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*“Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone:
but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit” JOHN 12:24*



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Meditation

A Remarkable Prayer Day When Jeremiah Was Shut Up

Rev. E.C. Adams, Picture Butte, AB

“And Jeremiah commanded Baruch, saying, I am shut up; I cannot go into the house of the LORD: Therefore go thou, and read in the roll, which thou hast written from my mouth, the words of the LORD in the ears of the people in the LORD’s house upon the fasting day: and also thou shalt read them in the ears of all Judah that come out of their cities. It may be they will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people” (Jeremiah 36:5-7).

This notable prayer day has taken place during the reign of King Jehoiakim, son of the God-fearing Josiah, the third to last king of Judah. Due to the rejection of God and His commandments, Judah came under the jurisdiction of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. It is evident that Jehoiakim did not fear the LORD because even with threatening judgments, he refused to hearken to the Lord and repent of his sins. Yet, in verse nine we read (undoubtedly under the fear of the hovering judgments, present distress, and prophecy of future captivity) that a day of fasting before the Lord is proclaimed. Remarkably, on this incredibly unusual and different prayer day, Jeremiah, the prophet of the Lord, is missing in their assembly.

“I am shut up.” The Lord has commanded Jeremiah, the prophet, to write all the words He had spoken on a roll. Jeremiah commands his secretary Baruch to read this roll in the ears of the people since he himself was shut up. What this “shutting up” refers to is not entirely clear—whether he was under a restraining order or had to stay in the court of the prison. What is clear is that he is shut up because he warns Judah about the approaching judgments.

Due to the coronavirus, the term “I am shut up” is not a strange experience for us and our children in the past year. This shutting up is not because of our valiant witnessing for the truth but on account of our God-provoking sins. Many are shut up and cannot go to God’s house. Psalm 76:8 speaks of how God “didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still.” I also read in 1 Peter 4:17b, “For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.” Are the sins of the church not grievous? Have we not taken the many blessings given for so many years for granted? Have we not oftentimes come up to God’s house out of form and duty, perhaps even reluctantly, or in the spirit of the Pharisee of Luke 18:9-12?

Indeed, have not many even dared to come up irreverently and immodestly? Surely the Lord is speaking to us and our children when God’s house has been wholly or partially

closed. The Lord is a God jealous of His honour and service (Exodus 20:5) and jealous concerning the sanctity of His house (Leviticus 26:2). Readers, where has it brought us? Under the Lord’s judgment we cannot remain the same (2 Corinthians 2:15-16).

In our text, the scroll was to be read to the people when they would come from their places to the Lord’s house in Jerusalem on their fasting day. It was still indeed a distinct blessing when such a day was proclaimed under the hovering clouds of God’s judgment. Jerusalem would soon be taken and burnt. Readers, what shall become of our nations when there is no calling for a National Day of Prayer and fasting?

“It may be.” What wonderful and amazing words for Judah who disobeyed the Lord and who hearkened not to His prophets. The Lord yet came with a word proclaiming mercy. The white flag of pardon was still held out before them, *“It may be.”* We also read these three words in verse 3, “It may be that the house of Judah will hear all the evil which I purpose to do unto them; that they may return every man from his evil way; that I may forgive their iniquity and their sin.” This *may* has its foundation in the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. This *may* tells us that there is a way to be pardoned from all of our sins. These little words inform us that there is a way for us and our dear children to bow, to pray, and to return, that the judgment may yet be postponed for a time. May this precious *may* become a holy *must* for us (Acts 4:12). There shall come a time when this *may* shall be withdrawn (Proverbs 1:27&28), when the Lord comes with greater judgments. May this *may* become a wonder to us and our children, incite us to repent of our worldly and evil ways, and cry unto Him for His mercy.

“Present their supplication before the LORD.” On this fasting and prayer day for Judah, the Lord implies it may be that they will truly pray unto Me the living God. It may be that they may have an impression of their manifold sins and heavenly high debt. It may be that they would truly believe the testimony concerning My judgments. It may be they would be deeply humbled before My countenance. It may be that they would sorely need the sacrifices of the blood which was daily shed in the temple, and which was pointing to Jesus Christ who would come. The people of Judah were still upon praying ground. There would come a time that it would be too late as it is written in Jeremiah 15:1b, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet My mind could not be towards this people.”

Friends, on Prayer Day, *“It may be.”* May I ask you, on Prayer Day, shall it be? Shall there be souls who cannot begin the new season without the Lord’s special and

abiding presence (Exodus 33:15)? Shall there be guilty and needy beggars with an owning and confession of their many sins? Shall there be a people that are not only hearers of the Word but also doers (Matthew 7:24-27)? Shall there be a people who need Jesus Christ as their Chief Prophet (John 6:45a), their only High Priest (Hebrews 7:25-27), and their almighty King (Revelation 19:16) when we stand on the threshold of another season?

“And will return every one from his evil way.” Do you read it correctly, my readers? It says “every one,” so this also includes you and me. The prophet, in the name of the Lord, declares that prayer must be accompanied with repentance (Jeremiah 3:12&13). Alas, also in the church it seems that under the Lord’s afflicting hand the need for a true and sincere repentance is so little heard of. Let me ask you, what has the Lord’s judgment worked out personally? What fruit has it brought forth in our family circles? Prayer Day must be accompanied with a returning to the Lord. Under the Lord’s solemn speaking, have there been times when we were shut up (even one time) with a true bowing and acknowledging of the Lord’s justice? With the Lord’s judgment of being shut up on the Lord’s Day, has the service and going up to God’s house become more desirable and precious (Psalm 42:1), or have we become quite comfortable just remaining at home? With the Lord sending the virus, and being shut up, have fathers and mothers taken more time around God’s Word, singing, praying, and speaking with their children about the Lord and His wonderful works (Psalm 78:4-7)? Have there been those that have returned from visiting evil and wayward places physically and on social media? Were we given to see that all our prosperity and materialism is so transitory, and there is one thing needful (Luke 10:41&42)? Have there been at least some (may the number significantly increase) who come more modestly up to God’s house so that those who love her walls do not have to be grieved (Psalm 119:136)?

Furthermore, have there been poor sinners who have been shut up, who have learned to pray in these solemn times the prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner”? Have there been souls shut up who have indeed heard the Lord speaking to them in the way of correction, reproof, instruction, comfort, and encouragement? Have there been those that have been shut up, night disciples and hidden ones that have come forth? Have there been souls shut up that were given to sing His praises in the night watches (Job 35:10)? Readers, does it not seem that there is a frightening silence in the church under the solemn judgment (Zechariah 1:11)? Do we not have great and many reasons to tremble and be afraid (Psalm 119:120)? When people harden their heart under the Lord’s judgment, then it is a judgment in the judgment.

“For great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.” These words announce the fierce wrath of the LORD against the chosen nation of Judah. These words are not words against heathen nations, but against a people whom the LORD has remarkably blessed.

These words are read distinctly to the people to whom the oracles of God have been richly and clearly declared (Romans 3:1&2). They are a message to a people who have been warned often by watchmen upon the walls of Zion (Jeremiah 6:17). Judah was a people upon whom the Lord had sent lesser judgment before their beloved and esteemed city was to be destroyed (Leviticus 26:14-39).

The message on the roll was read to the king sitting in his winter house. Jehudi, a man employed by the princes of Judah, read only three or four leaves when the king boldly and defiantly cut up the roll with his penknife and cast it into the fire. What an awful hardness of heart and boldness of a daring rebel. The same is taking place in our countries where there seems to be less and less room for God’s holy Word in our government offices, courts, and institutions of learning, and most of society. Readers, how is it with us concerning the Word of God? We do the same as this wicked king when we read the Word but despise it by not obeying. We do the same when we only obey certain portions, rejecting other portions which cost us too much time, effort, and money, or ask for too much sacrifice. Friends, let us come a little closer, for the penknife of Jehoiakim dwells in our heart, too, for “the carnal mind is enmity against God” as we read in Romans 8:7a. This penknife is active in our heart when we think we can be saved by our own righteousness or when we dwell in unbelief.

“It may be.” Prayer Day 2021—We and our dear children need the powerful and loving work of the Holy Spirit. We are still living in the day of *“It may be”* (2 Corinthians 6:2). To that end may the Lord grant a day of deep humiliation, confession of our heavenly high debt, with sincere and upright repentance before the almighty God, begging for His great mercy under His solemn judgments. May it also be a day of Thanksgiving to acknowledge the Lord for all the good things He has left in our midst. The Lord also graciously provided food convenient for our families (Proverbs 30:8) in these very grave and uncertain times. Above all, may the means of grace be blessed for the coming of His kingdom and in the glorification of His name. We read profound and touching words in Isaiah 30:18a, *“And therefore will the LORD wait, that He may be gracious.”* Readers, the omniscient Lord has waited incredibly long already in His patient longsuffering under this judgment. He is still waiting on this very Prayer Day. The Lord shall not wait forever. However, *“it may be”* that on the Prayer Day of 2021, *“They will present their supplication before the LORD, and will return every one from his evil way: for great is the anger and the fury that the LORD hath pronounced against this people.”* □

Such as think totally to ruin the church must do it in a time when it is neither day nor night, for the Lord keeps it by His providence day and night (Isaiah 27:3).

—Thomas Watson



Bible Study

The Life of Daniel (13)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

Daniel 7

“And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed” (Daniel 7:14).

