

# *the* **Banner** *of Truth*

May 2021  
Volume 87, No. 5

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

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the Church of Christ  
After Easter  
The Ascended Christ  
The School of Prayer

*For our young readers...*

Balaam and Barak  
Caught



*"Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: Thou settlest the furrows thereof:  
Thou makest it soft with showers: Thou blessest the springing thereof." PSALM 65:10*



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Cover Photo: Rain cloud over summer farm field | © Shutterstock.com | Olha Rohulya

### THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

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

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

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

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

PERIODICAL: Postage paid at Mahwah, NJ

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

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

#### Additional Denominational Sources for Printed Matter

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

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

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## Meditation

### A Sure Comfort for the Church of Christ

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

*“In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33b).*

After the Lord Jesus and His disciples had partaken of the Lord’s Supper, they stood up, and after what takes place in chapters 14, 15, and 16, He gave a parting word of encouragement and victory. He knew what grief His loved ones would have to experience when He would be taken away from them. Three days later He would return with His “peace be unto you.” That peace can only be found in Him and His accomplished work.

He gave His testament, His will, to His Church. He had often spoken to them of His departure, His going to prepare a place for them, and then He gave His testament in which their whole life was characterized. It would apply to the way which they would have to go through this life.

#### A predicted tribulation

This declaration is given by Him who is the omniscient God and Truth Himself. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (2 Timothy 3:12). He speaks about “in the world.” This is the place of their testing; it is not their fatherland anymore. It is the wilderness through which they have to journey. Time and again they will be reminded that this is not the place of their rest.

We and our children also live in the world although we should not belong to it. The world of our days shows more and more the truth of what Christ has foretold, that anti-Christian powers will rule and will oppress, discriminate, and persecute the church of God. In many countries in the world this is a daily experience, but also in our so-called free Western world the hatred against the church increases rapidly. The Lord does not promise an easy journey but certainly a safe one.

With “tribulation” He describes the way of the true pilgrim. It is Christ’s church. It is tribulation because of:

1) The enmity of the world. We could mention persecutions of the early church, Nero, arenas with devouring lions, later on during the Reformation burning stakes, and in the last days, those who do not bear the sign of the beast. There will be no place for them anymore, at least if they witness their conviction.

2) The enmity of the pious world. There will be bonds and persecutions as Paul endured from the Pharisees. The world is here compared with a woman in labor, and the nearer she comes to deliverance the heavier the pangs of birth become. Thus it is also with the world, especially in

the last great tribulation. God’s Word tells us that if the days would not be shortened, no flesh could be saved.

3) The assaults and attacks of the Prince of Darkness. “Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8b). He may assault them and say that their work is not true. He will tempt them to pride. He may tell them that they are hypocrites who will dishonor God or that they have sinned too much and that He has forsaken them.

4) God’s sometimes incomprehensible leadings with them in this world. The disciples would soon be led into a way that they had never known before. The Lord would depart from them. There may come a time in the life of God’s children that Christ is so hidden and seems to have departed, a time when they lose their conversion and all the precious promises and experiences. However, the Lord will not forsake the works of His own hands.

5) The strife against the enemy inside. The greatest enemy of their salvation is self—the evil lusts, the darling sins, their flesh, enmity against God, and their evil wicked heart.

6) Crosses and griefs in this world. It may be the loss of earthly possessions or of freedom, of dear ones, or concerns in marriage or family. What a loneliness there may be, especially in the evening of life, as well as weakness in the body and various other afflictions. However, all these tribulations flow forth from God’s Covenant of Grace and His sovereign ways and dealings with His dear children.

#### A well-founded encouragement

Sometimes His people seem to perish as Elijah under the juniper tree and Jacob when he said, “All these things are against me.” However, the Lord says, “Be of good courage, good cheer, or good comfort. True wilderness travelers have reason to be of good cheer. Why is that? The love of God has been shed abroad in their heart, their redemption draweth nigh, and they have hope of glory. The ground of their hope is “I have overcome the world” but also:

1) Their tribulation is short—2 Corinthians 4:17: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” It is an affliction of but ten days. The Lord has first measured their shoulders before He laid upon them the cross.

