wisconsin

After a pastorate of six-and-one-half years, Rev. A.T. Vergunst bid farewell to the congregation of Waupun, Wisconsin, on Sunday evening, June 19, 2020. He will be returning

to his former flock in Carterton, New Zealand, in the near future. Rev. Vergunst's text for his farewell sermon was Hebrews 13:8, 21&22. He closed the service with a few words about the years spent in Waupun and the close bond which had been established with the congregation. Elder Ross Derksen spoke some appropriate words of appreciation to the departing minister for all of the work performed among them during his pastorate. He expressed the wish that the Lord's blessing would be evident as a fruit of the preaching, and wished him the Lord's strength and blessing as he returns to New Zealand. Elder Dan Koepsel then closed the service with prayer.

Dutch Yearbook Delivery Status

For those readers who usually purchase a copy of the Dutch Yearbook, please be advised that there has been a delay in the shipment. They will be dispersed as soon as they are received. We apologize for the inconvenience.

—Evan Kersten

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

ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED

The School Administrator will strive to direct the school according to the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, the Constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, the policies of the NRC School Board, and the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education.

The primary duty of the Administrator is to maintain productive relations with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents and Community.

The successful candidate should have the following qualifications:

- A strong desire to promote the spiritual and temporal welfare of the students;
- A clear vision of the purpose of Christian education and a desire to see it maintained in our present day;
- Be a male NRC member in good standing with a solid knowledge of the Scriptures and Reformed doctrines;
- Have a bachelor's degree or higher in Education with a willingness to consider additional education as necessary;
- Be willing to travel as necessary for educational conferences;
- Have good written and verbal communication skills and the ability to relate to people in all social capacities.

For more information, or to apply for this position, please email nrcs_office@nrcsnj.org, contact John Van Der Brink at 973-628-7400, or contact Tim Mol at 973-204-5677.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is looking to fill openings for the 2020-2021 school year. We have openings in grades 7-12: math and/or science, English/language arts, literature, church history (grade 8-9), and part-time computer technology. Some of these positions could be combined depending upon qualifications and experience. We are also seeking a music teacher to begin at any time. The focus of this position would be instrumental (grades 5-12 band/orchestra) along with other opportunities in K-12 music.

Please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or danbreuer@nrcsia.org for further information. Visit www.nrcsia.org to learn more about our school. Log in to the main site by registering as a new user and wait for approval.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN HIGH SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, is accepting applications for possible openings for the 2020-2021 school year. Interested 7-12 applicants should send or email their resumés and/or questions to Mr. James Bazen, jbazen@plymouthchristian.us.

PONATAHI CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NEW ZEALAND, is an NRCEA school seeking applications for a secondary English teacher with one or more supporting subjects such as Physical Education or Home Economics. The English position could be a beginner teacher. The starting date for the position is negotiable and we would not expect any teacher to leave their current school before the end of the current school year. All teachers in New Zealand must be qualified. We would be hoping for a minimum commitment of two years. For more information, please contact principal@ponatahischool.nz.

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 for an elementary leadership position, either as principal or a vice principal with the potential to assume a principal role

in the future. We also continue to welcome applications from elementary and secondary teachers, or inquiries about our locally developed teaching program for those with a bachelor's degree. Please visit our website 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.

Minutes of Classis Midwest 2020 Meeting

A condensed report of the meeting of Classis Midwest held on Wednesday June 3, 2020, in Waupun, Wisconsin

An office bearers' conference was held on Tuesday, June 2, at which Rev. G.M. de Leeuw spoke on the topic of "God the Holy Ghost in the Days of Pentecost."

Rev. A.T. Vergunst, of the calling church of Waupun, conducted the prayer service on Tuesday evening, June 2, and used as the theme for his sermon, "The Baptism of the Holy Spirit," based on Acts 1:4,5,8&14. Rev. Vergunst explained his text with three points: 1) A promised gift for preachers; 2) A necessary gift to be saved; 3) A blessed gift for the unsaved.

Rev. H. Hofman opened the meeting on June 3 with the singing of Psalter 427:3&4 and the reading of Genesis 8:1-13. After mentioning some of the special events in the classis since the last meeting, he opened with a meditation on the chapter read.

All of the delegates were duly seated. The following officers were chosen and/or appointed:

<i>President</i>	Rev. J.J. Witvoet (by rotation)
<i>Vice President</i>	Rev. H. Hofman (by rotation)
<i>Clerk</i>	Elder L. Teunissen (by appointment)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Elder Ross Derksen (as Elder from the calling church)

The minutes of the previous classis meeting held on April 10, 2019, were approved.

Rev. H. Hofman gave a verbal report on the 2019 Youth Conference held in Rock Valley, at which Rev. Hofman and Rev. Witvoet presented topics. The conference was well attended. As approved at an earlier classis meeting, youth conferences will be held every other year from now on.

The committee for Incoming and Outgoing Ministers met on July 9, 2019, and reported on the departure of Rev. Adams to Picture Butte, and that all documents were found in good order.