The Lord had given Daniel a place of honor but also great opportunities to help his people. He had to remain in a strange land when part of his own people returned to Canaan. The historical part of the Book of Daniel we find in Chapters 1-6, in which we also read that Daniel continued and prospered in the country where the Lord had placed him. Chapters 7-12 are of a prophetic nature. They are not to be placed chronologically after what we read in the last chapters. It is in the first year of Belshazzar king of Babylon that Daniel had a dream and visions. The Lord gives him prophetic instruction about what is going to take place in the world. The vision he sees has something similar to the interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar in Chapter 2 about the image with four different parts resembling different powers which would reign also in future centuries.

What Daniel saw in this vision of chapter 7 is of great significance also for our days. We are living in times of great powers striving for dominion. We are no longer the only world power; China, Russia, and let us not forget Muslim countries, are fighting for the highest place. Also, developments in our own country show clashes of different world views—liberals against conservatives. We may well wonder what the future will bring for us and our children. However, we read in Scripture, “The LORD reigneth.” Christ is at the right hand of the Father, and “He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” Did we already learn to bow under His righteous rule? He will have the final victory over His enemies.

The vision

We read in Chapter 7:2b, “And, behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea.” The great sea is the picture of the nations of this earth, and the four winds striving upon the great sea indicate the conflicts between them. It speaks of a world in turmoil in which there are many uncertainties.

In verse 3 we read, “And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another.” Who are those four beasts? The first was like a lion and had eagle’s wings.

The lion is sometimes called the king of the animals. This animal speaks of the mighty power of Babylon, also in the days of Nebuchadnezzar.

Then in verse 5 we read of another beast, likened to a bear. It is a bear that devours much flesh. This animal that devours his prey is a picture of the Median/Persian power that would make many its victims. Many would be devoured by it.

In verse 6, Daniel beheld “another, like a leopard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl.” The beast also had four heads, and dominion was given unto it. This frightening animal, this leopard, resembled the Greek/Macedonian power. Alexander the Great conquered many nations.

However, this is not the last beast he sees, for we read in verse 7, “After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns.” When he looked at them, he saw that among them, another little horn came up, a horn with “eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.” This terrible beast speaks of the Roman empire which would become extremely powerful, but it is as if Daniel may also see a little further. There will be changes of world powers in the course of world history, the one may follow the other, and there will be terrible wars as we have experienced in WWI and WWII. At the end of the times, there will be the coming of the anti-Christ.

In verse 21, we read that this little horn made war with the saints and prevailed against them. It speaks of a very difficult time for the Church, of great tribulation, of heavy persecution before the Lord will come back to deliver His Church but also to judge all nations. The Lord Jesus has told us to give heed to the signs of the times although we have to be careful not to prophesy what still may be hidden for us. There is evidence, however, that many dark clouds are gathering above the Church of God. In many places Christians are persecuted today but also in the so-called free world; in these countries the pressures will increase to bow before the gods of this time, and concerns may well fill our heart. What will be the time in which our children and grandchildren, our loved ones, live? However, there is more that Daniel may see in the vision, and that may be of great comfort for those who truly love the exalted King, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The throne of the Judge

What Daniel sees is very impressive. The thrones were cast down; the world powers will not last; the government is upon the shoulder of the precious Saviour Jesus Christ as Isaiah already had seen and prophesied of Him.

We read of another throne in verse 9: "And the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like the pure wool; His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire." This shows Jehovah, the Holy One, the eternal God, and the beauty of His majesty.

In verse 10 we read, "A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." We read of this also in Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The enemies of the Almighty God are destroyed and given to the burning flame and the anti-Christian power will be done away.

Verse 12 tells us, "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away." What majesty of God and His terrible judgments are displayed in this vision. However, the prophet may see more than this.

The coming of the Son of Man

The prophet receives more instruction. We read in verse 13, "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought Him near before Him." It is Christ Himself. He is called the Son of Man who came

on the clouds of heaven to the Ancient of days. He has finished His work, has conquered hell, death, and the grave, has delivered His church, and may now come to God the Father. He is brought in glorious triumph near to Him. It is as if Daniel may have a look into heaven. Christ ascended triumphantly and received a place at the right hand of God. The world powers do not reign, also not today. We read in Psalm 72:11, "Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." We read the same message in Daniel 7:14a, "And there was given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him." His reign shall give deliverance to His Church. We read of them in Psalm 72:12, "For He shall deliver the needy when he crieth; the poor also, and him that hath no helper."

Blessed are they who may belong to those poor who cannot help and deliver themselves but have learned by experience that they are weak and frail, unable to overcome their enemies. When we read of the Son of Man in verse 13, the word used in the original speaks of being weak and frail. Christ has assumed a weak human nature; He was tempted in all points like those poor but with a glorified human nature He is now exalted into glory. There He will reign to help, deliver, protect, guide, and comfort His poor and afflicted people. This comfort is also spoken of in verse 14, "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." He will not allow the enemy to pluck one of His subjects out of His mediatorial hands. He will lead them safely through the howling wilderness and, in spite of the hatred, the mockery, and the assaults of their enemies, bring them safely where He is. There they will give this precious King Jesus all the glory, for He has done this. □

(To be continued)

The Pure Wine of Gospel Grace

The wise mother of king Lemuel gave her son gracious directions when she bade him to "Give strong drink unto him that is ready to perish, and wine unto those that be of heavy hearts" (Proverbs 31:6). It is when we begin to feel the misery into which we have been cast by sin, and thus become ready to perish and are of heavy hearts, that the pure wine of gospel grace is suitable to our lost condition. As the holiness and justice of God are discovered to the conscience, and we are made to see and feel the depths of the Adam fall, we look out of ourselves for a salvation which we could not find in our fallen nature or in our deeply corrupt and unbelieving heart. When, then, we obtain by living faith a view of the Son of God as a Mediator between

God and man, when we see by the eye of faith the blood of the cross, and the full and complete atonement which He, as the Lamb of God, made for sin, then we heartily embrace Him as "of God made unto us wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption" (1 Corinthians 1:30). We see and feel that there is salvation in Him and in no other (Acts 4:12); and as this salvation is seen to be worthy of God and suitable to us, as it answers all the demands of God's holy law, and glorifies it by rendering it an obedience as far excelling ours as heaven excels earth, and God surpasses man, we embrace it as our justifying righteousness and covering robe, from the eyes of Him who, out of Christ, is a consuming fire.

—J.C. Philpot



From Our Inheritance

Making Mockery of Blessed Words

Arthur W. Pink (1886-1952)

(Taken from the March 1965 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“It is finished” (John 19:30b).

How terribly have these blessed words of Christ been misunderstood, misappropriated, and misapplied. How many seem to think that on the cross the Lord Jesus accomplished a work which rendered it unnecessary for the beneficiaries of it to live holy lives on earth. So many have been deluded into thinking that so far as reaching heaven is concerned, it does not matter how they walk provided they are “resting on the finished work of Christ.” They may be unfruitful, untruthful, disobedient, yet (though they may possibly miss some millennial crown) so long as they repudiate all righteousness of their own and have faith in Christ, they imagine they are “eternally secure.”

All around us are people who are worldly-minded, money-lovers, pleasure-seekers, Sabbath-breakers, yet who think all is well with them because they have “accepted Christ as their personal Saviour.” In their aspiration, conversation, and recreation, there is practically nothing to differentiate them from those who make no profession at all. Neither in their home-life nor social-life is there anything save empty pretensions to distinguish them from others. The fear of God is not upon them, the commands of God have no authority over them, and the holiness of God has no attraction for them.

“It is finished.” How solemn to realize that these words of Christ must have been used to lull thousands into a false peace. Yet, such is the case. We have come into close contact with many who have no private prayer-life, who are selfish, covetous, dishonest, but who suppose that a merciful God will overlook all such things provided they once put their trust in the Lord Jesus. What a horrible perversion of truth. What a turning of God’s grace “into lasciviousness” (Jude 1:4). Yes, those who now live the most self-seeking and flesh-pleasing lives, talk about their faith in the blood of the Lamb and suppose they are safe. How the devil has deceived them.

“It is finished.” Do these blessed words signify that Christ so satisfied the requirement of God’s holiness that holiness no longer has any real and pressing claims upon us? Perish the thought. Even to the redeemed God says, “Be ye holy,

for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:16b). Did Christ “magnify the law, and make it honourable” (Isaiah 42:21b) that we might be lawless? Did He “fulfill all righteousness” (Matthew 3:15b) to purchase for us an immunity from loving God with all our heart and serving Him with all our faculties? Did Christ die in order to secure a divine indulgence that we might live to please self? Many seem to think so. No, the Lord Jesus has left His people an example that they should “follow (not ignore) His steps.”

“It is finished.” What was “finished”? The need for sinners to repent? No, indeed. The need for turning to God from idols? No, indeed. The need for mortifying my members which are upon earth? No, indeed. The need for being sanctified wholly, in spirit, and soul, and body? No, indeed. Christ died not to make my sorrow for, hatred of, and striving against sin useless. Christ did not die to absolve

me from the full discharge of my responsibilities unto God. Christ did not die so I might go on retaining the friendship and fellowship of the world. How passing strange that any should think that He did. Yet, the actions of many show that this is their idea.