2) It is a good sign if the devil assaults us, the world hates us, our flesh and heart distress us, or if we are chastised.

3) By affliction we will be loosed from the world and receive tokens of His favor. “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” Tribulations are needed to make us more

acquainted with ourselves, and the Lord may give a blessed fruit—John 15:2b: “Every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.”

4) We must become more conformable to the image of Him of whom we read, “He was oppressed, and He was afflicted.”

5) It will be to His honor, for He will teach them, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” He will manifest His support, His sustaining power, His unchangeable love, His wisdom, faithfulness, and assured deliverance.

### **An obtained victory**

The Lord Jesus comforts and assures His Church, “I have overcome the world.” You may say, “Why ‘I have,’ for didn’t He still have to fight the battle on Golgotha? Is this not too early?” The answer you find in the high-priestly prayer that we often read—“before the world was.” Here Christ spoke of His eternal council of peace, His suretyship. Christ may say “I have overcome”—it is firm and certain. The salvation of the Church, the ultimate victory, has the deepest anchor, grounded in God’s eternal decree. The warfare may be intense, the enemies mighty and threatening, and fear may fill the heart of His disciples, but Christ wants them to have peace in Him. Tribulation

may be the winds which shake the ark but no sharp rock to bruise them. The Church may be like the burning bush which will not be consumed. The last enemy is death, but it is a conquered enemy. Victory is sure for those who are IN Him. Do not rest on some impressions, some texts, or conclusions that there might be a beginning. The Church needs to be hidden IN Him, for then, however frightening the future may look also in our days, the King whose ascension to glory we may commemorate will lead His Church of crippled soldiers safely to everlasting glory. “These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for He is Lord of lords and King of kings: and they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful” (Revelation 17:14).

After this encouraging word, Christ has offered His high-priestly prayer, and He is still the intercessor at the right hand of the Father. The certainty of the final deliverance is founded upon His blood and righteousness. Oh, flee yet to the Ark of refuge. The time is short, God’s judgments are upon the earth, enmity and hostility against the Church are increasing, but be of good cheer, in Him, Christ, weak warriors will be more than conquerors. How worthy He is for you to fight under His banner and to expect all that you need for your journey from Him alone. ☐

## **The Ascended Christ**

*Rev. A. Schreuder, Beekbergen, the Netherlands*

***“...He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things”***  
(Ephesians 4:10).

**I**n Ephesians 4, Paul speaks not only of a descended Christ but also of an ascended Christ. It was not sufficient that He shed His blood upon Golgotha. If Christ had not ascended, then the devil and hell would have had the final word, and the Church would have sunk away into an eternal night. He, who descended from heaven, is the Same who has ascended. He has finished the work which was placed before Him.

Christ has completed His divine mission; therefore, He has ascended. He has finished His work here upon earth and presented it to His Father. He has torn apart the jaws of death. He has entered through the torn veil in the temple into the holy of holies with His blood.

He came down from heaven. He has assumed flesh and blood from the virgin Mary. While upon earth, Christ, the Son of God, has assumed our human nature, for He could not take that upon Him in heaven. He had to do that upon earth. In His human nature He has paid for the guilt of sin. When ascending up into heaven, He took His human nature with Him. Reverently stated, He returned to heaven

different from when He descended out of heaven. He has ascended. Luke writes in Acts 1, “And when He had spoken these things, while they beheld, He was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight.” The disciples watched their Head, with soul and body, ascend into heaven.

He has taken His assumed human nature and along with that the expiated merits obtained on the cross with Him into heaven. Since His ascension He is standing in heaven as the Lamb that was slain. On Good Friday His blood was shed upon Golgotha. Because of His ascension that shed blood is now in heaven. It is a fountain which shall never cease flowing. It is an eternal, lasting offering which will endure to all eternity as a satisfaction for sin for His entire Church. Adam had torn himself away from God in Paradise. Adam had locked heaven for mankind with his fall, but when Christ ascended, heaven was opened. Then man could again enter heaven which fulfilled the longing of God the Father. How the angels must have wondered when man was again in heaven.