A meeting of the committee for Incoming and Outgoing Ministers, was held on April 29, 2020, regarding the departure of Rev. A.T. Vergunst to the Carterton, New Zealand congregation. Following the approval of the updated documents of that meeting, Rev. Vergunst was given a proper and honorable dismissal. The committee commended Rev. Vergunst to the Lord for His indispensable help in preaching the one-sided saving work of God into the unknown future.

The following moderatorships were agreed to:

<i>Corsica</i>	Rev. J.J. Witvoet
<i>Grand Rapids-Beckwith</i>	Rev. H. Hofman
<i>Grand Rapids-Covell</i>	Rev. G.M. de Leeuw
<i>Kalamazoo</i>	Rev. G.M. de Leeuw
<i>Lansing</i>	Rev. J.J. Witvoet
<i>Rock Valley</i>	Rev. H. Hofman
<i>Rogersville</i>	Rev. J.J. Witvoet
<i>Sheboygan</i>	Rev. G.M. de Leeuw
<i>Sioux Center</i>	Rev. H. Hofman
<i>Waupun</i>	Rev. G.M. de Leeuw

Points to be considered:

<i>Corsica</i>	—No points
<i>Grand Rapids-Beckwith</i>	—No points
<i>Grand Rapids-Covell</i>	—Requested to consider the need to further define the biblical approach to legal separations of married couples.

Answer: This topic has been visited a number of times by Synod dating back to 1978, and revisited over a number of years. A final report can be found in the minutes of the 1998 Synod. As a second part of the point submitted, it was recommended that such members who are involved in a legal separation be requested to refrain from partaking of the Lord's Supper.

Kalamazoo—No points

Lansing—No points

Rock Valley—No points

Rogersville—Requests that a point be sent to Synod to reconsider a previous denial to allow "speaking elders" in our congregations to mitigate the shortage of ministers.

Answer: It was noted that this topic had been well discussed by Rev. Kersten and that the use of "lay preachers" was rejected. It was decided that this request would not be forwarded to Synod. It was suggested that perhaps ministers could ask their consistories for additional free Sundays, and that the ministers spend some additional time in the vacant congregations to perform additional pastoral work.

Sheboygan—No points

Sioux Center—No points

Sioux Falls—Requested some guidance in reaching out to the unconverted.

Answer: Practical and simple advice was given to the delegates by the ministers in attendance. The use of the abundance of Blue Books was recommended as a resource, and the need to proceed in a simple way when speaking to such people, remembering that we cannot convert a person; it is the Lord's work alone.

Waupun—No points

At the last Classis meeting it was requested a list of duties to be performed by the Classis Clerk and the calling church be provided. This was submitted and adopted with a few modifications.

Rev. H. Hofman agreed to draw up a schedule for church visitations. It is hoped that all churches can be visited in the coming year.

The expenses for the meeting were pro-rated in the usual manner. Grand Rapids-Beckwith will be the calling church for the next meeting, the Lord willing.

Because of the present uncertainty regarding the 2020 Synodical meeting, tentative dates were set for the fall meeting (if necessary) on October 14, 2020, and a spring meeting on March 17, 2021. The prayer service would be held the evening prior to the meeting.

Assignments were given to the ministers present for the labors to be performed by them at the next Classis meeting.

Rev. Witvoet made some appropriate closing remarks by stating that we had been able to meet in spite of all the uncertainties around us, and that we were able to have a peaceful meeting.

Rev. H. Hofman closed the meeting by thanking Rev. Witvoet for his leading the meeting. He also wished Rev. Vergunst and his wife well regarding their relocation to New Zealand, and that the Lord would add His help and blessing. He asked the delegates to sing standing, keeping in mind Rev. Vergunst's departure, Psalter 345:1&2. He then closed the meeting with prayer.

Temporary Delay in Receiving *The Banner of Truth*

A few uncontrollable circumstances have caused a delay in distribution of the July and August issues. We trust our readers will be understanding and patient as we anticipate improvement going forward, D.V. (Ed.)

The Blasted Fig Tree

One awful word which Jesus spoke
Against the tree which bore no fruit;
More piercing than the lightning's stroke,
Blasted and dry'd it to the root.

But could a tree the Lord offend,
To make Him show His anger thus?
He surely had a farther end,
To be a warning word to us.

The fig tree by its leaves was known;
But having not a fig to show,
It brought a heavy sentence down,
"Let none hereafter on thee grow."

Too many, who the gospel hear,
Whom Satan blinds and sin deceives;
We to this fig tree may compare,
They yield no fruit, but only leaves.

Knowledge, and zeal, and gifts, and talk,
Unless combined with faith and love,
And witness'd by a gospel walk,
Will not a true profession prove.

Without the fruit the Lord expects,
Knowledge will make our state the worse;
The barren trees He still rejects,
And soon will blast them with His curse.

O Lord, unite our hearts in pray'r!
On each of us Thy Spirit send;
That we the fruits of grace may bear,
And find acceptance in the end.

— *John Newton*