“It is finished.” What was “finished”? The sacrificial types were accomplished, the prophecies of His sufferings were fulfilled, the

work given Him by the Father had been perfectly done, a sure foundation had been laid on which a righteous God could pardon the vilest transgressor of the law who threw down the weapons of his warfare against Him. Christ had now performed all that was necessary in order for the Holy Spirit to come and work in the hearts of His people—convincing them of their rebellion, slaying their enmity against God, and producing in them a loving and obedient heart.

Oh, dear reader, make no mistake on this point. The “finished work of Christ” avails you nothing if your heart has never been broken through an agonizing consciousness of your sinfulness. The “finished work of Christ” avails you nothing unless you have been saved from the power and pollution of sin (Matthew 1:21). It avails you nothing if you still love the world (1 John 2:15). It avails you nothing unless you are a “new creature” in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). If you value your soul, search the Scriptures to see for yourself; take no man’s word for it. □

Christ did not die to absolve me from the full discharge of my responsibilities unto God. Christ did not die so I might go on retaining the friendship and fellowship of the world. How passing strange that any should think that He did. Yet, the actions of many show that this is their idea.



Doctrinal Studies

The Saving Knowledge of God (2)

Rev. Bernardus Smytegelt (1665-1739)

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

Instructions from the Catechist

Q. *What is the third book?*

A. The Scripture, the Word of the living God, the Bible, all the books of the Old and New Testaments. This is the rule of our life.

Q. *Is it truly God's Word?*

A. Yes! If we do not hold fast to this, then our blessedness is nothing, but if we hold fast to it, then it is beautiful.

Q. *How can we prove that the Bible is God's Word?*

A. From the witness of Scripture itself, for instance, from Timothy, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God;" and 2 Peter, "Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." They continually said, "They are not our words; we have not followed cunningly devised fables; it speaks of God the Lord."

Q. *But seeing that there are many people, as atheists, who do not want to believe, we must have arguments. What are they?*

- A. 1) We prove it hereby, because we find in God's Word the way to eternal salvation and how God desires to become the God of lost sinners. No man or angel ever knew this; flesh and blood have not revealed how God can reconcile the world to Himself by Jesus Christ. No man knows this except from the Bible even though he be ever so wise. Ask them, they will be as one blind, and the way which they will show outside of the Bible will be altogether wrong.
- 2) Hereby we prove it, that we find therein such truths that if we do not want to accept them as truths, we would have to do violence to our conscience. The laws and commands which are found therein are divine, and the law contained therein conforms with the innate law which each of us has within ourselves. Every person is comprehended under the law which is in the Word; this law is above every human law.
- 3) We find hidden mysteries therein which no person can understand, such as, election and rejection; the incarnation of Christ and the Lord's revelation that there is Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and that these Three are One; and that God loved man so greatly that He spared not His only begotten Son to save sinners. Angels or people could never comprehend this. Of this we must cry out, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" and say as Solomon, "I have not the understanding of a man."

- 4) It is also proven that the Bible is God's Word from the prophecies contained therein, which have been exactly fulfilled long thereafter. The Messiah was already promised in Genesis 3:15. In Daniel, God fixes the time to be within 490 years, which also was fulfilled on time. God said to Abraham when he was still without a child, "I will multiply thy seed exceedingly, as the stars of heaven, and it shall go into Egypt and be afflicted 430 years, after which I will bring them out." This also was fulfilled. Also consider 1 Kings 13. There the prophet says, "Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee." Upon this the king said, "Lay hold on him" because he prophesies this, and when he put forth his hand it became stiff. The king said, "Intreat the face of the Lord." The prophet was so good and he did so; then his hand was restored. In 2 Kings 23:15-18, which was 400 years after this happened, King Josiah said, "Whose sepulchres are these?" They answered, "Of the priests of Baal," and he burned the bones of them upon that altar. He then saw another grave and said, "Whose grave is this?" and they said, "It is the sepulcher of the man of God who prophesied the things which you are now doing." He then said, "Let him alone!" Now take the prophecy regarding Jesus, where He was to be born. It has been exactly fulfilled. When the wise men came to worship Him and asked, where He would be born, they said, "In Bethlehem" and they quoted the scripture in Micah 5.
- 5) For that reason, God says to the idolaters, "Let your gods tell us of things to come and show us things of the past; if they are gods, they should be able to do so." In this way the Lord ridicules them. To foretell events is the prerogative of our God. He also makes known things of the past. The world existed two thousand years before the time of Moses and the Lord knew how to inform Moses of every event, so he could write it.
- 6) The experience of God's children corresponds exactly with this Word. Because the Spirit works in a person, he is drawn to this Word. The less God's Spirit operates in the soul, the less he has a desire for this Word.

Q. *What is the 7th argument?*

A. If the Bible is not of God, then it must be from good or evil angels or from good or evil people. However, the Bible is not from good angels; they themselves were

desirous to see how that God was willing, in His Son, to become the God of sinners and how He could reconcile the world to Himself; but they were not able; neither can they call themselves, "Lord, Lord of hosts!" Neither is it of the devil; he only shoots arrows against it; all his efforts are to get rid of the Bible. Neither is it of good people; they heartily admit that they have not made it but that they have written it only because they were moved thereto by God's Spirit, 2 Peter 1:20&21, and they cannot call themselves Lord and God as we continually hear the Author of the Bible call Himself. Neither did evil people make it; they are pictured therein very ugly and would want it out of the way too. Thus, no one remains but God. We all ought to firmly hold fast to these seven arguments and say, "I accept your testimony and will live according to this Word." They who do this most simply, do it the best.

Would you like another argument? The Bible wants to bring sinners to God and the Saviour in the right way.

It comforts the perplexed and strengthens the faint-hearted. The Word says, "You will have peace if you walk according to its precepts." It is true, whosoever does this by grace has liberty and quietness, and whosoever does it not has no liberty. Do you want to add another argument? Just see what power has gone out with and by that Word, not as with the Turks and Roman Catholics who, with the sword and persecution, push their religion forward. We used nothing else but the Word and everyone can see that it is powerful; everyone must bow before it, even the most daring. When the apostles were sent out to preach, how much power accompanied the Word. How great a multitude was converted, which cried out, "Lord, what must we do to be saved?" And even if there were no other example, the more we shall live according to this Word, the safer we shall be. The wicked think that they have peace, but it is not true; at the end it will be bitter. □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



Guidance

Redeeming the Time (2)

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.
(continued from last month)

4. Time is not ours to dispose of at pleasure. A Christian, when he gives himself to God, gives up everything that is his to God, time and strength as well as body and soul. He has nothing at his own disposal so that he has nothing of which he is absolute master of to use as he pleases. "Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot?" (1 Corinthians 6:15b). My time is not mine, but Christ's. It is sacrilege to rob God of what is consecrated to Him. "For to me to live is Christ" (Philippians 1:21a).

5. Time is a precious commodity, worth looking after. The devil values it; if he can cheat you of your time, he can cheat you of your soul. For when conviction is strong and all your prejudices are borne down and his outworks taken, excuses and self-flatteries vanish. The last thing that he is loath to let go is time; his game is to cheat you of today, and so of the next day. God says, "To day" (Hebrews 3:13), and the devil says "Not today, but at a more convenient season," as Felix put off Paul. "When I have a convenient season,

I will call for thee" (Acts 24:25b). It is as to be rid of a troublesome creditor to whom we promise future payment. The sinner's tomorrow will never come. In hell men know the worth of time. Dying men who are affrighted in conscience discover the passions of the damned. What would they not give for one year, one month longer, yea, for one week, or one day more? However, all the wealth in the world will not purchase a day.

6. The present time is the best. "I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments" (Psalm 119:60). Ludovicus Cappellus tells us of a Jewish rabbi who, being asked when a man should repent, answered, "One day before his death," that is, presently, this day; it may be your last in the world. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Corinthians 6:2b). Heaven and hell is in the case; heaven is to be gotten or lost. Speed is necessary. We are commanded to "flee from the wrath to come" (Matthew 3:7b), and to flee "for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us" (Hebrews 6:18b). Your business is to avoid everlasting death and to prepare for everlasting life.

7. You have no time but what may be serviceable for some good use. There is no time in which you do not enjoy some blessings to provoke you to thankfulness or have

some sin to be mortified or some good work to be done. David had his morning meditation (Psalm 19), his evening thoughts, “When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which Thou hast ordained” (Psalm 8:3), and his night meditations when he could not sleep, “My reins also instruct me in the night seasons” (Psalm 16:7b). When the rain falls, “He seaeth up the hand of every man; that all men may know His work” (Job 37:7). We have a great deal of work to do in a short time.

8. We have much work to do; therefore, let us spend our time in matters that most concern us. We all complain of the shortness of time, yet everyone hath more time than he uses well. We should rather complain of the loss of time than the lack of time. We do not lack time so much as we waste it; much more might be done for God than ever yet has been done if we were serious and diligent. We make our lives shorter than they are by interposing numerous, unnecessary diversions and spending so much time as we do in vanity and folly and pointless recreations. Every man should call himself to account for how he spends his precious hours. “Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” (Isaiah 55:2a). Upon what do I spend my time and labor?