God’s Word speaks not only of ascension but also about being raised up. This is the work of the Father as well as the Son. From eternity a throne had been set up at the right hand of God. When Christ came in as the King of glory, He ascended the throne. His sitting at the right hand of God

preaches unto us that God's attributes have been glorified and that God will again bring His Church into communion with Himself.

Is the Church only concerned with the forgiveness of their sins? No, the Church also wants communion with God. Ascension preaches unto us that God again wishes to extend His good pleasure to His people. In Christ, and because of the everlasting offering of Christ, communion is possible with God the Father.

Heaven is the place of eternal, uninterrupted joy. Yet there have been moments when there was more joy in heaven than at other times. We read in Job that "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" when God created the world on the first day.

How the angels have rejoiced when Christ descended upon the earth! They have exulted, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." At that time, the angels descended to earth for a moment to let the earth share in their song, but with His ascension there was a feast in heaven because His work was finished. There was a feast not only among the angels and the saints but also on the part of God the Father and His Son. What will that have been when Christ, not as the Son of the Father but as Head and Mediator who has made a Covenant of Grace from eternity with His Church, came into heaven? What will it have been when it came forth from His lips,

"Father, here is Thy entire Church"? God is never diminished or increased, but then God again received His Church back. Then God has received back His elect mankind.

God created man in Paradise to include him in His godly love and favor. Adam and the Prince of Darkness have broken that covenant, but the ascension preaches unto us that God again receives His Church and that the Church again receives their Father. According to Psalm 2, Christ has been anointed as King forever, but on Ascension Day He receives His crown. As the second Adam He has again restored what the first Adam has broken.

For whom is this loving gospel? It is for those who have learned to know their depraved human nature. It is for the person who has learned that he lies in the bands of death, bound by Satan, and cast out from the communion with God, for whom heaven is closed. Man does nothing in bringing this salvation to himself. He stands completely outside. For one who learns that he stands completely outside, it becomes an unspeakable wonder when the Holy Spirit begins to apply the ascension to him personally. The entire Church is included in Christ. That is also why the steadfastness lies in Him. His ascension is the day of His crowning. No, the King of His Church does not receive His crown upon earth. His kingdom is not of this world, but His throne stands above. Is that a comfort for you, also? □



## *Bible Study*

### **The Life of Daniel** (15)

*Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ*

***"O Lord, righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day; to the men of Judah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, and unto all Israel, that are near, and that are far off, through all the countries whither Thou hast driven them, because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against Thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against Him"***  
(Daniel 9:7-9).

The Lord had shown His servant Daniel what will happen in the future. The one dominion will arise, the other will perish, and mighty rulers will also be put down from their thrones. The previous chapter speaks of a mighty, fierce enemy, Antiochus Epiphanes. He shall also stand up

against the Prince of princes, but he shall be broken without hand. God as the righteous Judge summoned this cruel ruler to stand before His judgment seat after a violent disease took him away from the earth. This awful disease was a striking token of God's wrath; nothing remained of this ruler's imaginary power and position. Chapter nine places us in the reign of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, of the seed of the Medes, who was advanced by Cyrus to the rank of ruler of the Chaldeans.

It was still a time of affliction and much sadness for Israel in Babylon. However, the Lord would arise and would perform that which we read in Isaiah 13:19, "And Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." In 538 B.C., Babylon had fallen before the victorious advance of Cyrus.

It was in the first year of Darius's reign that "Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that He would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem." He read what we find in Jeremiah 25:11, "And this whole land shall be a desolation, and an astonishment; and these nations shall serve the king of Babylon seventy years." This brings Daniel on his knees to plead with the Lord for his people.

