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to His Disciples About His
Suffering and Dying
For Our Transgressions
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Signs

*"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace." ISAIAH 9:6b*



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Meditation

Christ's Beginning Instruction to His Disciples About His Suffering and Dying

Rev. M. Mondria (1942-2020)

(Translated from *Reformatorsch Dagblad*, February 14, 1975)

“From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto His disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day”

(Matthew 16:21).

Christ and His disciples had come to the coasts of Caesarea, Philippi (verse 13). More and more He was facing opposition, and He left the multitudes behind because He did not want them to make Him king. His kingdom is not of this earth, but it is a spiritual kingdom, and He leads His people into the hidden mysteries of that kingdom. The necessity that God's Spirit must enlighten the eyes can also be seen by the disciples. Even though they had received much instruction from the highest Prophet and Teacher, they are of yesterday and know nothing; this was shown when they revealed their fleshly desires by asking if they may sit at His right and left hand. Christ begins to prepare His disciples for His suffering and death, and with that He brings their faith into exercise when He not only asks them, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” but He also asks, “But whom say ye that I am?”

Many who are strangers in their heart of the experiential knowledge of Christ and of their misery will give an intellectual answer to this question. Peter, however, could confess, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Here the work of God becomes visible; flesh and blood does not reveal that unto us. It is not a contemplated knowledge but that which has been revealed to him from heaven. If this were a man-made faith, it would perish under the many trials, but God's people are taught by the Lord Himself, and all those who have heard and learned from the Father come unto Him (John 6:45).

Now Christ begins to separate His disciples from the multitude so that they may be instructed regarding His suffering and death. He had already spoken unto them on a few occasions, saying that He would be taken from them (Matthew 9:15, 12:40), but they had not understood it even though Peter had testified, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.” When Christ begins to teach them of the necessity of His suffering and death, Peter rebukes Him.

Christ begins to show His suffering to His disciples, not to the leaders of the people. When He instructs His disciples in the hidden ways of the Lord, we see that they have to be made receptive to receiving heavenly instruction. Likewise, we do not know the way, and in our foolishness reveal enmity against free grace. Over against this Christ reveals His eternal love, herein, that He will humble Himself even

unto death. He will foretell those things which will soon come to pass.

He must go this way. They would all forsake Him and He would have to tread the winepress alone. Even though they had walked with Him for a long time, that would now come to an end, but this way is completely hid from them. What Christ was foretelling them would not come upon them suddenly, but it all had to occur to fulfill His godly counsel. Not only His dying but also His resurrection had to take place, and He has accomplished this all as Surety for His entire Church.

How necessary it is to follow in His footsteps, and that means that we must be planted together in the likeness of His death. The disciples had not counted on that, and what an inward sorrow there is when the Lord places before them what they are missing and that they must enter into death with the fruits of their life of grace. These are means in which they are shown that it can go no other way than into death. What fear can rise in our heart when we realize that our tears are not sufficient to satisfy God's justice, and the ground falls away from under our feet with everything wherein we sought our life—when we do not have a God for our heart, no Surety for our guilt, and there is no hope from our side.

This is the way in which the Lord leads His people so that they may understand the necessity of the death of the Mediator. We are greatly attached to His sensible presence and we wish to hold on to that, but more is necessary; the Church must be restored into God's communion, and that is only possible in a way wherein God's justice is completely satisfied. Christ has agreed from eternity to assume this work with His whole heart. He has given Himself as Surety to satisfy for the guilt of the elect, and now their justice demands His death, for Zion must be redeemed by justice. According to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, He has been taken and slain (Acts 2:23).

In that “must” the firmness of the salvation of God's Church is declared. He has loved His own from eternity and has given Himself for them, but the Father has also delivered Him from eternity and has sent His only begotten Son for the propitiation of the sins of His people, and that propitiation was a complete work. In that work the Father has been well pleased, and in that work the Church receives deliverance through His blood—deliverance of the guilt and punishment of a cursing law and a demanding justice of sin and death. That Christ had to suffer points us, therefore, not only to the fulfillment of God's counsel but also to the fulfillment of God's Word. Ought not Christ to have

suffered all these things and afterwards also be taken up into glory?

How clearly has Isaiah spoken of the suffering Servant of the Father in the fifty-third chapter of his prophecy. Everything which was foretold in this chapter has been completely fulfilled by Him. Both the prophets and the psalms speak of His suffering and death. The prophecy of His birth was fulfilled as well as that of His suffering and death, for Scripture must be fulfilled; not a word of it will have been spoken in vain. Now God's Word will be confirmed, but God's people will also experience and know something of it. They must die to everything of self and all that is outside of Christ.

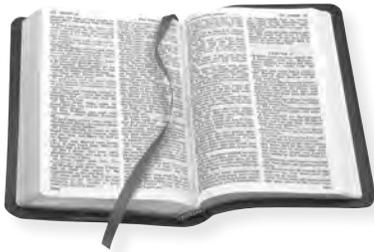
If we are a stranger of the work of God, of free grace, then we are an enemy which is why the Lord called out to Peter, "Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me." May the Lord reveal it unto us if we are constantly busy seeking our own salvation. Then we do not have to look upon those who live on in a deadly tranquility and who mock with the experiences of God's people. There is also a rejoicing by many in the benefits and a resting upon that which is past, while the discovering light is missing.

We need that discovering light so that we may be uncovered to the very foundations.

Let us not build up each other in all kinds of good feelings and pleasantness but pray that you may come to an end in yourself so that Christ may receive the greatest value, also in His suffering and death and that we might thereby gain Christ. Christ not only had to die but also had to be raised the third day. Not only His suffering was necessary but also His resurrection. In His complete offering the heat of God's wrath is quenched.

Such a complete Saviour is necessary for us, One who had to suffer and to die and who has also become the reason for the eternal salvation of His Church. How deeply miserable we are if we live onward without the least impressions of our sins which have cost the death of the Mediator, and live onward with nothing but a carnal pity such as the daughters of Jerusalem had in days gone by. It is our sins that have made the separation between God and our soul.

Christ foretells His suffering so that His Church may receive instruction and that they may learn, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." ◻



Bible Study

The Life of Daniel (12)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

Daniel 6:18-27

What a test it was for Daniel's faith when the law was made that forbade him to pray to his Lord and Master. Yet, we read that Daniel went into his house, his windows being open in his chamber towards Jerusalem, and he kneeled upon his knees three times a day. His enemies found Daniel "praying and making supplication before his God." What they had hoped had happened. Daniel had disobeyed the law of the Medes and Persians. Immediately, they went to King Darius and told him what they had detected. In verse 13 we read, "That Daniel, which is of the children of the captivity of Judah, regardeth not thee, O king, nor the decree that thou hast signed, but maketh his petition three times a day." The king was very displeased with himself and tried to deliver Daniel; however, Daniel's enemies reminded him that the law of the Medes and Persians could not be changed. Daniel's enemies rejoiced. They had their enemy, and he would certainly be destroyed by the hungry lions. Soon Daniel was cast into the lions' den.

A troubled night

The king returned to his palace; how restless was his night. He must have condemned himself for signing the law that he had made; he must have called himself a fool, an unjust person for doing this to this faithful Daniel. He ate no supper; he passed the night in fasting because his heart was full of grief and fear. There was no music from the royal musicians as usual each night. He went to bed, but there was no rest for him until the morning of another day. Do we know such nights that our conscience accuses us and our sins rise up against us? This heathen king showed regret and remorse for what he had done to Daniel, but many silence their conscience, harden their heart, and continue in their evil way.

However, for Daniel it was entirely different. He felt much of the Lord's presence in that dreadful den, which was for him a place where his enemies but also the lions would not touch him. God's Church has a refuge, a hiding place, even in the most dangerous times and situations. It is evident that the judgments of the Lord are upon this world. Many live in great fear and try to escape what they fear. How blest

are we when we may bow under God's judgments and say with Micah, "I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him." There is One for whom there was no hiding place, neither did He want to hide Himself from the wrath of God. He had promised to be a Surety for them, that is, for His inheritance given unto Him in the stillness of eternity. This is an inheritance which is precious in His sight; also Daniel is included in this. How blest are we if, when bowing under God and agreeing with His righteous punishment, we may hear from God that there is a Substitute, a Surety, a Saviour for us.

A wonderful deliverance

It is true that the king had said unto Daniel, "Thy God whom thou servest continually, He will deliver thee." However, the night had passed in the palace in much anxiety and fear. As soon as the morning allowed, there he was. He went in haste unto the den of lions. When he came there, "he cried with a lamentable voice unto Daniel." There is sorrow and grief in his heart but also some hope. This Daniel served a God who was mighty; the king believed that. The life of Daniel, the tender fear of God that he showed, must have made an impression upon this heathen king. What a testimony of Daniel the king gives when he says, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?" The heathen king does not say "my God" or "the God whom I also desire to know and serve." The life of God's Church, if they are living close to the Lord, sometimes makes deep impressions upon those who are strangers of it and even do not believe in God, but often it does not change their life.

Daniel may give a testimony honoring God about what He has done. Verse 22 tells us, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocency was found in me." No, Daniel did not reproach Darius or chide him for yielding so easily to the evil of his persecutors. He has but one desire, that is, to exalt the Lord. What a precious work it is if we may glorify the Lord and tell others who He has been for us. The Lord Jesus has said in Matthew 10:28, "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Daniel may be a herald of the majesty of his great King, the King of whom we read in Psalm 72: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Yes, the times are dark and full of dangers but His name shall endure forever; let the whole world be filled with His glory. He is a King who "delivereth and rescueth, and he worketh signs and wonders."

Do we know the great Deliverer and Rescuer, the Lord Jesus, whose coming in the flesh we have commemorated? Did we already learn to know our need of Him? By our sins we have made ourselves subject to His righteous anger, and He will by no means clear the guilty ones. That becomes reality in the life of an uncovered sinner. He learns to agree with God's righteous sentence. God has appointed

a Deliverer, a Saviour. He is the King of Zion, and He will rule forever. He delivers sinners out of the horrible pit and miry clay and sets their feet upon a rock, and establishes their goings. Christ Himself descended into the pit, and He brings His people up out of the pit. If that may happen, then a new song will be put in our mouth, even praise unto our God. Daniel in his old age may still bring forth fruits at the heathen court where the Lord had placed His servant.