Works of absolute necessity must be done first and most minded. “One thing is needful” (Luke 10:42a). This is the

one thing and the great thing. “This one thing I do” (Philippians 3:13b), that is, that we may become better Christians every day. Next to that, other things must be regarded in their order and place and according to their weight. In general, use time well. If it be short, do not make it shorter by your negligence and improvident mispending of it. A thing that is hired for a while is a loss to us if it be not used and employed, as a horse that is bargained for and he be kept idle or as money that is taken up at interest. Thus it is with time lent us by God for a while; we pay dear for it if we use it not and improve it not for God.

It is good to see what advantage we make of time daily. One could say when he heard the clock strike, “Now I have another hour for which to answer.” Many of the heathens pressed a review at night, asking, “Wherein have I transgressed?” Seneca’s practice was still to arraign himself, “What vice have I resisted? What disease of the mind have I cured? Wherein art thou bettered and improved?” In the story of Creation, God reviewed every day’s work and saw that it was good. Surely these or such like should be our night questions: “What have I done today? What advantage have I made of time that I may not lose it? What glory have I brought to God? What good have I done to others? Wherein have I profited my own soul?” □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)

May We Never Rest or Glory in a Form Without the Power

G.S.B. Isbell (d. 1860)

*(Taken from *The Christian Gleaner*)*

TTrue religion is a great mystery which is completely hidden from the wise and prudent of this world. Although I feel to be neither wise nor prudent, but ignorant, foolish, and base, above all, I often fear that this divine mystery is hidden from me. I cannot lift up my head and boast of my great establishment in the truth of God as many do, for I cannot say that Jesus is the Lord at any time unless I feel His power. I cannot root or ground myself in the way of life or feel the reality and blessedness of one thing that God has revealed in His Word except it be applied to my heart by the Lord, the Spirit. Impotence, death, emptiness, and misery, with evils unspeakable, are all that I can find in myself; I cannot rise above these things or look out of self when I please. It is sweet to me when my heart is in any measure lifted

up to the Lord and bedewed with meekness, repentance, love, and gratitude. I long to mount up with wings like eagles but find my wings clipped and then fear I have none. I seek to be free from every shackle, but lo! imprisonment and bonds await me. I would be somebody but am made to be nobody. I desire to run but am thankful if I can creep. I covet fullness but am happy to get a crumb and crave for drink to satisfy but deem it to be a mercy indeed if one drop is bestowed upon me from the fountain of the water of life. Many seem to be content that all fullness dwells in Jesus and cry out against frames and feelings, but unless we can feel Jesus’ presence and find Him in our heart, what does His fullness avail us or what comfort can we derive from the bare knowledge that it is written in the Word that Christ is All and in all?



Reflections

Warnings to an Unconverted Friend

Ruth Bryan (1805-1860)

(Taken from the *Letters of Ruth Bryan*)

“How long halt ye between two opinions? if the LORD be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him”

(1 Kings 18:21b).

Dear Mr. J—

What will you say to me for taking the liberty of writing to you? Perhaps you will feel indignant and offended, but I hope that will soon pass away, for Jesus says, “Blessed is he, whosoever shall not be offended in Me.” It is in His name and for His sake I write to you and for your soul’s sake also. I feel constrained to write you to remind you that He is “the friend of sinners.” He still “receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.” He says, “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink;” and, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” Now I am sure you have not found rest; you are not happy. You have too much light on spiritual subjects to be easy in a course of vanity and worldliness. You may drink the poisoned sweet, but it leaves a sting and a void behind. You may think that if you had a home and someone to love in it, the void would be filled up; but no; it would still be left.

*And let you try whate’er you will;
Believe me while you live,
A something will be wanting still,
This world can never give.*

That something is Jesus. Only He can give true happiness. He is the one which is needful to put all else into the right place. If you did but know the preciousness, you would think it worth forsaking all to find Him. He gives just what you need, a heart to love Him, His ways, and His people, for He says, “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” He also gives true repentance and free pardon, for He is exalted “to give repentance to

Israel, and forgiveness of sins.” He gives deliverance from the power and love of sin, saying, “I will put My fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from Me.” He washes crimson sins white as snow in His own precious blood, for hear Him say, “Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red as crimson, they shall be as wool.” He puts the best robe on prodigals who have been vainly trying to find satisfaction on the husks of this world’s pleasures. By His Spirit He bringeth them to their right mind, cleanses them in His blood, and clothes them in His righteousness.

Perhaps you will say, “And what is all this to me?” Why it is this to you, beloved—without these things you must perish forever. Should you ask, “What have you to do with it?” I answer, “I have a great concern for your soul’s salvation.” You may object, “The things you have spoken of are for God’s chosen people, and I do not know that I am one.” You do not know that you are not one, and should rather say, “Why not my soul? Why not for thee?” Although they are a free gift not to be obtained by any creature power, yet ask God to give them to you. Ask Him to give you the Holy Spirit to make you feel your need of them. Oh, may that Holy Spirit

*Convince you of your sin,
Then lead you to Jesus’ blood;
And to your wondering soul reveal
The secret love of God.*

That you may have an experimental knowledge and enjoyment of these things, is the earnest and affectionate desire of yours sincerely,

—R. Bryan

Jeremiah 6:16, but I hope not the last clause. ◻

The Only Sure Object of Safety

If a man would lead a happy life let him but seek a sure object for his trust (or faith), and he shall be safe. “He shall not be afraid of evil tidings: his heart is fixed, trusting in the LORD” (Psalm 112:7). He hath laid up his confidence in God; therefore his heart is kept in an equal poise.

—Thomas Manton



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

Is it wrong to use a text out of context? Habakkuk 2:3b (“Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry”) is usually explained as a comfort for God’s people. However, when I recently read it, it looks more like it is a text which speaks of judgment to come.

To this I would answer yes and no. The Marginal Notes to the Dutch Statenvertaling points out that in Habakkuk 2:3, reference is made to judgments poured out as a punishment upon the wicked, and as proof a cross-reference is made to Ezekiel 21:31. At the same time, our fathers also point out that in the *same judgment* the Lord fulfils His promises for the comfort and deliverance of the godly. So as far as I can see, it is not wrong to observe here an encouragement for the Church of God even though the text as such refers to the tarrying of a judgment and not in the first place a promise. We emphasize that careful exegesis is always necessary in order to avoid erroneous explanations or applications of a text.

There is no doubt that faulty exegesis can lead to arbitrary applications. I think this happens often, and it is not wrong to point this out. For those readers who still understand (some) Dutch, I highly recommend the book *Zin en Mening* by Rev. A. Moerkerken (den Hertog, Houten, 2010). In this well-written and easy-to-read book about the rules for the explanation of Scripture, we can read scores of examples of faulty exegesis and how they are rectified. I truly wish this book would be translated someday for our English readers. Just recently there was an interesting article in the *De Saambinder* about the very subject of the question. The title of the article was clear: “Comfort out of a wrong application...” A minister had visited a child of God in his congregation who believed that the Lord had spoken by means of a text which afforded him much comfort in his distress after a long season of darkness, but careful exegesis of the text showed that this child of God evidently had made a wrong application of the text. In Job 29:15 we read: “*I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame.*” This text the man had applied to Christ, particularly in what Christ promises to be for His tried Church. This had given him much comfort in his spiritual condition to the extent that his soul was lifted up for a longer period of time. Careful exegesis however, shows that this text in no way refers to Christ but rather to Job who sought to justify himself before God.

As the reader can understand, this presented itself a very difficult and tender pastoral issue. Was the Lord’s visit to this man’s soul merely imagination now? Did this minister

tell the man that he completely misapplied the text? It would have erased his spiritual comfort and joy instantly. Instead of pointing this out right there and then, the minister left it for the time being. At a later time, though, he would seize the opportunity to preach about such a text, still reaching his purpose in clearing up the matter... This instance reminded me of Elijah who told Naaman the Syrian to “*go in peace*” even when Naaman spoke of bringing two mules’ burden of earth to the house of Rimmon, while bowing and worshipping there... The prophet certainly was less gracious to Gehazi in his sin who was supposed to know better than Naaman in his ignorance.

Having said this, let us be careful but also not too dejected about the dangers pointed out. The Lord knows our frame and remembers that we are dust. Many phrases in the Psalter, as well as the Dutch Psalm book are not translations but paraphrases. Would we now say that the Lord cannot or will not use such a line because it is not literally taken from His Word? Another fact is that in the New Testament we read many examples where Paul refers to Old Testament texts, but inspired by the Holy Ghost, a slightly different application is made of them. We find this especially in Romans and Hebrews. If you take a close look at Romans 3:10-18, you will notice that Paul makes use of several Old Testament texts *out of context* to prove one point: all men are guilty before God. The fact that the Holy Spirit sometimes uses a text out of its original context is a biblical fact. That does not give man the freedom and liberty to do the same, though.

Writing about this subject brings back to my memory the studies at our theological school. For one of the exams, we had to study a large number of texts which are often misexplained and therefore misapplied. Rev. A.M. den Boer had handed us scores of sheets with such texts, along with the common (but faulty) explanation, as well as the corrections. Needless to say, I found this very interesting.

In closing, as a good assignment for those interested or for personal Bible study, I will share some of the texts that were listed, along with the common explanation. I have added the question to point out the common explanation, but obviously there is another meaning. Perhaps with the help of both a sound exegetical explanation as well as devotional commentaries you may do the research and find out the correct meaning.

Here are some examples:

— Does Hebrews 7:25 (“*Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him*”) mean here that Christ is able to save the worst of sinners?