### Confession of guilt

The Lord had, indeed, given His word that there would come an end to the desolation of Jerusalem and Judah after Israel was in exile for seventy years; however, it did not seem to happen, and there were no indications that deliverance was near. Therefore, Daniel sets his face unto the Lord God to seek Him with "prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes." This is an urgent, humble prayer. Daniel exhibits his grief over sin and confessed his unworthiness of receiving divine mercy. These are marks of contrition, outward signs of internal humiliation and penitence. His prayer is sent to the LORD, the God of the covenant. He is the Lord who is *the* God, that is the true God of heaven and earth. How privileged Daniel is that he can say "my God" as we read in verse 4. He knows God and may know by grace that he belongs to Him. He speaks of Him as "great and dreadful" as we also read in Deuteronomy 7:21b, "For the LORD thy God is among you, a mighty God and terrible."

He also addresses Him as the one who "keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him." That is the hope and expectation for this undeserving supplicant and his people. Hear his confession:

- A) "We have sinned," that is, we have wandered away from the right way—we have missed the mark, which is to serve Him rightly.
- B) "And have committed iniquity" which means, we have done perversely, unrighteously.
- C) "And have done wickedly," in our rebellion against God.

Daniel adds to this "by departing from Thy precepts and from Thy judgments." We have turned aside. There is a climax in this confession. It is written in a form that emphasizes action.

What is remarkable is that Daniel does not say *they* have sinned but *we*. He identifies himself with his people. He does not stand above them. How is that with us? Are we convinced that our countries are turning farther from the right path of obedience, from the sovereign Lord and

Creator? We may, indeed, weep because of the condition of our land and church. However, do we confess that *we* have committed iniquity? Have *we*, under the low-hanging clouds of God's judgment, learned to bow under Him and make a heart-felt confession like Daniel did?

The guilt of the people becomes greater since God had sent the prophets to them to reveal His will. In spite of their clear testimonies, however, the people rebel. There is so much sin, not of ignorance, but of willful disobedience.

He then mentions a contrast when he says that "the Lord is righteous," which is manifested in His dealings with Israel. He sent them His prophets who warned them of sin, and particularly, He sent the exile as a punishment of God. Daniel declares God to be just, but to the people belong "confusion of faces." Shame should cover them because of the consciousness of punishment which is so well deserved. Therefore, they are driven into exile and scattered through the countries. Daniel says it was "because of their trespass that they have trespassed against Thee."

This is the situation which Daniel describes in his prayer "as at this day," that is, as the present circumstances exemplify. The entire nation has been guilty of faithless dealing toward God. It is a tragic confession when we consider that Israel was to be a light to all the world. This prayer is not a complaint about the cruel oppressors of Babel, about their ungodliness, their destruction of the city and killing many people, and leading so many into exile. Daniel is included, but he may say that the Lord is right in all His ways and works.

He speaks as the thief on the cross, "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our

deeds," or as Micah, "I will bear the indignation of the LORD, because I have sinned against Him." It was a prayer in evil and discouraging times, just as it is in our day. Israel was led into exile, the temple had been destroyed, the altars had been removed, no sacrifice could be brought, and the city of Jerusalem was in ruins. Yet, there is no complaint in Daniel's prayer about the heaviness of God's dealings but a bowing under Him. That is, generally, what is missing in our days, also in the churches, this true confession including self and agreeing with God. When sin really becomes sin for us, there will be sorrow and true humiliation, for sin is:

- 1) Alienation—a departing from God.
- 2) Hatred—the carnal mind is enmity against Him.
- 3) Contempt—it looks down upon God's sacred precepts.
- 4) Defiance—it boldly resists God and ridicules all penal consequences.
- 5) Rebellion—it breaks the bonds and ignores submission.
- 6) Treason—it joins hands with God's adversaries.

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7) Robbery—it defrauds God of His due, for He has a right to our obedience.

Daniel may have a precious place in this prayer. May it be our petition also to be brought in the same place as a penitent beggar.