The proclamation of Darius

The testimony of Daniel made a deep impression upon Darius. The enemies of Daniel have been cast into the den of lions with their children and their wives, and for them there was no deliverance. The lions "brake all their bones in pieces or ever they came at the bottom of the den." This mighty and faithful God is proclaimed by the heathen king. He made a decree that everyone in his kingdom should tremble and fear before the God of Daniel. He delivers and rescues, and He "worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions." What a proclamation this is, and who is able to rightly express the greatness, the goodness, and the love of Him who still delivers sinners out of the power of hell and sin, from the prison which they have willingly brought themselves? He is able to save to the uttermost. No one shall pluck His people out of His mighty, faithful hands. Daniel prospered in the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus. According to Daniel 10:1, Daniel was still living in the third year of the reign of Cyrus. That means that he lived to see the proclamation that was made for the return of his countrymen to Canaan. How glad Daniel must have been for this great blessing so that thousands could return to the land promised to their fathers.

Nevertheless, Daniel himself did not return with them. The Lord had given him a place of great honor but also great opportunities to help his own people. It is evident that he had to remain there. Daniel was also a sinner although we do not read of any sin into which he fell. At a high age, he entered into the rest that the Lord has prepared for all those who fear Him. This rest is only by the righteousness of Him whom the prophet also prophesied in Daniel 9:24a, "Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." The proclamation of Darius was impressive, but this proclamation is a great wonder. At the appointed time, He will come who will make reconciliation for iniquity and bring in everlasting righteousness to cover unrighteous sinners so that they, as pure virgins, may be brought to the King. Daniel may now perfectly worship Him who he served in the appointed place for himself. What a blessing if we may know this service and the faithfulness of this King. His yoke is easy, His burden is light. There is yet place; sinners are called to also bow, surrender, and flee to Him. □

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

For Our Transgressions

Rev. A. Vergunst (1926-1981)

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, February 20, 1975)

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities” (Isaiah 53:5a).

We may again commemorate the very meaningful days in which we recall the suffering and dying of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are days wherein the Lord often lets His people experience something of the mediatorial labors of the King of His church. Who can ever express the value of it fully?

The glorification of the attributes of God is declared in that labor of Christ but also the complete salvation of the lost sinner. Christ in all of His glory is the great content of the gospel of God’s grace. Regrettably, man sees no value in this Mediator. The most gifted preacher is not able to show a hearer the glory in Christ. Even if an angel would, without interruption, speak to us for one thousand years about the inestimable splendor of the Lord Jesus Christ, even then, there would not be one person who would consider Him precious if the Lord Himself did not make place for Him in the heart and declare Him unto us by His Word and Spirit.

The prophet Isaiah, who is properly called the evangelist among the prophets, also knew of that. “Who hath believed our report?” he called out. That was his personal experience, for even if he would have preached for many more years, his preaching was despised and mocked.

Yet, this word is also a prophecy, for comparatively in its meaning it points to the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. His appearing upon earth is a preaching in itself. It is a preaching of godly mercy whereby the Lord has sent His only begotten Son so that through Him lost ones may yet be saved. Who has believed His preaching? Just look at the history of the people of Israel. They have looked upon Him as One who was tormented and oppressed by God. Such a Messiah they did not expect, One who would suffer and die. No, they did desire a Messiah but One who because of His appearing in glory would capture their heart. One who would suffer and die could not be their Messiah. Even if Christ preached it Himself, they still would not believe His preaching, but they despised Him who is truly the Messiah.

That Jewish train of thought lives in the heart of the self-righteous person who has never rightly understood his own lost condition by the knowledge of God’s righteous justice. A self-righteous man thinks that with all of his busyness

with religious duties, with the worth of his prayers and church attendance, Bible reading and tithing, he is quite far on the way to heaven.

What must such people do with a wounded Jesus? Their heart breaks out in enmity when it is mentioned to them that with all that is ours, we cannot exist before God, for God has an aversion to all our works and all our so-called meritorious activities; they are insufficient.

According to His justice, He casts away all imperfect works—works defiled by sin. God instructs His people of that by means of the Spirit of reconciliation. That Spirit is so necessary if Jesus will ever obtain any value for a person. It is that Spirit which makes us acquainted with sin and judgment. It is that Spirit which completely uncovers so that the robe of righteousness only shall obtain its true value.

Erskine says somewhere so beautifully that the Spirit of the Lord convinces, persuades, breaks down, humbles, and gathers, until a person does not know any better what to do, than to flee to Jesus—to that Jesus, who mankind has always resisted, stood in the way, and rejected with his religious activities—that Jesus in whom he saw no value because he was of the opinion that he could satisfy God in a different manner. Only when a person may come to the realization of his hopeless condition and becomes aware of the irredeemableness of his state and condition, is there place for Jesus.

Then it will be said with holy adoration, in wonderment, what the prophet calls out here, *“But He was wounded for our transgressions.”*

1. What great depths are hidden in this word of Scripture. In the first place, the word *but*. This word expresses a contrast. People have never thought that way before. He was despised and rejected. His calling to them of His eternal love was cast to the wind. In spite of all of His invitations it was decided to trust in our own works and merits, but when it became a cut off work, then it was as if a light arose in the darkness. *“He was wounded for our transgressions.”*

2. Our transgressions of heart, talk, and walk are why we have deserved eternal death. Because of those transgressions we are worthy to be cast in hell, for but one transgression makes us worthy of eternal death, and how many transgressions there are without number. We can never undo them, and that is why it is lost from our side.

That Spirit is so necessary if Jesus will ever obtain any value for a person. It is that Spirit which makes us acquainted with sin and judgment. It is that Spirit which completely uncovers so that the robe of righteousness only shall obtain its true value.

3. Oh, the wonder of God's mercy! It is written here: "He was wounded"—the eternal Son of God who was born holy, He who had lived a pure life and who never committed any sin, He who was perfectly sinless—He was wounded by the righteous sword of God's wrath, He in the place of those who deserved to be cast into hell. He went into the fire of God's judgment. They placed the crown of thorns upon His head and hung Him on the shameful cross, and that in our place. See, here is the object of adoration. Adore, here, eternal wisdom and love, goodness, and justice. Glorify, here, the great God who does wonders. Oh, lost one, here lies your salvation, not in your works, your tears or your merits but in this blessed Son of God. The soul who may repeat this with a mouth of faith, "Wounded for our transgressions" is himself worthy of hell and acknowledges this, but he is also full of a holy joy and wishes to proclaim it. A person cannot just keep it to himself. He who with an eye of faith still dares to speak of the Lord Jesus with a narrowness of mind, has never looked upon himself as one who is worthy of hell. Perhaps he is full of an imagined self-righteousness, but he has never experienced through a saving faith what that contains. Testify of it, soul, you who have seen something of it. Then there was a humbling wonderment in your heart and a holy joy in your soul. Oh, that you might also proclaim something of it in these days.

Is it possible that you have always tried to remove Jesus' crown by seeking your salvation outside of Him, in yourself or some other creature? Oh, that for once you would say farewell to all of your self-righteousness and become a partaker of His righteousness alone.

There is room in that completed work even though your sins were more than the sand at the seashore. Of a certainty, your sins are not too many for Him. Do not through

unbelief deny the power of His blood by saying that you are too black to be saved by Him. That is the greatest dishonor which you can ever lay upon Christ. "Still," says someone, "I have dishonored Him so many times already, and for such a long time."

Have you done that and He now will no longer be a Deliverer for you? Take the time to read this chapter. The prophet predicts that this would happen. We have despised Him. That is now your picture. You have despised Him because you have considered the weight of your guilt greater than the power of His blood. Yet, in truth, that blood is weightier, more precious, more glorious and more sufficient than any person can say, yea than even an angel could say.

Oh, cast yourself at the feet of Christ as the greatest of all of His despisers, and you will experience that He will stretch out His hands of godly mercy over you, and you will also experience what it means to say, "Wounded for our transgressions."

Then there are no words which may express it; all that is left is adoration. Then you will join in with the song of praise of the congregation which above, but also here below, will already sing His praises. On the other hand, my reader, if you will continue to dishonor Him by loving sin, to adore your own self-righteousness and despising Christ, know that He who was once wounded only out of love towards the salvation of His people, will soon be your Judge and that He then will exert His holy wrath upon all who have not valued Him and who have continued to dishonor Him. "Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little."

Blessed are the people that have been able to kiss Him with lips of faith, who here stammer but who will eternally rejoice, "Wounded for our transgressions." □



Doctrinal Studies

The Saving Knowledge of God (1)

Rev. Bernardus Smytegelt (1665-1739)

(Taken from the April 1962 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Instructions from the Catechist

Q. *Has God given any books from which man must learn to know Him?*

A. Yes, three books. The book of nature. The book of conscience. The book of Scripture.

Q. *What do you understand by the book of nature?*

A. All of nature, the entire creation. God wills that we should learn from every creature. It is pleasing to God that man learns to know Him in His providence, in the least as well as in the greatest. "But ask now the beasts, and they shall teach thee; and the fowls of the air, and

they shall tell thee: or speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee: and the fishes of the sea shall declare unto thee. Who knoweth not in all these that the hand of the LORD hath wrought this?" (Job 12:7-9). "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number" (Isaiah 40:26a).

Q. *What do we learn about God from this book of nature?*

A. 1) That He is the Maker of all things. Each small creature says, "I am not of myself; I have a maker." You cannot look at a house or a building without knowing it has a maker; so also, everything that you see has a maker.

This Maker is God. (From the wonders of the universe to the mysteries of the subatomic, nature proves its Creator's existence and not man's rebellious theories. Psalter 15:2a: "Moon and stars in shining height nightly tell their Maker's might; when Thy wondrous heavens I scan, then I know how weak is man." —Ed.)