- Does Romans 12:1 (“*Present your bodies a living sacrifice*”) point to making sacrifices?
- Does Psalm 116:6 (“*The Lord preserveth the simple*”) refer to the uneducated and unlearned?
- Does Isaiah 63:3 (“*I have trodden the winepress alone*”) refer to the humiliation of the suffering Saviour?
- Does Isaiah 28:16 (“*He that believeth shall not make haste*”) refer to being slow and lax?

How necessary and applicable are the words of Psalm 43:3: “*O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me.*”

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



Church Life

Prayer Day in the Light of Our Present-Day Society

Rev. J.J. van Ekeveld, Zeist, the Netherlands

Prayer Day is not observed in a vacuum or a void. On the contrary, we observe our Prayer Day in light of our present-day world. We may not observe our Prayer Day as if we lived four hundred years ago in the days of our forefathers. The people of four hundred years ago lived an essentially different life from those of today. Yet, in one respect we are all the same; because of our deep fall in Paradise, we are all children of Adam. Calvin has written that we are all inclined to have a dreadful love towards this present-day world. People are therefore not changed, but this world has changed.

We observe Prayer Day in the midst of a society which shows more and more the signs of the end-time. What that means as God’s Word speaks of it is the great apostasy and falling away and the revelation of the man of sin.

What is the special mark of the present-day world? We can say it with one word—secularization. With that we point to a society which has departed from God and has more and more torn itself loose from its Christian roots. We see it in the diminishing of the membership in many churches and the closing of thousands of churches in the Netherlands in the past several years. We also see the increasing secularization in how we view abortion, euthanasia, sexuality, etc.

Personal prayer life

Are we able to stand at a distance and shake our heads that happily it is different in our congregations? If that is the case, we do not know ourselves. We do not recognize the fact that the winds of secularization are blowing directly through our congregations because they blow directly through our heart. We are much more affected by our secularization, by a life lived loose from God and His

service, than we realize. We are all masters at pointing out the faults of others.

Where must our Prayer Day begin? It is not among our secularized society, not among this evil world, but with ourselves. Who are we before God? Must not Prayer Day begin with our personal prayer life? How is it with our secret communications with God?

How far have we already been drawn along in the movements and trends of our days? Are we examples for our young people of the tender life in the fear of the Lord?

If Christ could not exist without the hidden life with His Father, should we then be able to do without it? Are there still some among us who, through grace, show something of the image of Christ? That alone can evoke jealousy in others.

When we consider these things, where must Prayer Day begin? It must be in expressing our guilt before God. The issue is not in the first place our evil society but ourselves; we have greatly sinned against God. We have gone astray and left the paths of salvation. We have enough in ourselves. Daniel’s place is fitting for us, “We have sinned.”

What do our secularized neighbors see in us as church attendees? How do our children see us? Is it a life spent in the tender fear of the Lord, where something is visible of the love of Christ and makes others jealous, but not a life in self-righteous pride where we look down from our high perch upon a multitude which no longer knows the Law?

In the first place, let it be our prayer that the Lord would make us guilty before Him for the first time or by renewal. God’s children have to be brought to that place time and again. May the prayer of Jehoshaphat be laid in our heart by the Spirit of Christ, “For we have no might against this great company that cometh against us; neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon Thee” (2 Chronicles 20:12b). □



For Young and Old

A Wild Hunter Captured (2) 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*)

Why Samuel Annear 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. "I pray you, for the Lord's sake, dear Samuel!" said his wife, "do not be discouraged, turn back, God will surely bless your work."

"But dear wife," answered the preacher with tears in his eyes, "you do not know what this is costing me. Let everyone enter the pulpit but not me. I should like to cry out with Job, 'Cursed is the day in which I was born'—and especially the day in which I first entered the pulpit. I am more and more convinced that God has not called me to this work. I have taken it in my own hands, I am not fit; believe me, I am not fit."

"How is it possible that you say that, my dear Samuel? There may be some preachers who have more talents and outward appearance than you, but the Word which you preach is God's Word, and your congregation delights in hearing you. You always have many listeners, and the people come from afar to hear you."

"Curiosity!" cried the preacher. "Have you ever heard of anyone becoming regenerated by my preaching? Where that does not happen, it is obvious that the Lord withholds His blessing. Of what benefit is the approval and admiration of the people? They will not justify me before God. On the other hand, I never go into the pulpit without a feeling of oppression in my heart as though an inward voice were saying: 'How dare you undertake this holy work? Who has called you, thereto, sinner? Who rather needs someone to preach to you?'"

"A sinner," said his wife, "are we and all God's servants not poor sinners in ourselves? Jesus does not send angels to preach the precious gospel."

"Yes, but such a great sinner I am. If Titus Klose, who is known in this vicinity as a blasphemer and great curser, would climb into the pulpit, I would sooner believe he was called thereto than I, as it is written, 'Harlots and publicans will go before thee in the kingdom of heaven.' He is surely known by all the people as a great sinner, while I am looked upon as a saint, but before God who knows our heart, he is considered a saint compared with me, for I am sure such ungodliness, as day by day arises inwardly in me, probably never entered the mind of Klose."

"Oh!" cried out his wife, bursting into tears. "How can you have grounds for such abuses, for all our hearts are evil from our youth to the present, and, the Lord himself has said, out of the heart comes forth all kinds of sin and ungodliness, for which we may rightly tremble. I can quite well believe that your heart is not better than Klose's, but God has opened your eyes that you may see the corruption, and, at the same time, you have come to know the beloved Lord Jesus as the only way of safety for a guilty sinner. Klose does not see this; therefore, you are capable of preaching the way of life, but he is not. Come, dear Samuel, the congregation is awaiting you; ask the Lord for his supporting grace. He has promised to those who are uncomfited and driven forth by storm that He will lay their stones gracefully and build their foundation with sapphires. When you come into the pulpit, the Lord will give you courage and gladness as He has done at other times, and 'He gives them courage and strength who hope in Him at length.'"

"The way of life," repeated the preacher, "yes, in case I was capable of proclaiming it to others, then I would see the fruits of my labors, but who has ever heard that through my preaching sinners have become converted?"

"What," said his wife, "have you so speedily forgotten the grace of God? Have not Anna Johnson, Philip Cowroom, Philip Bades and others testified that under your preaching they have been brought from darkness into light, of whom you can say they are the seal of your apostleship?"

"Oh, that is a long time ago and when I was in my youthful strength, but now the candlestick has been taken from me, and I am nothing but a dry tree who has no more tollage or fruit."

"Now," said his wife, casting her eyes upward—for she had prayed in silence to the Lord—"this morning the Lord will again cause a shoot to spring forth from your dry root; for He is mighty to cause the unfruitful to be a father of a multitude of people. Go, Samuel; I pray thee, the Lord will be with you." With these words his wife gave him his cane and hat, kissed him heartily, and with an inward sigh let him out of the door. ◻

(To be continued)



Current Events

Argentina Legalizes Abortion

Argentina's landmark abortion law went into effect allowing abortion up to the 14th week of pregnancy, and later in some circumstances. The Senate passed the legislation last month, then President Alberto Fernandez signed the bill into law on Sunday, January 14th, making Argentina the largest nation in Latin America to legalize elective abortion. Abortion is already allowed in some other parts of Latin America. It is prohibited in El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and Honduras. After the legalization, anti-abortion advocates pledged not to give up on the battle against abortion. "This doesn't end here," said an activist with the pro-life group Youth Front. "We will not allow our voices to be ignored like this."

—CBN.com

South Carolina Fighting Abortion

Just days before the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, South Carolina passed a pro-life bill aimed at taking down the controversial ruling. The South Carolina Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act would ban most abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, which generally occurs between the sixth and eighth week of a woman's pregnancy. Ultimately, the goal of the bill is to tear down Roe v. Wade by taking any ensuing lawsuits all the way up to the Supreme Court—including new justice Amy Coney Barrett—to examine against precedent. "With changes to the U.S. Supreme Court, it is our sincere hope that the legislation will withstand constitutional challenge and be implemented in order to save innocent, unborn babies' lives when a heartbeat is present," the South Carolina Citizens for Life organization said. Similar yet stricter laws were recently passed in Georgia, Tennessee and Missouri.

—CBN.com

Fierce Attacks on Christians in Nigeria

The scale and ferocity of attacks on Christians in Nigeria's Middle Belt in 2020 has been overwhelming. It is estimated that there have been at least 265 attacks resulting in over 800 civilian deaths (the vast bulk of them Christian), a further 309 injured and hundreds more displaced. The following is an account of such an attack. On April 7, 2020, Fulani herdsmen killed Pastor Matthew Tagwai and three members of his congregation, including a 10-year-old boy. Matthew left behind his widow Rose (27) who was seven months pregnant, and daughters Esther (5) and Joy (2). (*This and more examples are written in the Church In Chains Winter Newsletter—Ed.*)

—ChurchInChains.ie

Human Rights in Egypt

Two U.S. Congressmen have initiated the formation of The Egypt Human Rights Caucus. The announcement comes amidst a deteriorating human rights record in Egypt, where the government has been cracking down on the free speech of minority activists and enforcing its harsh blasphemy laws. One of the Congressmen said, "American interests have not been served by a policy of unconditional support for the Egyptian military while downplaying the military-led government's human rights abuses, corruption, and mistreatment of American citizens. The Egypt Human Rights Caucus will reflect and help shape the growing consensus in Congress that we need to rebalance our relationship with this important country." This past fall, Egyptian authorities detained three members of the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIPR), an organization known for their documentation of the abuses of the Egyptian government. Although Egyptian authorities released these EIPR members, many vulnerable communities now find it more difficult and more dangerous to report the religious freedom abuses of the government.