### God's mercy

The sinfulness of the people has been honestly confessed, but Daniel may plead upon divine compassion, verse 9. He says "To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses." These words are placed in the plural form which denotes intensity in the manifestation or the continued exercise in the qualities of those attributes. That is his hope. That is the only hope for a guilty people. God will not show mercy at the expense of His justice. He will not be moved to compassion because of the miserable condition in which Israel and we are, by nature. He speaks not only of mercies or compassions but also of forgiveness.

Daniel may speak of Him who will come in the fullness of time to pay for all the robberies, the rebellion, and the wickedness of sinners. Indeed, Daniel speaks unto a great and dreadful God, who is holy and just, but this same God is also gracious and may grant unto them forgiveness. Daniel is pleading upon God's name, His attributes, His mercy. He does not ask for deliverance but for forgiveness of their sins and that the Lord may remember His covenant. That is what the publican pleaded when he said, "God be merciful to me a sinner." That is what the Canaanitish woman prayed: "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David."

God is the Father of all mercies, and there is forgiveness for the sake of His Son, the Mediator. Mercy is having a burning heart to show compassion, undeserved goodness, and love towards a people in misery. God is rich in mercy; the Apostle Paul says His mercy endureth forever. His mercy reacheth unto the heavens. It is the pleading of the poet in Psalm 85:7, "Shew us Thy mercy, O LORD, and grant us Thy salvation."

All God's attributes must be exalted and magnified. We need mercy and forgiveness. A Remedy is provided, a Refuge is erected; Christ has suffered, the Just for the unjust. Christ is the unspeakable gift of God's love; Christ is the treasure-house in which forgiveness is stored. He is the Mediator, the Surety for guilty ones. The poet says in Psalm 130:3, "If Thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" He could also speak of the wonder of grace, "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared." It is the hope and pleading ground for unworthy sinners, and Daniel may wrestle with his God, that He might turn to them in mercy and restore them. We often hear about pleading upon the promises. This is the true pleading from the dust of self-abasement, completely agreeing with God in His Justice, but, by faith, taking hold of His Word and what He has promised. That is what the Canaanitish woman has done. Christ has spoken of bread for the dogs. There is bread, and that is what she must have, even as a little dog. Do you know such pleading? Have you been truly humbled before God? They will not be ashamed who wait for Him. □

*(To be continued)*



## *From Our Inheritance*

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### After Easter

*Rev. A.F. Honkoop (1921-2008)*

(An excerpt from a sermon on the Heidelberg Catechism, Lord's Day 17)

### The fountain of a new life

That new life has its beginning with the rebirth. Even the smallest one in Zion shall be a partaker of that new life—a new life which is placed in the heart by God. Jesus said, "Because I live, ye shall live also." With Him, the Church is raised up to a new life. That new life cannot remain hidden.

It reveals itself, just to mention something about it, in a love towards God. Oh, examine yourself. Do you also know the moments—perhaps you would not want anyone else to know it—that your heart sings of it?

*I love the Lord, the fount of life and grace;  
He hears my voice, my cry and supplication,  
Inclines His ear, gives strength and consolation;  
In life, in death, my heart will seek His face.*

It is that new life which causes us to seek God because we can no longer be without Him. We can no longer live without God. Sometimes it causes us to sing:

*My thirsty soul longs earnestly,  
Yea, faints Thy holy courts to see  
'Mid festal throngs and music swelling.  
My heart and flesh cry out to God,  
To Him I spread my hands abroad.*

That new life which brings with it love for God, love for His people, and love for His statutes, will also be accompanied with a hatred of sin. What God now lays in the heart at the beginning shall take root and develop. If it is real, that new life will reveal itself more and more. That new life which wants to live for God and which will hate sin is an

ongoing matter in the life of God's people. If we are missing that life, it is a reason which should lead us to a serious examination. However poor and miserable His people may be in themselves, it will become the practice of their life that they can bring forth no good, but their life is with Christ.