- 2) We learn to know His attributes which shine as a pearl in a crown. Some are as follows: His great power, His eternal perfection, His wisdom, which brought all this forth, and His infinity—how that He was before the mountains were made (Proverbs 8:25).
- 3) If we see any good in the creature, then we should look higher and learn to see how much more greatness and beauty there must be in the Creator.
- 4) We must take the creatures as examples of spiritual matters; for instance, we see that when darkness goes away light comes in its place. By this we can see an example of how it goes with a child of God: after darkness light also comes into his soul. Likewise, when we arise from sleep, then we see how we must arise from the sleep of sin. The Saviour used the creatures as examples of spiritual things. He took the parable of a woman who had a little leaven and hid it in three measures of meal until the whole was leavened. If we do likewise, we shall find nothing in household matters or corporal things, or we shall thereby be led up to God and find something spiritual. If we would see all things spiritually as we see them corporally, we would be very much useful to ourselves.

Q. *What is the second book?*

A. The book of conscience. No person is without this, no matter how abominable he may be.

Q. *What is conscience?*

- A. 1) It is the vicegerent, the monitor, the lamp of the Lord which is within us, which knows all commissions and omissions. It is our heart, our reins which takes knowledge of all our actions; it is the light and the power which is cast into our soul, and it tells us what is good and what is evil. There is something in us which oppresses and condemns us when we have done wrong; and when we have done well, she will exonerate and say with liberty, "Thou hast done well." There is something within us which says after committed evil, "Now you may try to silence me, but the Lord will give me the opportunity to speak; now you may slap me upon the mouth, but I will summon you before the judgment.
- 2) It takes knowledge of good and evil.
 - 3) It becomes an examiner of what we have done, whether it has been good or evil.
 - 4) Then it becomes a witness and says, "I testify that this is good and not that."

- 5) If what we have done is evil, it then makes us timid.
- 6) If it is good, it says, "I have peace."
- 7) It says, "You will not let me speak now, but if I speak in the day of judgment, then it will be very bitter for you." It will say, "I summon you to judgment; here you refused to listen to me and silenced my voice."
- 8) And if, upon a death-bed, the conscience is awakened or let loose, then that person will lie terror-stricken as King Belshazzar whose joints of his loins were loosened and his knees smote one against another. They shall be as a troubled fountain. There they will cry out and make promises of reformation. Oh, there is not one person, whether Jew or Gentile, Turk or Barbarian, the most savage or most refined, who has not this conscience. This is his constant Bible, his minister who says, "It shall be ill with you if you do not well. You know how to oppose me or now silence my voice, but if I depart from you, know that for all of this you will be brought into judgment."

Q. *What else does this book teach us of God?*

- A. 1) That there is a God.
2) That He is omniscient.
3) That this God is a Judge and according to truth will judge as a righteous and holy Judge.
4) That He made this conscience.
5) That He judges by this conscience—Man does not learn this from the book of nature, from the creatures. If it pleases God to unloosen this conscience, we would be terror-stricken. Listen to Cain's cry, "Every one that findeth me," he says, "shall slay me." How agitated was Judas who said, "I have betrayed the innocent blood," and he went to the halter. What about king Saul? He fell upon his own sword. It is recorded, "So Saul died for his transgression." How it can also trouble children of God, even the best of them. Now and then they scarcely permit it to speak, and for a long time it is silent, but afterwards God lets it speak loudly. We see this in Joseph's brethren when Simeon was bound. When they spoke about Joseph their brother, they said, "Now God requires the blood of our brother." God's children must also say at times, "Now God requires that and that sin." At times, the conscience does its work immediately. We see this in David when he had numbered the people; immediately his heart smote him. Sometimes it is a little later as in David's case with Bathsheba and Uriah. It goes not, however, without knocking until it finally has the desired effect, as with Peter when he went out and wept bitterly. It is the reins which instruct (Job 19:27). For them who cast instruction behind their back and will not listen to it terror stands at the door. □

(To be continued)



Media Use

A Fearful and Overwhelming Onslaught from the Powers of Darkness

NRC Synodical Modern Media Committee

Dear Readers,

It was recently brought to our attention that we overlooked placing the second installment of the modern media article, “A Fearful and Overwhelming Onslaught from the Powers of Darkness.” It should have been placed in the May 2020 issue of *The Banner of Truth*. We apologize for the oversight, and are happy to provide the missing portion for you at this time. (Ed.)

Reformed people would all agree (hopefully) that pornography is sin against the seventh commandment and, thus, a spiritual danger. Nevertheless, most people are unaware about the dangers of digital pornography. As with all sin, there are subtleties and consequences which are far reaching and profound. Many are unaware that this is also true of pornography, and of how far reaching and devastating these consequences are. There are many consequences, but two primary effects stand out and these are:

1. Pornography rewires the brain in fundamental ways;
2. Pornography reduces people’s ability to sustain relationships, including marriages.

Let us look briefly at each of these dangers to get a better understanding of how toxic and destructive pornography is to those who indulge in it. In this article, we will consider the first effect, and in the next article (see page 157, July 2020 *Banner of Truth*) will consider the second effect.

Experts now realize that pornography actually changes the way our brains function. Through sustained use of pornography, our brains can become desensitized to dopamine (the agent which activates the feelings and emotions in the body) through the nonstop over-stimulation that is available on the Internet. That causes then a chemical dependency (often without realizing it!) needing larger and larger doses to achieve the same gratifying effect. Do we see that this is nothing but a real addiction? That is also the cause why pornography has become increasingly perverse and even more depraved. Like with all addictions, the addicts need novelty in order to achieve the same stimulations as before. This is driving a market for violent material in which women are degraded and abused. Some researchers even believe that this is the majority of mainstream pornographic content now, even among young people.

Matt Fradd, the author of *The Porn Myth: Exposing the Reality Behind the Fantasy of Pornography*, described evil effects of indulging in pornography this way:

Scientists are now seeing that continued exposure to porn gives the brain an unnatural high—something it literally isn’t wired to handle—and the brain eventually fatigues.

Anatomy and physiology instructor Gary Wilson notes this is the same pattern noticed when drugs are abused: the brain becomes desensitized. More of the drug or harder drugs are needed to get the same high, and the downward spiral begins. Wilson says this brings about significant changes in the brain—both for drug users and porn users.

Wilson also notes that by the frequent use of pornography that part of the brain changes which is the center of controlling ourselves, our willpower, our impulses, and our passions. The earlier pornography use begins, the more profound the impact it will have on the brain—especially a young, developing brain.

Many young people in our Reformed communities—and older ones, too—have found themselves trapped in this addiction, and have realized that digital pornography has an enormous power that is hard to resist, especially as it rewires the brain to demand more use. As one of our ministers noted in a topic on this subject, there are sins we must struggle with and sins we must flee from. Pornography is too powerful to struggle with, and too addictive—we must flee from it.

That is the reason Paul writes unto his spiritual son Timothy in 2 Timothy 2:22, “Flee also youthful lust: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” He also wrote in Ephesians 4:22 unto the congregation which Timothy served as minister, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” We clearly see that there is nothing new under the sun, also regarding this sin. The Lord knows much better than we do how devastating this sin is, and therefore He warned us already in His Word.

Oh, it is true “that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecclesiastes 7:29b). These inventions (schemes) of man are contrary to both God and the way in which God has made man. As we have seen in this article, any deviation from this has serious consequences. These consequences are not always perceived immediately but are devastating. In any case there will be God’s offended justice that will eventually confront us. We all have to give an account one day.

When Peter writes in 1 Peter 1:16b, “Be ye holy; for I am holy,” he quotes from the book Leviticus where the Lord gave many rules about a proper Biblical life. In Leviticus we read this command six times, so in total we read this command seven times in the Bible...which means one for every day of the week. That is how serious the Lord takes

the keeping of the commandments, especially of this one. The Lord strongly warns us to flee from all these lusts which entangle us in corruption and lead us to eternal death!

“O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!” (Deuteronomy 32:29). □

(This article marks the end of this series.)



Guidance

Redeeming the Time (1)

Rev. Thomas Manton (1620-1677)

*(Taken from the November 1994 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)*

“Redeeming the time, because the days are evil”
(Ephesians 5:16).

Let me press you to redeem the time.
1. Too much time has been spent already. “For the time past of our life may suffice us” (1 Peter 4:3a). In infancy we were in no capacity to act grace; we lived the life of sense rather than reason and did only feed and sleep. When we began to bewray our reason, we showed the folly that was bound up in our hearts, and since then we have spent a great deal of precious time in sin. Now as travelers that have stayed long in their inn mend their pace, and ride as much in an hour as before in two, so because we have spent much time already, we should redeem time. “The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light” (Romans 13:12). This was the text that converted Augustine, who opened the Bible in this place when he heard a voice, saying, “Tolle, lege” (take and read). We have all been too long disputing and traversing the case with God. It is good to come to a resolution and break off the old, vain, sinful, carnal way of living that we may at length set about the work of godliness.

2. We are to be accountable to God for time. When He comes to reckon with His people, time is one of the circumstances mentioned, either for the aggravating of sin or commending His mercies. “Forty years long was I grieved with this generation” (Psalm 95:10a). God might have reckoned with you twenty, thirty, forty years ago, with honor enough to His justice, but He has borne with you all this while. So for commending His mercies, “Then said he unto the dresser of the vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree” (Luke 13:7a).

When the Scripture speaks in such cases in round numbers, as ten, twenty, or the like, we need not inquire after the interpretation, for it signifies a long time. But when there is an uneven number, why is it three years rather than four or six? I answer: Look to the harmony of the evangelists and you will find that after Christ’s baptism He had spent three years in the ministry and was now entering upon His

fourth year. God keeps an exact account of how long we have learned of Him. “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God” (Hebrews 5:12a). “From the thirteenth year of Josiah the son of Amon king of Judah, even unto this day, that is the three and twentieth year, the word of the Lord hath come unto me, and I have spoken unto you” (Jeremiah 25:3a). God keeps an exact account; full three and twenty years had He been reclaiming them.

All these are but pledges of the great process at the Day of Judgment. God will call you to an account, not simply for your mercies and sins but for the time you have spent, so long patience, so much means. Oh, then reflect upon your own heart: I must die and give an account for all my time, and I cannot give an account of one day among a hundred. My time has been spent in foolish mirth, troublesome cares, and idle company, in vain sports and recreations. Pass a reckoning upon your time for the present, and if you cannot answer conscience, you cannot answer God. So much in meals and banquets, so much in sleep, so much in sports and recreations, so much in worldly business; then think how little a remainder there is for God.