—Persecution.org

How to Stop Schools from Parenting Your Children

The Policy manager for Family Policy Alliance writes, "I'm tired of schools trying to play the role of surrogate parents. Like too many parents across our nation, I've become increasingly concerned about the radical social and political ideas that are being forced upon our children in public schools." She further writes that parenting is a fundamental right including the right for us to decide what kind of education our children will have. But more often than not, public schools teach our children a radical moral code. Advice is also offered—you have the federal right to view your child's lesson plans, observe class, and review curriculum. You also have the constitutional right to opt your child out of classroom content that violates your religious and moral beliefs. In the nurse's office, you have the right to limit the type of medical treatment your child receives in school, such as declining all "abortion-related" materials. You also have the right to testify at local school board meetings regarding any concerns you have.

—DailySignal.com

Necessity of the Holy Spirit's Work in the Soul

Whom God legally saves, He experimentally saves; whom He justifies, them He also sanctifies. Where the righteousness of Christ is imputed to an individual, a principal of holiness is imparted to him; the former can only be ascertained by the latter. It is impossible to obtain a scriptural knowledge that the merits of Christ's finished work are reckoned to my account, except by proving that the efficacy of the Holy Spirit's work is evident in my soul.

—Arthur W. Pink



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (15) **Article XXII: Of Faith in Jesus Christ**

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

In our previous article we have seen that the Lord brings His children in faith to the Surety. It takes place in a manner different from what they had expected since it happens in a way of their own decreasing in order that they may embrace Christ as the full and complete Saviour, in whom is everything which they need for time and eternity.

This is denied by man as is also stated in this article. In the first place, we think of the doctrine of Rome, which also seeks salvation in Christ. For them, however, He is not a perfect Saviour. They cannot miss free will, piety, and good works as the means to their salvation. The churches of the Reformation have rejected any basis for salvation outside of Christ; thus, we read in this article, "Therefore, for any to assert, that Christ is not sufficient, but that something more is to be required besides Him, would be to gross a blasphemy: for hence it would follow, that Christ was but half a Saviour."

It was especially after 1574 that this doctrine was defended since at the Council of Trent it was decided that good works were a part of our righteousness before God. Rome makes a difference between the temporal and the eternal punishment of sin. They believe that Christ has given satisfaction for the eternal punishment but that man must bear his own temporal punishment by suffering, penitence, or purgatory.

How can a finite man bear the eternal punishment other than in eternity? This was understood by our forefathers; therefore, they could not go along with this Roman Catholic error which deceives people for eternity. Only Christ, who was eternal God, could bear the eternal judgment of God in time. This was possible for God but not for man.

According to Rome, we don't need Christ for the temporal punishment. We must try to keep and fulfill the law, and in this way, we will merit salvation or at least a part of it. If we then transgress one of the commandments, it is not too serious, for Christ bore

the eternal punishment, and, with a shorter or longer punishment in purgatory, satisfaction will be made and men may enter into glory. Do you understand how foolish such a doctrine is? There is no impression whatsoever that we have to deal with a holy and righteous God, with whom we cannot compromise. How deceiving it is for those poor people. How terrible it will be for deceivers when the Lord will require from them an account of their teachings.

Is it not good to live a strict life? It is a privilege when we do not live a loose life, but we must never forget that the Lord is not satisfied with a faulty life even though we may do our best. Many modernists today teach that we cannot do what the Lord requires but that He takes the good will and intentions of man into consideration, and that will save us.

Good works should be according to the law of God, to the honor of God, and should proceed from a true faith. All those who know themselves shall cry out, "Oh wretched man that I am. Enter not into judgment with Thy servant." Isaiah complained about himself, confessing that he was a man of unclean lips and that our self-righteousness is as an unclean garment. It was experienced by all of the saints of the Old and New Testament, but also by God's people in our days, that only in Christ are we righteous before God. It is really no wonder that this doctrine of free and sovereign grace has so many opponents. It glorifies Christ and debases man. This is not according to the will and wish of man because he must then decrease and become nothing, which is something which dishonors him.

Helping grace, where the Lord does something and man does the rest, leaves man with some credit towards his own salvation. Not so, my friends, as hard as it may seem, I hope that we may all learn the truth of what is written in our article, "Therefore we justly say with Paul, that we are justified by faith alone, or by faith without works." This is the only way to be saved! Without faith it is impossible

to please God. Justification is an acquittal and restoration into the communion with God. By sin we are guilty before the Lord, having transgressed all of God's commandments in thoughts words and deeds. It is only for Christ's sake that the sinner is acquitted and receives a right to eternal life. The doctrine of justification we hope to discuss in our next article, D.V. It is such a great blessing if we may experience it, to be placed from the state of death into the state of life and that the Holy Spirit gives this testimony in the heart that our debt will no more be remembered.

What is still remaining is the question as to how we may become partakers of this justification. Our article states, "However, to speak more clearly, we do not mean, that faith itself justifies us, for it is only an instrument with which we embrace Christ our Righteousness." This was written to prevent a false explanation. It is not to minimize the necessity of faith as if it is not important. Faith is indispensable to salvation, and without faith we will never receive a part in Christ and in His righteousness.

It is written here so that we do not make a ground of faith itself or find any merit in it, for this would diminish the glory of Christ. The value of faith is inexpressibly great, but there is no ground in it because it is the instrument which is given in order to accept the benefits which Christ has merited for His children.

The sinner is not accepted for his faith but by his faith. A beggar extends his hand, but he does not obtain a gift because of his extended hand; it is the mercy of the giver to give him a gift. If he did not have a hand, then he could not receive the gift either. The ground upon which God the Father acquits the elect sinner is not his works, but it is only the satisfaction of Christ. By His passive obedience Christ has taken away the curse of the law and paid the debt of His Church. In His actual obedience He merited life for His Church. By the obedience of One many have been made righteous. Zion shall be redeemed with judgment and her converts with righteousness.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Israelites in the Wilderness (5)

(Based on Numbers 16&17)

Do you still remember how Aaron and Miriam complained against Moses? Do you remember that they were jealous because he was the leader and how Miriam became a leper as a punishment from the Lord?

Well, the children of Israel had not learned their lesson. There were other people who were angry with Moses. There were others who thought they were just as important as he was. Those men were Moses' cousin Korah and two other men who were brothers, Dathan and Abiram.

One day these three men came to Moses and grumbled to him and Aaron. "Why do you think that you are better than we are? Why do you get to be the leader? All of our people are holy, and God is with us just as He is with you. Why do you think that you know more than we do?"

What terrible words, but when we think about it, we are just like they were, aren't we? We each think that we are the most important person. We all show

our jealousy when someone else gets special things; we think that WE should get the best. Also, don't we all think that God should be pleased with what we do? We are just like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram.

Moses could only pray to God for help in talking to these angry men. "Is that how you feel?" he asked them. "Then come back tomorrow and God will show you who He has chosen to be the leader of His people. When you come, bring a censor and put fire in it." (A censor was a container that was used in offering incense before the Lord.) "Then God will show us whom He has chosen."

Before the next day came, Moses tried to talk to his cousin Korah about the terrible sin he was committing. Then he tried to contact Dathan and Abiram, but they would not even come to see him. They just argued with Moses. "First you brought us out of Egypt, out of a wonderful country, into a terrible desert, and now you are trying to make yourself a king over us. You will not even bring us into the beautiful land you

promised us we were going to. You just want us to die here in this desert. No, we will not come to see you.”

The next day the children of Israel gathered together about the tabernacle. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and many men who agreed with them brought their censers with them to the tabernacle.

Suddenly, there was a wonderful glorious light. God had descended to the tabernacle. God was angry with the people. He told Moses and Aaron to move away so that He could kill them all. Moses and Aaron pleaded with the Lord not to do that. God then told them that He would kill only those three wicked men and their families who had rebelled against God and Moses.

Moses told all of the children of Israel to move far away from the tents of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Then Moses said, “Now we will know whether God really sent me to do His work. Now we will know if I really am your leader. If these men die just like other men die, then you will know that God did not send me. On the other hand, if something awful happens to these people and the earth opens up and swallows them, then you will know that God did call me as your leader.”

And then—what happened? Suddenly the ground under the feet of those wicked men opened up, and they and their families were swallowed up alive. All of their possessions such as their tents and goods were also swallowed up, and none of them were seen any more when the earth closed over them. Only the family of Korah was spared, for they had not agreed with those wicked men, and they had moved far away from them before the Lord came with His terrible punishment.

What awful screams could be heard from the pit into which they fell. The other children of Israel quickly ran away from the area because they were

afraid. And then—all was quiet. The ground had closed up again, and Korah, Dathan, and Abiram were buried alive. What an awful punishment!

God had spoken. He had shown the children of Israel that He had chosen Moses and Aaron to be their leaders. You would think that the people would never complain about Moses and Aaron again, but what do we read in that same chapter? The Bible tells us that already on the next day, not a month or a year later, but on the NEXT day, the children of Israel came to Moses and grumbled, “You have done an awful thing. You have killed the people of God.”