Oh, it is true, here below life remains a striving against the world and sin. It will be the experience that our flesh has been sold unto sin. Oh, how it can grieve us when we experience that sin has such control over our life. How often must God's people complain about their unfaithfulness and lovelessness. Oh, that there can be such a denial of the Lord, that there can be such an upbuilding of self, such a seeking of our own honor. Note, here is not written "Raised in our own strength," for if that were the case, it would be a lost cause.

If we would have to overcome sin, it would be eternally impossible. On the other hand, we are raised by His power to a new life. It is the strength which Jesus will make perfect in weakness. It has caused the Apostle Paul to call out, "When I am weak, then am I strong." The more we die to self, the weaker we become. The blinder we are, the more foolish in self we will be. Therefore, the experience of the soul will be more glorious when it is raised in His strength to a new life.

God's people may, through faith, look upon Him who has conquered death and who sits at the right hand of God to the welfare of His people. We are constrained by the time. How gladly we would like to speak to you about what the life of God's Church may be. How poor and miserable they may be in self, yet it shall become their experience that though they can bring forth nothing good, their life is in Christ. In and of themselves they are nothing. They die daily so that they may live out of Christ. The Apostle Paul writes, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless, I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

That is the true life; that is the real life. That is the life which causes us to triumph in all strife and difficulty. That is the life which causes us to look to Above, in the knowledge that the resurrection of Christ is a certain pledge of our blessed resurrection. Let us sing of it from Psalm 89:1 (Psalter 422:1):

*My mouth shall sing for aye Thy tender mercies, Lord;  
To every age will I Thy faithfulness record;  
I know how firm and sure Thy wondrous grace  
is founded,  
Established in the skies by love that is unbounded;  
As Thy celestial throne shall never sway, no never,  
So shall Thy truth endure forever and forever. □*

## Pentecost

*Rev. I. Kievit (1887-1954)*

***"And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications"*** (Zechariah 12:10a).

**I**t is Pentecost, the fiftieth day following Easter. While the people of Israel remembered at Easter their departure from Egypt, at Pentecost, they recalled the giving of the law at Sinai. Both of these feasts also had a connection to the occurrences in nature. On the day of Easter, the first fruits of the barley harvest were brought, and fifty days later the finely ground wheat flour had been gathered into the barns. Therefore, for Israel, Pentecost was also the feast of the completed harvest.

It was also fifty days after Easter that at the Jewish Feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit was poured out according to the Lord's promise. This pouring out could only happen after the Lord Jesus was glorified in His resurrection and His sitting at the right hand of His Father.

The basis of the benefit of Pentecost is that it is a godly deed. "I will pour out"...ah, if that were not the case, then

there would be no hope for a child of Adam, for we lie in the midst of death and refuse to be converted.

"I will..."—there is no escaping this mighty word of grace. The hardness of our heart, our aversion to the way of grace, cannot hinder God's deed, but it shall surely show and spread its godly character. An aversion to God and Christ is a bitter evil. It will work in us death eternal for sin; it is the cause of the judgment. That bitter evil we find not only in the world but also in the church, for many of the hearts are those of unbelievers. We have brought Christ to the cross and called out "Away with Him." He who has not learned this does not know his heart, nor does he know the gospel. No, by nature, our condition is not good.

"I will..."—moved by an unshakeable love and unbreakable faithfulness, the Lord speaks, "I will be Surety for My people."

"I will pour out...the spirit of grace and supplications." This pouring out speaks of an overabundance. Not only His gifts but His Spirit itself is poured out. This text speaks especially about the mighty workings of the poured-out Spirit in the congregation on Pentecost. We see the acts of

the Trinity working toward the one purpose of glorifying itself and the salvation of sinners.

The Spirit works in communion with the Father and the Son. Pentecost places us before the threefold essence of God. When the Spirit which is sent by the Father breaks down our soul, the Father is therein glorified, and the Son is exalted, for this is the way which leads to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

The Lord Himself calls the Holy Ghost the Spirit of grace and supplications. What does that mean? What is the relationship between grace, prayer, and the Spirit? The Spirit testifies of grace. He is the work Master of grace, and He causes us to enjoy that grace. In like manner the Spirit also works prayer.