3. That time is only yours which is spent well in pleasing God and doing good, for that time is bought and redeemed which otherwise is lost to you. We lose all that time which is not spent in the love and service of God. Strictly and properly, we are never said to live as long as we are alienated from the life of God. A man may abide long in the world until he be eaten out by his own rust or drops like rotten fruit, but he cannot be said to live long. As a man may be long at sea but is tossed to and fro by the waves, yet he cannot be said to make a long voyage when driven back into the port out of which he came at first. The apostle said, “But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth” (1 Timothy 5:6). Her time is useless, lost as to all spiritual purposes. You are a loser by that day in which you have not done or received some good. □

(To be continued)



Questions & Answers

The Might of the Devil

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

The devil is a fallen angel; therefore, he is not all-knowing or omnipresent. How is it then possible that he deceives and leads people into sin over the entire world and that he lives in all of their hearts?

World

“Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in Me” (John 14:30). They are the words of the Saviour to His disciples spoken in the night in which He was betrayed. Even the Lord Jesus speaks of the devil as the “prince of this world.” Satan came closer by in order with his instruments to capture the Surety and to kill Him, but Jesus cannot be “taken” by him. The marginal notes tell us “Satan will not be able to employ his might over Christ, but in trying he will thereby lose all of his might.” Yet, the awful truth is that the prince of this world does apprehend children of Adam. In our covenant head Adam, and in the first woman Eve, we have sold ourselves to Satan. We have placed him on the throne and by nature bow under his terrible rule. We are in the deepest sense possessed by Satan’s angels. *Legion* (see Luke 8:30) does not live so far away from us. Who is really able to fathom the state of death of the fallen generation of Adam?

The questioner wrote that it is hardly possible to understand that the devil can respond to a person’s weaknesses. Remember, the prince of this world has approximately six thousand years of experience and has come to the conclusion that we are all cut from the same cloth. Just as a dog instinctively knows who is afraid of him, so Satan intimidates people in order to discover how he can control them. We know from Scripture that the might of Satan is very great. Even though Satan’s head was bruised at Golgotha, he still wreaks havoc with his tail. Just as he once led the swine into the depths in the history of the aforementioned *Legion* in Luke 8, so in like manner he tries to seduce people of all ages.

The way that he works is invisible, but it is in a refined, sophisticated manner when it concerns his faithful subjects, also when it concerns the bride of the King of kings. The apostle Paul writes, “Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”

(Ephesians 6:11). Sometimes Satan is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may destroy in the congregation. We recall times of great persecution. He can also come as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). Then he comes with the Word of God in his hand, but then he only tells a partial story or uses something which is taken out of context as he did when he tempted the Lord Jesus in the desert. He is an exceptionally dangerous enemy who can be invisible and not always recognizable in his technique, thereby harming the children of God. He wishes to destroy God’s congregation, to remove from them the Word, that mighty sword of the Spirit and, in general, create confusion and bring about schism.

Restlessly, he roams about the earth, as we read in Luke 12 and Job 1. Wherever possible he sows the seed of tares among the wheat. With lies he strives against God’s truth, and with darkness he covers the light; he confuses the spirit of people with errors, awakens hate, ignites strife and anger, and knows how to turn the one brother against the other.

A true pilgrim to Zion may at times look upon the faithful Surety and Saviour. When faith is in exercise, then at times it may be believed that there is not one grain of sand of Satan upon the entire earth. When he began to try Job, he first had to receive permission; to enter into the swine, he also had to ask for permission.

His coming again

As the day of Christ’s return is coming closer, Satan will yet one more time show his great might. We read so emphatically, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). Do we understand the times in which we are living? Who is in control of our life? □

(Note: Due to a heavy work schedule with the holidays, Rev. Hofman was unable to provide an article this month. He hopes to resume next month, D.V.)

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

God’s decree is the very pillar and basis on which the saint’s perseverance depends. That decree ties the knot of adoption so fast that neither sin, death, nor hell can break it asunder.

—Thomas Watson



For Young and Old

A Wild Hunter Captured (1) **Or God's Great Mercy Related on a Particular Occasion in the Life of Titus Klose**

(Taken from *The Wonderful Providence of Almighty God Seen in the Lives of Young and Old*, Series No. 10)

Dear reader, you may ask, “How can a lion become a lamb?” We must agree, it is strange and wonderful, but strange and wonderful things happen so frequently. What we wish to relate is not impossible. At least it is not a fairy tale or mystery story which the world is full of and is read to pass away the time speedily. We hope the time spent reading this old story may not be regretted. Regret? Have you ever regretted spending time idly, reader? Do you know that you will have to give an account of every hour of your life, and what will your answer be as these hours become years? The time spent in reading this narrative will not be lost; may it be a blessing to all of us.

On the 10th of June, 1833, the famous missionary, Titus Klose, died, of whom the following particulars regarding his conversion are written in his biography. Although Klose was a child of pious elders, nevertheless, he followed the path of sin in his youth. This was mostly the result of having been sent to a boarding school by his elders, where the fear of God was not taught. As he became older, he was well learned in evil-doing and stood in the foremost ranks of Satan. In as much as he did not serve God, he could not bear that others did and was a pursuer of God's children. His greatest pleasure was to disturb the gatherings of God's children and interfere with public worship in the churches so that his name became a byword in the community through his unrighteous and riotous living.

One day he and his comrades took a pleasure ride on the sea. It can be understood that there was plenty of drinking and card playing, and at times it seemed as if the devil and his army were aboard. While this evil gathering was busy laughing, singing, and cursing, a storm suddenly arose, accompanied by terrible thunder and lightning which broke above their heads so that the frail craft was in danger of sinking any minute. Many of the party who only a short time previous had blasphemed the name of God, were now as sailors aboard Jonah's ship, falling on their knees and praying for mercy. In the midst of this terrible scene stood Klose with a scornful grin on his face. “Come, Jack,” he called to one of the frightened men. “Shame on you, do you wish to become pious for fear of a few raindrops and a shot out of the heavenly cannon? Here, take a good heart-stimulant out of this bottle and go with me to the cabin and play another hand of cards. I will play a game with you for heaven or hell!”

Terrible language, my readers, whereof the psalmist says: “They set their mouth against the heavens.” The listeners were astonished at this awful language during the raging

storm in which God's majesty was seen. Whether Jack really was made ashamed by Klose or whether he was still drunk—Klose finally persuaded him, and they both sat down to card playing while the boat was in great danger of sinking any minute. “I tell you, Jack,” shouted Klose, while he dealt the cards and raised his voice to overcome the din of the storm. “I tell you, as true I am a servant of the devil, and we come through this storm safely, the coming Sunday I will visit the preacher at Stamfoxe, where I will blow a storm, which will make this one seem like a breath. Come, play on, it is your chance!”

“Titus!” answered the other, laying the cards on the table and staring at him in surprise. “As sure as we are sailing straight into the jaws of death, you are now going too far. I thought myself to be quite a man, but you are as the devil himself. I will not play anymore, no matter what you say; now is no time for card playing.”

We shall no longer follow the conversation of these wicked men for fear our readers would witness a scene which every pious mind would despise with horror. The Lord in heaven also witnessed this gathering of unrighteous men, which took place amidst the wrestling of the elements and above the fathomless pit to try His patience. It was resolved by His counsel to show this sinner that heaven is stronger than hell and that the patience of the God of grace can endure longer than the provoking of the wicked sinner. After several hours, the storm calmed and the evil party came to shore. “Now, friends,” shouted Klose while they separated from each other, “the forthcoming Sunday morning we will all gather at my house on horseback and proceed to Stamfoxe. There we will chase the ‘pious storehouse, helter skelter.’”

About a half hour's distance from the village of Stamfoxe stands a simple home. The way leading thereto is ordinarily one of the most charming in the whole of England, but at the moment wherein we find ourselves, it is almost impassable as a heavy rain is falling and the wind fills the dale with a dreadful noise. In the house lives the preacher, Samuel Annear. The poor man! It is Sunday morning and he must go to Stamfoxe to preach the Word of God. It is no wonder he is pacing the floor of his room with a depressed look on his face. Twice he left his home to go to church but had to return because of the weather. It was not weather for a man to travel in and then have to preach for a few hours in wet clothes. “The man had a good reason to turn back, and his congregation would be unreasonable if they expected him to come through such weather,” is probably

the thought of our readers. These, however, were not the thoughts of Annear. He had gone to the church in stormier weather and was therefore not alarmed. It was nothing unusual for him to preach for hours in unfavorable weather under an umbrella or from an open cart. Why he turned

back could not be accounted for by the weather, but why did he turn back? Let us go inside the house and listen to the conversation between the preacher and his wife. ◻

(To be continued)



Reflections

The Marvelous Riches of Savoring Christ

Ruth Bryan (1805-1860)

(Taken from the Letters of Ruth Bryan)

My Beloved Friend,

I was pleased to receive a few lines from you, though you do not say much about yourself, and I fear from some remarks that your health is not materially improving.

From the views you sent me, I should think the place of your residence very lovely but well know that no beauties of creation can satisfy a soul breathing after Jesus, who is the peerless Pearl, the matchless perfection of beauty and love. Every lovely feature in creation is but to shadow Him forth, and every sweet endearment in relationship just the same; all that is lovely and loving He comprises in Himself as He stands related to His Church. It is for her He is Immanuel, and to her as such, the chiefest among ten thousand, yea, the altogether lovely. He stoops so low that she can lean upon Him in these lowlands of sorrow and sin, and He is so exalted that He can bear her up in spirit even above all heavens where He Himself is ascended. He is so condescending that He communes with her in her pilgrimage dress, though all dusty and disordered with the weary way. He is so princely in His love that He has provided for her a court-dress, with all accompaniments suited to His own dignity. Moreover, the beauty she now faintly sees, and will one day fully see, in Him, the same beauty He will yet see in her, for when He shall appear, we shall be like Him. And if now she feels too full of sorrow, and grief, and sin, to look so high, she may behold Him “in another form,” even in the “likeness of sinful flesh,” a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief” in temptation, in reproach. She may behold Him even not having where to lay His precious head. She may see Him weep, hear Him sigh, and hear Him groan, if she would know whether He can sympathize with her. Yea, further, in the days of felt evil, when the iniquity of her heels doth compass her about, she may hear how He was touched

with the very feeling of her infirmity in those memorable words, “For innumerable evils have compassed Me about: Mine iniquities have taken hold upon Me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of Mine head: therefore my heart faileth Me.” But you will say, He was holy and did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. Ah, true; but it was her sin that took hold upon Him—that very iniquity which is now pressing her down, it pressed Him till His precious blood was forced through His pores with agony intense. Here, then, is a companion in tribulation; on this Beloved the feeblest, faintest, vilest

may venture to lean and to come up from the wilderness. His arm is power, His heart is love and tenderness. It has been a bruised, broken heart; it has felt the shafts of hell, the flames of wrath, and the bitter anguish of desertion amidst it all.