How did they dare to say such a thing? With just one word, the Lord could kill them as well, and that is what God did. Suddenly, people began to fall down dead. God had appeared in His glory, and He was angry.

Moses and Aaron were afraid that the Lord would soon kill all of the people. Quickly they offered a sacrifice upon the altar to God. Aaron stood right between the dead and the living people and prayed that God would accept their offering. God was gracious and heard their prayer so that no one else died.

God knew that the people would still complain about Moses, so the next day He showed them that Aaron and his family, the Levites, would be the ones in charge of the tabernacle. God made a dead stick to grow flowers as a sign that He had chosen Aaron to this office.

Finally, the people saw how sinful they had been. Now they cried to Moses, “We have sinned so grievously; we will surely die also!” Now the people of Israel saw how gracious and kind God was even though they had done such terrible things; they saw how wicked they were, and they asked God for mercy. Do we also see how wicked we are? Or do you grumble like the Israelites did?



God opens the earth to destroy the wicked, rebellious men and their families.



Bible Quiz

Fainting

Dear Boys and Girls,

Bob peered into his fridge, closed the tiny door, then opened it once more as if hoping he might have somehow missed something in the small, cold space that held his meals in the cab of his truck. He shook his head sadly to himself and sighed. Sliding behind the steering wheel, he knew there was nothing to do but go on again and ignore his rumbling stomach. Lashing rain and wind had made his drive longer than anticipated. The meals that had been so lovingly prepared by his wife were gone. He had run out. The load in his trailer was due at the warehouse in two days, so even though night was coming on, he had better keep driving.

A few hours later, Bob slowed his tractor trailer a bit. He knew that a truck stop was beside the road in a minute or two. With a faint frown he noted that the truck stop was closed. The usually well-lit building was completely dark. A hundred miles later was another rest area, but here, the entrance road had been blocked to show that it, too, was closed. Bob passed truck stop after truck stop all of which were completely dark and silent. He thought of the crispy French toast or the warm egg sandwiches that could usually be bought there, and his mouth watered.

His stomach protested more and more, but there was no food in sight. Bob became more and more tired. His eyes grew heavy, his head was spinning, and his mouth was dry. He was beginning to feel quite faint. He didn't want to grumble. He knew very well that the reason for all the closed restaurants and rest areas was the serious virus that was spreading through the country—COVID-19. However, if he didn't have something to eat soon, he would not be able to go on driving. His complaining stomach would prevent him from sleep as well, so it was no use to try that either. Bob's truck rumbled steadily onward and soon crossed the border into another state. Bob squinted as he peered ahead, and he heaved a huge sigh of relief. Finally, a truck stop up ahead appeared to be open. A half hour later, Bob had finished a hearty meal and was back on the road, feeling much better. The food had done him good—he felt refreshed, stronger, and able to continue on his way.

Sometimes we become faint or feel faint. A boy might be blowing a tuba or French horn in the school band and suddenly feel a little dizzy. A girl might be pulling weeds in the hot sun and have to stop quickly

for a drink of cold water. We can also become faint with fear; some people run from what frightens them, or run for help, but others freeze, their knees trembling and weak. We might be hiking for a very long time and feel so faint that we think we cannot make it to the end. At these times, we need help. We need something to refresh us, just like Bob, the truckdriver, did. Food, water, rest, fresh air, or extra oxygen are all things that help.

However, the Bible speaks of a different kind of fainting. This is not a fainting of the body; it is not a fearful fainting of mind and spirit. No, it is a fainting of the soul. Such souls can no longer go onward in the journey through life. The enemies—Satan, sin, unbelief, and the world—have become so great that they have no might against them. They see no way out of their soul's troubles. They seem to have no hope anymore. They fear they will sink into darkness forever. They do not know anymore if the Lord knows of them, and they are fainting inside because the Lord is not speaking to them anymore. God's Word is like food and drink to refresh their soul, but it has been so long since the Lord has pressed something from the Word into their heart so that it helped them. They can only see how black their heart is, and it makes them lose hope. Maybe they will have to go on in this way until they die, and then, they will have to enter eternal death without any hope, without a God for their soul. They cannot revive their own heart. They cannot make themselves feel better or encourage themselves that everything will be all right. Whatever helped them in the past is long gone and cannot satisfy their fainting hearts. They sometimes sigh, "Lord, if it was true, wilt Thou say it again?"

What can help such people? Their heart pants after the Lord like a deer pants after water when it has been chased. Have you ever read of this in Psalm 42? The longing in that psalm explains the longing of a person with a new heart. This new heart is fainting and needs God. The Lord will not leave such a person over to himself. He may wait, because He knows the best time, but He will not let their heart completely despair. When these people become faint, a word from the Lord can lift them up out of their fear, battles, and despondency. Sometimes they are working or driving or just lying down to go to sleep, and the Lord will speak in their heart with

a part of a text or a line of a psalter. Sometimes they have listened all day on a Sunday to several sermons, and it is the very last sentence in the very last sermon that the Lord places with power into their heart. They might be walking out of church with a sinking heart, losing all hope, when the psalter the organist is quietly playing as the church members leave the sanctuary penetrates with quiet power into their heart. That text, or line, or sentence, is used just as food and drink to a fainting person.

When the person has many difficulties in life, many trials, the Lord might make a little resting place for him. This might be a paragraph in a book, a sermon-recording during a car ride, or a psalter that his kindergartener is singing in the family room. The words become a comfort and give strength to go on. It could even be a cold or headache that makes the person slow down from all the busyness for a little while. He or she might have to lie on a bed for an afternoon, just quietly, and there the Lord draws out his or her heart to pray to Him. It might last only a moment. Just as a beautiful quiet garden or oasis will quickly have tall, stubborn weeds or burrowing little animals in it that disturb the beauty and rest, so the things of the world quickly disturb a soul's moment of rest. However, that does not mean the rest was never there.

The Lord sustains and takes care of His people, both in daily life and in their souls. He sent ravens to Elijah, fed him in the widow's home, and then gave him food under the juniper tree when he was faint. When the disciples were tired, He took them into a quiet desert place to rest awhile. So, the Lord still takes care of His people today. Ask the Lord often if He will make you one of them! In the next quiz, we hope to study and speak of Someone who never faints in His care of His people.

* * * * *

Take the words from the box to complete the texts.

country	governor	bread	tribulation
angel	flee	pursueth	disciples
	famine	believed	exhorting

1. "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and _____ them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much _____ enter into the kingdom of God."
2. "And there appeared an _____ unto him from heaven, strengthening him."
3. "And after he had spent some time there, he departed, and went over all the _____ of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the _____."

4. "And told him, saying, Joseph is yet alive, and he is _____ over all the land of Egypt. And Jacob's heart fainted, for he _____ them not."

5. "And there was no _____ in all the land; for the famine was very sore, so that the land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan fainted by reason of the _____."

6. "And upon them that are left alive of you I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and the sound of a shaken leaf shall chase them; and they shall _____, as fleeing from a sword; and they shall fall when none _____."

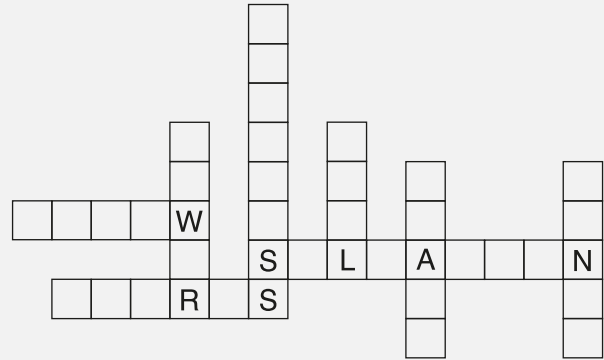
Answer the questions.

7. Judges 8 – Who were they pursuing when the men became faint and needed bread? _____
8. 1 Samuel 14 – Why did the people become faint? _____
9. 1 Samuel 30 – How many men were too faint to cross the brook Besor? _____
10. 2 Samuel 21 – Who was David fighting when he waxed faint? _____

For the Older Children

Unscramble the letters in each group and use each group to fill in one of the words in the crossword. Then use these words to fill in the blanks.

HDAS	AVITO	RYWE	USO	NDGOE
TCOU	NEER	OPE		



11. "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the _____ of the LORD in the land of the living."
12. "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the _____ of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."
13. "Hungry and thirsty, their _____ fainted in them."
14. "My soul fainteth for Thy _____: but I hope in Thy word."
15. "Therefore shall all _____ be faint, and every man's heart shall melt:"

16. "He giveth _____ to the faint; and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

17. "Even the youths shall faint and be _____, and the young men shall utterly fall:"

18. "But they that wait upon the LORD shall _____ their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

For the Younger Children

Find the answers in the Bible. Fill one letter into each blank. Then take the letters from the blanks that have a number in them and place them in the blanks in number 23 below.