Look, O tempted, sin-burdened one! Look and love, adore and wonder, for there has never been a sorrow like unto thy sorrow,

and heavier too, and from the very same cause. Thy Lord is so one with thee that He calls thy iniquities His own, and He was dealt with as if He were the transgressor. He was not a sinner, but He was made to be sin that thou mightest be made the righteousness of God in Him. Though a sinner in thyself or in the first Adam nature, He took all thy guilt with Him to the cross. Go there and learn that God will by no means clear the guilty. The Surety was accounted guilty for thy sake and therefore thou art viewed as guiltless; and that same God who showed Him no mercy is to thee merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. All praise to a sin-bearing Saviour—a sin-pardoning God, who can honorably blot out atoned iniquity with atoning blood. May the Spirit give application,

(continued on page 44)



Current Events

VP Pence Hosted “Life Is Winning” Event in December

In a “Life Is Winning” Event in December, Vice President Mike Pence and other members of the White House team reflected on the many pro-life accomplishments achieved during the Trump administration. “I believe a society can be judged by how it deals with its most vulnerable: the aged, the infirm, the disabled, and the unborn,” Pence said. “President Trump said early in our administration, and I quote, ‘Every person is worth protection, every human life, born and unborn is made in the holy image of Almighty God.’ In this administration, it’s always been about life,” he recalled. The Vice President mentioned how Trump stopped American dollars from going overseas to pay for promoting abortions in foreign lands and, back here in the United States, helped deal a financial blow to America’s number one abortion provider. “I had the honor of casting the tie-breaking vote in the United States Senate to allow every state in America to defund Planned Parenthood. And President Trump signed it into law,” Pence said.

—CBN.com

NJ Bill Mandates Schools to Provide Sex Education to K-12

In December, NJ senators defended the role of parents in the moral and sexual education of their children during the virtual session of the New Jersey Senate. Senator Pennacchio attempted to move an amendment to a bill, A-4454/S-2781, which requires school districts to provide instruction on diversity and inclusion in the curriculum of students in grades kindergarten through 12 as part of the implementation of the New Jersey Student Learning Standards. The requirements under the bill include gender identity and sexual alternatives instruction. “The Democrat Legislature is intent on imposing its will on parents, stripping away their rights, and compromising their God-given responsibility to raise their children as they see fit,” he said. “Healthy discussions on racial, cultural, and economic differences should be embraced, but our schools should not be commandeered to indoctrinate students about sexual nuances and progressive values.” His motion was tabled by the Democrat majority and blocked by a vote along partisan lines.

—InsiderNJ.com

Democrat Introduces Pro-Life, Pro-Woman Legislation

Throughout this year House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has stonewalled various bills in Congress designed to protect life and protect children from the transgender agenda. Those bills include the Born Alive Survivors Protection Act, which would require healthcare professionals to provide appropriate medical care for babies who survive botched abortions, and a bill that would reserve girls’ sports for biological females. Despite gaining significant numbers of cosponsors, both bills have languished, but last week something remarkable happened. In her final days before retiring from Congress, U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) introduced two bills nearly identical to the ones previously introduced by Reps. Ann Wagner (R-Missouri) and Greg Steube (R-Florida). At first glance, while it is encouraging that a Democrat congresswoman would support these efforts, there is more at play here. Gabbard could easily have simply cosponsored the existing bills—yet she chose to make a much bigger statement. By introducing a similar set of bills, she demonstrated that protecting babies who survive abortions and ensuring that female athletes compete on a fair playing field have gained traction in our culture.

—FamilyPolicyAlliance.com

Secular Democrats of America Blueprint for New President

Dear Readers,

In the January issue of *The Banner of Truth*, we inserted a short statement between the two letters by J.K. Popham, expressing concern about some of the forces at work in our country and our need to be diligent. Shortly after this was published, we were made aware of a document with the title, “Secular Democrats of America Blueprint for the Biden-Harris Transition Team.” Since the document is too lengthy for us to publish it in *The Banner of Truth*, we urge you to read what the forces of secular humanism are promoting to the incoming administration. It is a document which someone summarized in a few words, “Take God and His Word out of U.S. Society.” May there be much prayer for our incoming president that he may look for guidance to God’s Word and statutes and resist going in the way expressed in this document. (Ed.)

—SecularDems.org

—Tinyurl.com/secblueprint

COVID-Related Religious Freedom Battles in Canada

Multiple religious freedom battles are unfolding in Canada, and it is all about harsh COVID restrictions against the right to worship. A church in Toronto, Canada, is speaking out against the province of Ontario’s COVID-19 health regulations and has filed a constitutional challenge. *The Canadian Press* reports that the Toronto International Celebration Church says in court documents that it’s challenging the provincial health guideline that puts a cap on weddings, funerals, and religious services to ten or fewer people. Meanwhile, a Manitoba court ruled against a Winnipeg church, saying it will not be exempt from public health orders and will not be allowed to hold drive-in worship services. There are reports that officials fined Springs Church and two pastors more than \$32,000 for allowing the drive-in services. “These orders necessarily restrict rights...in order to prevent death, illness, and the overwhelming of the public health system in Manitoba,” the Manitoba Court said in a rare court hearing held on a Saturday.

—CBN.com

Another Difficult Christmas for Chinese Christians

While the rest of the world celebrates Christmas with joy and social-distanced services, Christians in China once again face challenges and restrictions as the government continues to clamp down on Christianity. According to a pastor of a church in Xiamen City, some local Christians were invited to perform Christmas songs at Wanda Plaza (a shopping mall) on Christmas Eve, yet their performance was interrupted by local police. Local Ethnic and Religious Affairs Bureau and State Security also dispatched staff to make sure the Christians’ performance was canceled. The Taihu Catholic Church’s application, showing many official seals, has been widely circulated online to show how difficult it is even for a government-approved church to celebrate Christmas.

—Persecution.org

Two New Mexico Churches Fined

Two New Mexico mega churches were each fined \$10,000: \$5,000 for violating the state’s 25% capacity rule, and \$5,000 for breaching the state of New Mexico’s mask mandate. The New Mexico’s Health Department was also deliberating other remedies to prevent churches from hosting large turnouts in the future.

—ABCNews.com



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (14)

Article XXI: Of the Satisfaction of Christ, Our Only High Priest for Us

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

We know that Christ has three offices—Prophet, Priest, and King. This article does not speak of His prophetic office, which is to make known the way of salvation, to preach the good tidings to the meek. Neither does it speak of Christ's kingly office but tells us of His priestly office which is the foundation of His prophetic and kingly offices. It reads, "We believe that Jesus Christ is ordained with an oath to be an everlasting High Priest after the order of Melchisedec."

After Adam fell in Paradise, there was no priest who could exist before God. Not only must sacrifices be brought to the altar, but the priest must also be clean and holy. Before the fall Adam had been a priest without sin, but after the fall he became unclean in thoughts, words, and deeds. It was for this reason that his offerings were also unclean before the Lord.

God's Word, and also this article, speak about two kinds of priests; one after the order of Melchisedec and the other after the order of Aaron. These two names should be well known to us. Aaron, the brother of Moses, was called by the Lord to be the first priest in Israel. This priesthood was only of the nation of the children of Israel. According to the commandment of the Lord, the priests out of the tribe of Levi were about twenty years old when they came into the office. We do not find these restrictions in the priesthood after the order of Melchisedec; no nation, no family, no age is prescribed.

The priestly office in Israel pointed to Christ, who would come in the fullness of time. The priestly office of Melchisedec excels that of Aaron. As we know, Christ was not born out of Levi, but out of the kingly tribe of Judah. According to the divine commands, the Lord Jesus could not be a priest in Israel; He was a priest, however, but then after the order of Melchisedec.

Who was Melchisedec? This man was King of Jerusalem and priest of the Most High (Genesis 14:18). He had received this double office from the Lord in

a special way according to God's eternal pleasure. This is the everlasting office which is given to Christ, as we read in Psalm 110:4, "The LORD hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." It is a great comfort for the church if they may look by faith upon Christ and His sacrifice, which has an eternal value. He merited eternal life for His church, and in Him is surety for soul and body, for time and eternity. He is unchangeable and faithful. Therefore, in order that Christ may become everything, the Lord brings His church to an end with everything of themselves.

Three types of work were performed by the priests—they brought sacrifices, they prayed, and they blessed. We know that Christ brought the sacrifice of Himself. In Isaiah it is written, "When thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand." In our article this is described as follows: "And that He hath presented Himself in our behalf before the Father, to appease His wrath by His full satisfaction, by offering Himself on the tree of the cross, and pouring out His precious blood to purge away our sins."

By transgressing the law and violating the justice of God, a sacrifice was necessary to make restoration into God's communion. His wrath had to be appeased. The wrath of God is not to be compared to the wrath of man; God hates and punishes sin. The Lord is the Lawgiver and requires an obedience to love God above all and our neighbors as ourselves. Only Adam and Eve in Paradise were able to perform this, but after the fall it was no longer possible and we were brought under the curse and wrath of God. Deliverance from the curse of the law is only possible if the law is perfectly kept and the attributes of God restored; it is only in this way that we can return into the communion with God.

The Old Testament Church was visibly taught to bring sacrifices; animals had to die. In this way a

ceremonial satisfaction was given, which had no value for eternity, but it was a shadow of Christ's sacrifice. How did Christ execute His office as Priest? In His once offering up Himself to satisfy the Divine justice and thus reconcile us with God. His satisfaction consists of two branches, His active and passive obedience. In His active obedience He fulfilled all righteousness. Christ did everything which the law required. His holy life was a perfect commentary upon the law of God, and He obeyed the law for us.

This article does not speak of Christ's active obedience but deals with His passive obedience, how He suffered and died. Why was this necessary? It was because we ate of the forbidden fruit, which was to be punished with the threefold death. After this sin was committed, the Lord did not immediately fulfill this punishment upon man; however, the seed of death is already present in man when he is born, and spiritual death is also there at once. The temporal death will come at the end of our life and, if we are not reconciled with God, then the wrath of God will be fully revealed in our eternal death. A certain number of people out of the human race, known only to the Lord, will be saved by the merits of Christ which satisfied all God's attributes.

Christ suffered all the days of His life but especially at the end in Gethsemane and Golgotha. Oh, how He did suffer in soul and body together. It was not a mere appearance of suffering, but knowing what would happen made Christ sweat great drops of blood. Then followed the crucifixion, which is an ignominious, painful, and accursed death. Would another death not be of the same effect? No, the crucifixion was a heathen punishment and the most dishonorable known. No Romans, but only slaves and great malefactors received such a punishment. Sometimes it happened in Israel that the body of a person stoned to death was hung on a tree, but before evening ended, it must be buried; otherwise, the curse would rest upon the land.

Christ became a curse for His people to free them from the curse of the law. He did not suffer for His own sin but for the sins of His people. The unrighteousness of His people is laid upon Him, but He is clean. As Judah gave himself for Benjamin, so Christ gave Himself for His elect. What a privilege when we may know something of His Mediatorial work in our personal life. We were and are disobedient, and will it be well, then we need such a perfect and obedient Mediator as Christ is.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Israelites in the Wilderness (4)

(Based on Numbers 15)

Your parents give you rules, don't they? Maybe they tell you not to touch the expensive organ in the living room or not to touch things in your dad's desk or not to touch the figurines in the china cabinet. Your teachers also have rules, such as no running in the halls and no talking in class without first raising your hand. The city also has rules such as no dumping garbage in the streets and no speeding.

Has God also given us rules? Yes, He has. He gave us the Ten Commandments. They tell us to honor God above all, to keep the Sabbath Day holy, not to steal and not to kill, and to honor our father and mother as well as other things which we must and must not do.

The Israelites had the same Ten Commandments as we have because God is the same God now as He was then. However, pay close attention, something terrible had happened. One of the Israelites had not

obeyed God. He had done something which the Lord had commanded the people that they should not do. He had broken one of the Ten Commandments.

What had this man done? Had he killed another man? Had he stolen some money?

No, this man had worked on the Sabbath Day, which is like our Sunday. He had gone outside of his tent to pick up sticks. He probably wanted to light a fire to cook some food, so he had gone out to gather sticks.

What? you say, is that all he did? Is that so terrible? You may say that it was wrong, but, really, it was only a "little" sin. Don't we "forget" and do little wrong things like that sometimes?

No, it is wrong to think that way. Any sin is a sin. There are no "little sins." All sins are awful in the sight of a holy God. All sins must and will be punished.

The Israelites did not know what to do with this man who had gathered sticks, so they asked Moses, and Moses asked the Lord. The Lord had said that this man had to be stoned.

When the Israelites stoned someone, all of the people had to come together and throw stones and rocks at the person until he died. That is also what happened to this man. He died as a punishment for breaking one of God's commandments.

Was that not a terrible way to die? Does God want

such punishment every time His Law is disobeyed? No, He does not. He wanted to show the people of Israel the seriousness of sin. Sometimes God does not punish us while we are alive. If He doesn't, then—if our sins have not been forgiven—He will certainly punish us AFTER we die. God told the children of Israel never to forget His commandments. He told them once, and then again, "I am the Lord your God...I am the Lord your God." May we also never forget this.



Bible Quiz

Signs

Dear Boys and Girls,

"Plymouth, five miles..." James announced as the car zoomed steadily past another green sign. He bounced up and down a little on the seat. "Almost there, right Dad?" He couldn't wait to arrive at the campground and visit the Mayflower in the morning. It was going to be a wonderful vacation! They entered a town, and James read more signs aloud. "Barber shop... Deli... Welcome home, Marine... Plymouth College...Landscape by Kleyder & Sons Landscaping... Clothing donations here... Girl Scout cookies for sale... Honey for sale..."

Mom pointed. "I wonder if twins were born there. Look, one sign says 'It's a boy,' and the other 'It's a girl,'" The sign was enough to tell her that a young family with a baby or two lived there.

"Painting by D&M Painting," James read. "Oh, I know why," he added. "Look, the other sign says 'For sale.' I guess they're painting the house to make it look good enough to sell, and they are going to move."

"Can you tell me if both of those school buses came from the same place?" Dad asked. James studied the two buses for a moment, then shook his head.

"Nope, the first one is from Pilgrim Place Special Needs Camp, and the second one is from Thomas Penning Summer Camp," he declared, pointing out the signs on the sides of the buses.

"There is so much we can learn just by looking at signs," Mom observed.

Signs in front of houses tell us who lives inside; signs can tell us where to go, from where someone came, and what we can buy in the stores we pass.

Signs can tell us something about the people in the homes. They usually show something good, while the secret things that might be sad or bad remain hidden. People can tell much about you by observing what you do and how you act. They are signs of your character—whether you are kind, thoughtful, friendly, shy, outgoing, ambitious, calm, quick, or handy. Every act of kindness is imperfect and stained with much sin, but still, it is important that we are good to others if we do not want others to avoid us—doing something good is a sign of kindness, willingness, and concern.

However, always remember that God sees much deeper than that. God sees the heart. He does not do what we do—read signs, watch, look, guess, feel, and sometimes judge others. No, He knows most perfectly. He knows without looking at our actions what we are. He knows that even when He keeps us from being mean or doing other terrible things, our hearts still think bad things all the time, and our hearts do not put God first as we were created to do.

We all carry a sign which is always before God's eyes. He sees the sign on our forehead even when others cannot see it. It is an invisible sign placed there when you are baptized. It places you apart, making you a baptized member of your church, and the Lord sees where you go and what you do with that sign. You were baptized in the name of the Triune God. Do you do many wrong things or go to places that are dishonoring to this Triune God?

The Bible speaks of many signs. There were signs of good things to come. Hezekiah and Gideon received

signs that God would help them. God made the sun go backward as a sign, and he made a fleece on the ground wet with dew when the ground all around was not wet at all. There were signs of bad things to come. Noah's and Jonah's presence and preaching were a sign for the people that punishment was about to come.

Prophecies were also signs—signs of what the Lord showed would come to pass. Long before Jesus' birth, it was prophesied that a virgin would conceive. The shepherds in Bethlehem's field were given a sign so that they would know where the Lord Jesus was born. "And this shall be a sign unto you; ye shall find the Babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

The Bible is filled with signs that point the way. There are warning signs of what happens to those who disobey God's law. Some texts point us to what will happen if we never become sorry for our sins; others mention what the signs will be of the end of the world and of an anti-Christ. There are directing signs, too. There are texts pointing to how a person is to be saved. There are texts that point God's people to where hope is to be found, to the blood of the Saviour, the forgiveness of sins, and the rest given by the Lord. There are promising signs which point out the comfort and peace there is to be found in God. These signs sometimes make God's people very happy.

Do you ask the Lord to point out these signs of warning and direction to you, or do you ignore them? We have examples in the Bible of signs that were ignored. Pharaoh did not listen, did he? He was shown so many signs—not only the staffs that turned into snakes but also ten terrible plagues. He was shown that God was Almighty and would make him let the people go, but he did not believe those signs.

The Lord Jesus showed so many signs and wonders that proved that He was the Son of God, but the Pharisees and scribes did not want to believe those signs and did not understand them. The chief priests asked Judas Iscariot to give them a sign that would allow them to capture and bring the Lord Jesus in to be condemned, but the Lord Jesus only ever showed signs that He is able to heal and save from all sins and sicknesses. The Lord Jesus foretold that the apostles would have much tribulation in the world, but He also told them of a Comforter that would come; He also foretold of signs that will show that the end of the world is near. He spoke about those signs of warning, directing, and promising, but...did the people listen? When He was born, no one went to see what the shepherds had told them, and when He died on the cross, the people shook their heads and walked away when it was over.

What do we do? What do you do? Do you search your Bible? Or do you ignore all the signs—the texts, sermons, and more that point us to the only way to be saved? NOW, those signs are still there. We are even given such clear signs of how urgent it is for our souls to be saved that they are hard to ignore—did not everyone in the whole world notice when God sent a serious disease (Corona) into the world? However, what have you done with that sign that pointed you to what is important? Do you STILL make everything else more important than God and your soul? Seek the Lord NOW, while those signs and warnings still come to you...

* * * * *

1. What was the next sign shown to Pharaoh after he did not believe the first two signs? (Exodus 4)

2. What was the object Moses and Aaron were to use when they did signs? (Exodus 4) _____

3. What changed by degrees to give a sign to Hezekiah that he would be healed? (2 Kings 20)

4. What was the sign Judas gave to the band who went to capture Jesus? (Matthew 26) _____

5. Who was a sign to the Ninevites? (Luke 11)

6. What would be in diverse places as a sign from heaven? (Luke 21) _____

7. Who did many signs and wonders, causing fear to fall upon all men? (Acts 2) _____

8. Where was the Babe placed, which was a sign to the shepherds? (Luke 2) _____

For the Older Children

Match the text to the correct type of sign given or spoken about in that verse.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------|
| 9. Isaiah 7:14 _____ | warning |
| 10. Matthew 16:3 _____ | promising |
| 11. Matthew 11:28 _____ | prophecy |
| 12. John 6:37 _____ | directing |
| 13. Nehemiah 9:10 _____ | warning |
| 14. John 16:7 _____ | promising |

For the Younger Children

The answers to the following questions are also found in the wordsearch puzzle on the next page.