19. Jonah's soul fainted within him while he was in the 1 . (Jonah 2:7)

20. Jonah was faint because the 4 beat upon his head. (Jonah 4:8)

21. Jesus had compassion on the multitudes that fainted because they were as sheep having no 3 2 . (Matthew 9:36)

22. Jesus made the loaves and fish enough to feed all the people so that they would not 5 . (Matthew 15:32)

23. What did Jesus say, regarding weary ones?
" 1 will give you 2 3 4 5 "

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

Answers to February's "Signs" quiz:

- | | |
|------------------------|----------------|
| 1. Blood, vs. 9 | 13. Warning |
| 2. Rod, vs. 17 | 14. Promising |
| 3. Shadow, vs. 9 | 15. Coming |
| 4. Kiss, vs. 48 | 16. Prophets |
| 5. Jonas, vs. 30 | 17. Clouds |
| 6. Earthquakes, vs. 11 | 18. Sign |
| 7. Apostles, vs. 43 | 19. Generation |
| 8. Manger, vs. 12 | 20. Israel |
| 9. Prophecy | 21. Disciples |
| 10. Warning | 22. Wonders |
| 11. Directing | 23. Angels |
| 12. Promising | |

Answers to previous quizzes were received in January from:

Benson Bakker (2) 11	Marlisa Korevaar 9	Kaiven
Anabelle Berkenbush 13	Rebekah Korevaar 9	Van Middendorp (2) 13
Jenina Blom (2) 17	Rebecca Krygsman (2) 19	Konner
Lawrence Blom (2) 11	Sarah Krygsman (2) 21	Van Middendorp (2) 13
Aidan Bosch 9	Cody Maassen 3	Brett Van Velthuisen 3
Hayley Bosch 16	Madeline Mol 6	Kason Van Velthuisen 3
Derek Brouwer 17	Olivia Mol 11	Trent Van Velthuisen 3
Thomas Brouwer 17	Lindsey Muis 5	Jace Van Voorst 8
Cody Driesen 17	Marielle Neels 15	Taya Van Voorst 6
Evan Driesen 4	Blake Pannekoek 1	Taylina Van Wingerden (2) 4
Micah Driesen 4	Lauren Pannekoek 11	Ellie Van't Zelfde 5
Michelle Driesen 4	Collin Rozeboom 6	Levi Van't Zelfde 6
Toby Driesen 17	Trina Rozeboom 4	Alivia Vande Hoef 20
Lindsey Driesse 2	Ale Rus (2) 13	Wyatt Vande Waerd 5
Geralyn Engelen 12	Jessa Rus (2) 16	Heidi Vandenberg 16
Shawn Engelen 12	Kaela Rus (2) 2	Kristen Vandenberg 2
Trevor Engelen 12	Lakia Rus (2) 5	Helen Verhoef 8
Kyal Grinich 10	Megan Taylor 12	Shara Verhoef (2) 9
Logan Grinich 11	Renee Taylor 7	Jaydon Weeda 4
Taryn Grinich 7	Aaliyah Timmer 13	Jonathan Wesdyk (2) 14
Kari Groen (2) 12	Drake Timmer 14	Allyson Ymker 12
Kurtis Groen (2) 13	Andrew Van Brugge 4	Cameron Ymker 16
Anthony Knibbe 6	Anna Van Brugge 8	
Ashley Knibbe 13	Jedidiah Van Brugge 3	
Courtney Knibbe 13	Ellen VanHarten (2) 2	
Lindsey Knibbe 13	Janelle VanHarten (2) 2	
Lydia Knibbe 14	Lydia Van Manen 20	
Nathan Knibbe 16	Rosalee Van Manen 13	
Whitney Knibbe 13		

20 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. Thank you, boys and girls! The total is 309.

Letters to My Young Readers

Jenina & Lawrence Blom

I loved receiving your beautifully decorated Bible texts, Jenina and Lawrence. Everyone did such a good job with that. You had a smart idea to do the quiz on a weekday because on Sunday you have catechism. Here we have three services because we cannot all go to church at the same time, so perhaps the children can do the quiz on a different day, too. What is your favorite subject? What is your favorite part of your homeschooling day?

Welcome to our new members:
Ellen & Janelle VanHarten and
Blake Pannekoek.

Thank you to the children who sent money for Bibles—how wonderful to be able to give others God's Word!

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. S.W. Janse of Rijssen-Zuid, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Beckwith, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Declined:

By Rev. S.W. Janse of Rijssen-Zuid, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Beckwith, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

■ Obituaries

DEN BOESTERD, Abraham (Abe) – Age 93, January 21, 2021; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Tina (nee Barendrecht); Children – William & Margaret den Boesterd, Peter & Pat den Boesterd; 8 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, and 1 sister; predeceased by great-grandson Jacob, 5 brothers, and 1 sister. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Psalm 90:12.)

KRYGSMAN, Lisabeth (Betty) – Age 72, January 29, 2021; Norwich, Ontario; Husband – Peter (deceased); Children – Julie & John Nieuwenhuis, Gerald & Hilda Krygsman, Joyce & Jerry Van Leeuwen, Lisabeth & Ken Butyn, Wilma (deceased) & Dave Nevill, Gary & Jessica Krygsman. June & Dirk Byers, Peter & Stacy Krygsman, Andrew & Willemieke Krygsman, Anna & Dwayne Van Harberden, and Paul & Beverly Krygsman; 50 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren; 2 brothers, 1 sister, and 2 brothers- and sisters-in-law; predeceased by daughter Wilma, granddaughter Kathleen, and great-granddaughter Kaylee. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Ecclesiastes 12:1a.)

NEELS, Jacobus – Age 95, on January 16, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Johanna Cornelia (nee Simon); Children – Ina Neels (deceased), Leny & Wybe (deceased) Zwemstra, Hanny & Henk Rozendaal, Betty & John Neels, Ko & Ina Neels, Jan Neels, Wim & Marian Neels; 13 grandchildren, 34 great-grandchildren. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg, Romans 6:23.)

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.**

In Memoriam

Mr. Abraham den Boesterd

On January 21, 2021, it pleased the Lord to take from the midst of his family and our congregation, former deacon Abraham den Boesterd at the age of ninety-three. Mr. den Boesterd served the congregation of Norwich faithfully for twenty-two years as a deacon with all the love of his heart and the gifts which the Lord had given him. There is an empty place not only in the midst of the family circle but also in the congregation. May the Lord graciously remember the mourning family and sanctify this calling to each of us.

— *The Norwich NRC Consistory*

70th Wedding Anniversary

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

Harold & Johanna Bouma

hope to commemorate their
70th wedding anniversary
on April 4, 2021.

It is our wish that the Lord, who has been faithful in providing for them so graciously in the past, may continue to uphold them in the unknown future.

*“The LORD shall preserve thy going out
and thy coming in from this time forth,
and even for evermore” (Psalm 121:8).*

Box 106, Choteau, MT 59422

■ 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 discontinue 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. We anticipate several vacancies and would be thankful to hear from versatile and dedicated applicants to enable continued provision of Christian education to our children and young people. All applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. 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 gladdened 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@ecs.school.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@ecs.school.ca.

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2021-2022 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@nrnsnj.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 2021-2022 school year. We anticipate teaching needs in upper elementary and in 7-12 Language Arts and computer technology. Full or part time inquiries are encouraged. 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@nrscsia.org for further information. Visit www.nrscsia.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@psckzoo.com or 616-644-2661 for more information.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is welcoming applications for the 2021-22 school year, as we have several positions to fill. We also invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. We are currently accepting applications for an elementary leadership position, either as a principal or a vice-principal, with the potential to assume a principal role in the future. Visit us at www.rcsnorwich.com for more detailed information or contact the director, Mr. John Heikoop, at director@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403, ext. 223. Cover letters and resumes may be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com.

To All Candidates for Teacher Positions

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

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **Schooljobs!**

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is seeking British Columbia certifiable elementary teachers who are interested in joining us in a motivating and exciting elementary learning environment. We present an interesting curriculum that focuses on knowing, doing, and understanding while including self-assessment strategies for learners. Teaching this curriculum through a Christian worldview requires teachers who thrive in a dynamic educational environment where they work together with a unified goal and purpose—education of the whole child as the Lord requires. If you are interested in joining us and are a member of a conservative Reformed denomination, please contact the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at dstam@timothychristian.ca or 604-794-7114 for more information and an application package.

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 Maaike 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.

The Crucifixion

Now from the garden to the cross,
Let us attend the Lamb of God.
Be all things else accounted dross,
Compared with sin-atoning blood.

See, how the patient Jesus stands,
Insulted in His lowest case;
Sinners have bound the Almighty's hands
And spit in their Creator's face.

With thorns His temples gored and gashed,
Send streams of blood from every part.
His back's with knotted scourges lashed,
But sharper scourges tear His heart.

Nailed naked to the accursed wood,
Exposed to earth and heaven above,
A spectacle of wounds and blood,
A prodigy of injured love.

Hear how His doleful cries affright
Afflicted angels, while they view.
His friends forsook Him in the night,
And now His God forsakes Him, too.

O what a field of battle's here!
Vengeance and love their powers oppose.
Never was such a mighty pair;
Never were two such desperate foes.

Behold that pale, that languid face,
That drooping head, those cold, dead eyes!
Behold, in sorrow and disgrace,
Our conquering Hero hangs and dies!

Ye that assume His sacred name,
Now tell me, what can all this mean?
What was it bruised God's harmless Lamb?
What was it pierced His soul, but sin?

Blush, Christian, blush; let shame abound.
If sin affects thee not with woe,
Whatever spirit be in thee found,
Christ's spirit thou didst never know.

—*Joseph Hart*