15. The disciples asked, "What shall be the sign of Thy _____?" (Matthew 24:3)

16. False Christs and false _____ shall shew great signs and wonders to deceive people. (Matthew 24:24)

17. One day, all will see the sign of the Son of man in heaven, coming in the _____ of heaven

with power and great glory.
(Matthew 24:30)

18. The Pharisees tempted the Lord Jesus by seeking from Him a _____ from heaven. (Mark 8:11)

19. The Lord Jesus sighed deeply in His spirit when He saw how many only wanted signs and miracles and did not need Him to save them. He said, "Why doth this _____ seek after a sign?" (Mark 8:12)

20. When Simeon blessed Joseph and Mary and the Babe, he said, "Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in _____: and for a sign which shall be spoken against." (Luke 2:34)

21. The Lord Jesus performed so many signs and wonders in the presence of His _____ that they were not all written down. (John 20:30)

22. Peter spoke of Christ as "a Man approved of God among you by miracles and _____ and signs," signs which showed that He was the Son of God. (Acts 2:22)

23. John saw many things which point to judgment, heaven, things to come, and more. He saw a sign of seven _____ having the seven last plagues. (Revelation 15:1)

* * * * *

Answers to January's "Leaning" quiz:

- | | |
|------------|-------------------|
| 1. Reed | 2 Kings 18:21 |
| 2. Battle | 1 Chronicles 5:20 |
| 3. Buckler | Psalm 18:2 |
| 4. Trust | Psalm 18:30 |
| 5. Name | Psalm 20:7 |
| 6. Commit | Psalm 37:5 |
| 7. Weak | Psalm 6:2 |

8. "The God of my rock; in Him will I trust: He is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my Saviour; thou savest me from violence." 2 Samuel 22:3

9. As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the LORD is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him. Psalm 18:30

10. Wilderness, beloved, apple tree, mother, Song of Solomon 8:5

11. Jesus loved, John

12. Jacob, Ephraim and Manasseh

The vowels are missing in the word search.
Fill in the missing vowels and circle the words.

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C	<input type="checkbox"/>	W	<input type="checkbox"/>	N	<input type="checkbox"/>	D	<input type="checkbox"/>	R	<input type="checkbox"/>	S	<input type="checkbox"/>
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P	R	<input type="checkbox"/>	P	H	<input type="checkbox"/>	T	S	<input type="checkbox"/>	O	G	
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SIGN • ISRAEL • ANGELS • COMING
CLOUDS • WONDERS • PROPHETS
GENERATION • DISCIPLES

I S G I O G E N E R A T I O N
N S C E E H C I N L R N K S L
A E N N R H L D S L E G N A S
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PROPHETS • COMING • ANGELS
WONDERS • DISCIPLES • ISRAEL
GENERATION • CLOUDS • SIGN

Answers to previous quizzes were received in December from:

Benson Bakker (2) 9
Clay Bakker 2
Kaia Bakker 1
Sawyer Bakker (2) 3
Amber Bisschop 6
Eryn Bisschop (3) 11
Sara Bisschop 10
Derek Brouwer 16
Thomas Brouwer 16
Sarina Den Bok 11
Kaylynn Ekema 17
Kariena Engelen 6
Shawn Engelen 11
Trevor Engelen 11
Joseph Engelsma (2) 2
Kurtis Groen 11
Charity Hup (2) 3
Derek Hup (2) 12
Justin Hup (2) 12
Serena Hup 1
Autumn Kegel (2) 2
Sophia Kegel (2) 2
Jadon Kievit 3
Lydia Knibbe 13
Nathan Knibbe 15
Sheri Knibbe (2) 2
Rebecca Krygsman (2) 17
Sarah Krygsman (2) 12
Cody Maassen 2
Lydia Mol 14
Teddy Mol 14
John Murphy 10
Marielle Neels 14
Andrew Remijn (2) 13
Lauren Remijn (2) 9
Allyson Rose 3
Dillon Ruissen 2
Jacob Ruissen 3
Kimberly Ruissen 3
Levi Ruissen 3
Malia Ruissen 1
Mitchell Ruissen 3

Brogan Spaans 2
Tessa Spaans 2
Marla Stubbe 5
Colin Ten Hove 13
Aaliyah Timmer 12
Drake Timmer 13
Harley Timmer 17
Hunter Timmer 15
Kadin Timmer 15
Laurencia Timmer 8
Sierra Timmer 13
Skye Timmer 15
Wyatt Timmer 14
Charity Van Brugge 4
Maurice Van Garderen 15
Emmalyn Van Garderen 15
Caleb Van Koeveringe (2) 4
Kaiven Van Middendorp (2) 16
Konner Van Middendorp (2) 16
Ciara Van Velthuisen 3
Rylie Van Velthuisen 3
Ellie Van't Zelfde (2) 4
Levi Van't Zelfde (2) 5
Heidi Vandenberg 15
Kristen Vandenberg 1
Caleb Vogelaar 7
Matthew Vogelaar 7
Alisha Wessels (3) 25
Anthony Wessels (3) 15
Johanna Wessels (5) 19
Arthur Wisse (2) 17
Joanna Wisse (2) 17
Lane Wisse (2) 16
Tonia Wisse (2) 17
Heidi Ymker 16
Paxton Ymker 13
Quentin Ymker 10

8 Bibles were sent to Boliva this month.



Letters to My Young Readers



Thy Word is
a lamp unto
my feet and
a light unto
my path



Please send your answers to the
address shown below:

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

*And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it,
when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left.*

(Isaiah 30:21)

The Marvelous Riches of Savoring Christ *(continued from page 37)*

and then thy heart will rejoice, even thine. Then what a keeping of Christmas it would be in company with the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world, born for thee, obeying for thee, bruised for thee, bleeding for thee, dying, arising, ascending, all for thee, and pleading on thy behalf. It is thus to us a child is born, to us a Son is given, and we find it tidings of glad joy, which brings peace to our souls and reveals to us the goodwill of Him that dwelt in the bush. The Lord hasten in thy experience the fullness of time when to thee personally He will send forth His Son, and thus visit thee with His salvation, that thy liberated soul may say, Now, Lord, lettest Thou Thine handmaid depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen and my heart had felt Thy salvation! Once get a sight of the King in His beauty, and I know you would long to be with Him. You are now waiting for that sight, and He says, "They shall not be ashamed that wait for Me."

*The Lord hasten in thy experience the
fullness of time when to thee personally
He will send forth His Son, and thus
visit thee with His salvation...
Once get a sight of the King in His beauty,
and I know you would long to be with
Him. You are now waiting for that sight,
and He says, "They shall not be ashamed
that wait for Me."*

Your letter contains pleasing instances of the Lord's dealings. "I will work, and who shall let it?" Like you, I long to have His sensible presence when called to cross over the Jordan of death. Many an invitation have I sent up to my dear Lord to meet me on the banks of that river and "let me breathe out my life in the arms of His divine embrace..." You speak of your lovely retreat as being spiritually barren, but I trust you have some with whom you can take sweet counsel as you journey on; it is a privilege—"How dear to my heart is the communion with saints." I shall be happy to hear from you soon and wish you every blessing and power to look up and see Jesus appearing in the presence of God for you. Adieu, my dear friend.

With kindest love in that precious Jesus who is our bond of union. I remain your affectionate

Ruth ◻

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. A.T. Huijser of Sliedrecht, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Grand Rapids-Covell Avenue, Michigan.

To Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo Michigan, by the congregations of Capelle a/d IJssel West, the Netherlands, and Lethbridge, Alberta.

To Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Brakel, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Declined:

By Rev. A.H. Verhoef of St. Catharines, Ontario, to the congregation of Corsica, South Dakota.

By Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregations of Lisse (Salemkerk), and Capelle a/d IJssel West, the Netherlands, and Lethbridge, Alberta.

By Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Brakel, the Netherlands, to the congregations of Sioux Center, Iowa, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

By Rev. A. Verschuure of Capelle a/d IJssel (Middelwatering), the Netherlands, to the congregation of Brant County, Ontario.

By Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg of Chilliwack, British Columbia, to Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

By Rev. A.T. Huijser of Sliedrecht, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Grand Rapids-Covell Avenue, Michigan.

■ Obituaries

DE KOK, Hubrecht (Huib) – Age 90, January 1, 2021; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Jannigje; Children – Jany & Barend Van Maanen, Cornell & Betty de Kok, Henry & Janey de Kok, Herbie & Mieke de Kok, Andre & Henrietta de Kok, Gerald & Linda de Kok, Terry & Sharon de Kok, Marie & Ed Vandenberg, Rick & Marie de Kok, Elaine & Koos Vis; 67 grandchildren, 169 great-grandchildren; Brothers – Kees, Andy; Sisters – Kaatje Neels, Neeltje Neels; In-laws – Mina de Kok, Fijgje Van Herk, Judith & John Overeem, Willem & Teuni Slingerland, Cobi Slingerland, Anneke Slingerland, Tony & Margaret Slingerland, Andy & Nita Slingerland; predeceased by grandchildren Jeffrey de Kok, infant de Kok, great-grandchildren Alysha Roth, Landon Mourits, Kelsea de Kok, numerous brothers, sisters, and in-laws. (Rev. G.M. de Leeuw, Proverbs 11:4.)

DE KOK, Nellie – Age 88, January 1, 2021; Picture Butte, Alberta; Husband – Andy; Children – Nelleke & James Kreft, Janet & Garret Van Hierden, Andrea & Peter Feyter; 16 grandchildren, 60 great-grandchildren, 3 great-great-grandchildren; Sisters – Jannie & Marinus Indenbosch, Mattie & John Vanee; Brother-in-law – Kees de Kok; Sisters-in-law – Kaatje Neels, Neeltje Neels; predeceased by son Andrew, grandson Adrian Kreft, brothers John, Pete, and Andy, and numerous brothers and sisters-in-law. (Rev. H. den Hollander, Ecclesiastes 12:1.)

DE PEUTER, Bastiaan (Bas) – Age 86, December 29, 2020; Fort Macleod, Alberta; Wife – Gerie (deceased); Children – Martin de Peuter, Jake de Peuter, Gonda, Aris & Yumi de Peuter, Janie & Rob, Michael de Peuter; 14 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren; Brother – Jake & Jane de Peuter; Brothers-in-law – Jake & Nell Slingerland, Aris Slingerland, Martin & Jeanette Slingerland, Case & Rose Slingerland, Adam & Annie, Slingerland, Hank & Arlene Slingerland, Tony & Lisa Slingerland, Marinus & Wilma Slingerland, Willem Slingerland; Sisters-in-law – Jannie & Jaap Stouten, Gonda & Kor Vanden Hoek, Judy & Chris den Hertog, Diane Slingerland; predeceased by daughter Meta, grandchild Nathaniel, brothers Dewey and Peter, brother-in-law John Slingerland, and sisters-in-law Judith Slingerland, Margaret Slingerland and Ellie Slingerland. (Rev. H. den Hollander, Luke 15:20.)

KLOK, Jan (John) – Age 82, December 29, 2020; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Janet (deceased); Children – Peter & Marianne Klok, Betty & Cornell de Kok, Janey & Henry de Kok, Henrietta & Andre de Kok, John & Cheri Klok, Jeanette & Andrew Beusekom, Nelly & Adrian Sinke, Ed & Marieke Klok; 56 grandchildren, 117 great-grandchildren; Sisters – Corrie Ouwendorp, Eefje de Ruiter, Maasje & Isaac Kruijt, Cootje van Beek; Sisters-in-law – Bertha Klok, Teunisje & Willem Slingerland, Hennie Van Hierden; predeceased by great-granddaughter Alysha Roth and numerous brothers, sisters, and in-laws. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Psalm 146:4&5.)

KRUID, Alvin (Butch) – Age 72, December 30, 2020; Sioux Center, Iowa; Brothers – John & Barbara Kruid, LeRoy & Chris Kruid; Sisters – Ella Mae & Ray Ver Mulm, Wanda & Ron Hulshof; many nieces, nephews, and other extended family; predeceased by brother Herman Lee Kruid. (Rev. Witvoet, Ecclesiastes 3:2a.)

In Memoriam

Mr. Jan (John) Klok

It is with sadness that the consistory of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta, announces the passing away of their former elder and deacon, Mr. John Klok, passed away on December 29, 2020, at the age of eighty-two years. He served the congregation from 1968-1979 as both elder and deacon with the talents which were entrusted to him. May the Lord remember the extended family in their great loss.

— *The Lethbridge NRC Consistory*

In Memoriam

Mr. Huib de Kok

It is with sadness that the consistory of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta, announces the passing away of their former deacon, Mr. Huib de Kok, on January 1, 2021, at the age of ninety years. With the help of the Lord, he faithfully served the congregation from 1978-1990 and again from 1991-2003 with the talents which were entrusted to him. May the Lord remember his wife, children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in their loss.

— *The Lethbridge NRC Consistory*

KWEKEL, Cora – Age 91, December 30, 2020; Cedar Springs, Michigan; Husband – Leonard; Children – Joan & Norm Harris, Marlene Spicer, Bruce & Pam Kwekel, Ruth & Dave Bergsma; 17 grandchildren, 32 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren; Sister-in-law – Barbara Kwekel; predeceased by 7 siblings. (Rev. H. Hofman, Psalm 39:4.)

VAN DER BRINK, Joe – Age 90, January 1, 2021; Sioux Center, Iowa; Wife – Arlene (deceased); Children – Bev & Cornie Blom, Dave & Sandy Van Der Brink, Jolene & Bob Wobbema, and daughter-in-law Esther Van Der Brink; 24 grandchildren, 53 great-grandchildren, and 1 great-great-grandchild; Brothers – Richard & Greta Van Der Brink; Sister-in-law – Eldora Van Der Brink; predeceased by wife Arlene, son Ron, granddaughter Leah Mae, great-grandson Marcus, brothers

Frank & Ann Van Der Brink, Case & Alice Van Der Brink, William Van Der Brink, and sisters Hendrika & Rich Van Hill, Greta & Jim Scholten. (Rev. H. Hofman, Numbers 20:22-29.)

■ ■ Erratum

In the obituary for Mr. Koenen in the December 2020 issue of *The Banner of Truth*, his first name was inadvertently listed as John. It should have been Gerrit. We regret the error. (Ed.)

■ ■ ■ Items Available from Bible Truth Books

Used Books: We have recently updated our Used Book list. In addition, donations of used books are also greatly appreciated with free postage offered on donations shipped from U.S. addresses. Please see the contact information below to request a copy of our Used Book list or regarding a used book donation.

Periodicals: At this time, Bible Truth Books also has a considerable number of periodicals available. These are available free of charge, although donations to offset shipping costs are always appreciated.

- *Gospel Standard Magazine*: 1968–2014
- *Bethel Pulpit Magazines*
- *Friendly Companion*: 2000–2017
- *Mount Zion*: 2000–2020
- *Zion's Witness Magazines*
- Dutch-Language *De Saambinder*: 2000–2015
- *The Banner of Truth*: 1960–Present
- Treasured Meditations Sermon Booklets

For further information or to request any of the items mentioned above, please feel free to contact us at:

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■ ■ ■ 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. Consistories then distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost to the end user.

You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or to be removed from the list of those receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

■ ■ Education

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites applications from teachers of any grade or subject specialty for the 2021-2022 school year, D.V. All applicants must be members of the NRC, or a closely related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. We are also seeking applicants for a new position of Operations Manager to begin as soon as possible. The successful applicant will be responsible for supporting delivery of Christian education through team-oriented leadership of School Operations (human resources support & oversight of janitorial, maintenance, and transportation personnel) and Policy/Compliance (development and oversight of OH&S program, etc.). Candidates for this position should be able to provide evidence of successful team oversight, management and supervision, with demonstrated skills in personal relations and conflict resolution. Excellent oral & verbal communication skills are required. Completion of post-secondary education and proficiency with a range of office software would be an asset. Teaching certification is not required. For more information about any position at CCS, please contact the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland at 403-381-3030 or marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter, resumé or c.v., and references to office@ccschool.ca.

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applicants to fill a full-time educational assistant position. The position will be available in September 2021, God willing. We would be gladened by an inquiry and application from someone who is qualified, versatile, and dedicated, who also loves the doctrine according to godliness. For more information on this position, please contact Mr. A. Vrugteveen by e-mail at principal@ecschool.ca or 905-563-3077. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer, 1385 Third Ave., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9 or email him at gerry@ecschool.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.

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, anticipates for the next school year having multiple openings for teachers both in elementary and secondary. Applicants must hold or be eligible for BC certification, and subscribe to the faith identity of the MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America, which is based on the KJV and the Three Forms of Unity. Wages vary depending upon experience and post-secondary education. Inquiries should be addressed to principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca. Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the Board secretary, Mr. Eric Van Maren, at ericv@vanmarengroup.com, or mail it to 48988 Yale Road East, Chilliwack, British Columbia V4Z 0B2.

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@nrscia.org for further information. Visit www.nrscia.org to learn more about our school. Log in to the main site by registering as a new user and wait for approval.

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, invites inquiries from teachers interested in teaching in our small K-9 school. We presently have an opening at the elementary level. Please contact our principal, Tom Kwekel, at tkwekel@pcskzoo.com or 616-644-2661 for more information.

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.

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.

TRINITY REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SUNNYSIDE, WASHINGTON, welcomes applications for a teacher/administrator for our small school. We are an approved school for grades K-8 but currently have students in the lower grades. We have a four-day school week to allow for adequate preparation and administrative time for our multi-grade classroom. To apply or request more information, please contact the school board president, Mr. Arthur den Hoed, at 509-786-2354 or email artdenhoed@gmail.com, or Maaïke Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email trinityrcs@embarqmail.com.

Come 2 Carterton, New Zealand

PONATAHI CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

Our long-standing principal is nearing his retirement and is considering his future. We are seeking expressions of interest for a successor. Please check out the exciting information about our school, church, and local community by visiting our school website at www.ponatahi.school.nz (vacancies). For further information, please contact the Ponatahi Christian School Board of Trustees via email at come2carterton@gmail.com.

To All Candidates for Teacher Positions

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

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **Schooljobs!**

The Sins and Slips of Saints

J.C. Philpot (1802-1869)

It is a great mercy for God's people that the account which the Holy Ghost has given of the saints in the Scripture is very different from the opinions which men form of them by nature. If we attend to the conceptions that the human heart naturally forms of saints, we should believe them to be a kind of intermediate being betwixt us and angels, far removed from all the frailties, sins and imperfections of humanity, never overtaken by slips and falls, but continually walking in the "beauty of holiness".

But God has not recorded such imaginary saints in the Scriptures; and to beat down these foolish ideas, he has given us an account of the drunkenness of Noah, the incest of Lot, the unbelief of Abraham, the peevishness of Moses, the adultery of David, the idolatry of Solomon, the pride of Hezekiah, the cowardice of Mark, and the cursing and swearing of Peter.

But why has the Holy Ghost left on record these sins and slips of the saints? I believe chiefly for three reasons. *First*, that it might teach us that they were saved by grace as poor, lost, and ruined sinners, in the same way as we hope to be saved. *Secondly*, that their slips and falls might be so many beacons and warnings, to guard the people of God against being overtaken by the same sins, as the Apostle speaks, "All these things happened to them for ensamples, and are written for our admonition" (1 Corinthians 10:11). And *thirdly*, that the people of God, should they be overtaken by sin, might not be cast into despair; but that from seeing recorded in the Scripture the slips and failings of the saints of old, they might be lifted up from their despondency, and brought once more to hope in the Lord.

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 Green Tree and the Dry

Behold the Son of God
Who left His heavenly throne
To rescue sinful man
And for their sin atone.

He came unto His own,
His own received Him not;
But was reviled and spurned
Though He was without spot.

Although He healed the sick
And raised those that were dead,
He bore the wrath of man and God
And suffered in our stead.

The earth began to quake,
The veil was rent in twain;
The sun withheld its light,
The Lamb of God was slain.

The curses of the law
Were on the Saviour laid,
And through His sacrifice
Full satisfaction made.

Christ conquered death and hell
When on the cross He died,
And if by faith we look to Him,
We will be justified.

Do not despise God's Son
Who banishment endured
And for all those who trust in Him
Eternal life procured.

Oh, ponder on this thought
And to the Saviour fly;
For if the green tree bore such wrath,
What prospect hath the dry?

—*Jack R. Swets*