Of course, the work of the Spirit can have a distinguishing character. The Spirit testifies of godly grace. Grace is the benefit which is given instead of what we have deserved. Let that difference in the administration be enlightened with that which happened on Pentecost. The disciples were together in one accord. The Spirit therefore testified of the grace of the Ascension found in their souls. The Spirit awakened the faith; it was for their benefit that Jesus had gone up to the

Father. They experienced grace by means of the Spirit, and they knew the grace. They glorified the grace of God in Christ, for they were praising and thanking God.

The Spirit of grace was at the same time the Spirit of prayer, for also their praises belonged to their prayers. These all continued in prayer and supplication. Rich grace was glorified in their souls. That is why their prayers and thanksgiving overflowed.

Now that Spirit is poured out, it becomes Pentecost. The Spirit was with them, but now it would be in them. It must therefore be clear that Pentecost brings an administration of the Spirit which is richer because of the indwelling in the heart and not just to be with them. The relationship becomes more intimate, and not only that, but it also opens more deeply

the treasures of godly grace.

This is the Spirit of grace and supplications which was poured out. In this manner the disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. This Spirit does His work in the hearts now as the indwelling Comforter who remains with them eternally and dwells in them. Do you know something of this life? □

*The Spirit works in communion with the Father and the Son. Pentecost places us before the threefold essence of God. When the Spirit which is sent by the Father breaks down our soul, the Father is therein glorified, and the Son is exalted, for this is the way which leads to Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.*



## *Doctrinal Studies*

### **How God's Attributes Are Commonly Distinguished (2)**

*Rev. J. Fraanje (1878-1949)*

(Taken from the August 1971 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

#### **Notes out of the catechism classes of Rev. J. Fraanje**

**W**e continue with Rev. J. Fraanje's instruction on God's attribute of Independency.

The devil began ages ago to place the image of *independency* before man—being as God, knowing good and evil. That charms the poor soul. It entices him to be free from God, loose from all ties and, thus, through desire for independency becomes eternally shackled to sin and death. Do you see now how the devil was a liar “from the beginning,” just as Jesus said? In addition, he confirmed his lies with an oath when he said, “God knows.”

When there is a celebration in our cities and villages, the people, oftentimes, make a gateway of ferns and flowers and place beautifully colored lettering, saying this or that, amongst them. Boys and girls, just as these pretty gateways of gold or orange letters entice your heart to go to the feast and you find it so nice that you cannot resist, so it was, figuratively speaking, in Paradise. The devil erected a gate-

way in Paradise and placed the word *Independency* over the top of it.

This was the allurement or decoy, through which men were made Satan's captive listeners. By our actions, at that time, we renounced the Lord and implied that He was lying in His command that we thought withheld freedom from us. We want to be in God's place ourselves, knowing all things, good and evil. We want to remove ourselves from the obedience of His command. So, the devil obtained his purpose, at least in this respect, that man fell from the favor of God.

If we were ever dependent upon God, then, surely, it is after the Fall. Do you not believe that, too? It is because of our desire to elevate ourselves still higher than we were when created in God's image that we fell to an inexpressible depth. So now, we are dependent upon God for the smallest of our needs, even if we do not acknowledge Him for them.

We have now mentioned a few things concerning man's dependency.

Would you say the angels are also dependent? I am referring now to the good or predestined angels, not the fallen angels which are today devils. Yes, the perfect spirits attending the throne in heaven as well as the evil angels in hell are all dependent upon God. We read throughout God's Word that the good angels are ministering spirits, who by God's command are excluded from sin. They are dependent upon Him in their service to Him before His holy countenance.

Concerning the evil angels: We read in Mark 5 when Jesus met a man "possessed" (a person possessed is one in whom the devil has such great influence, that he is totally under his command), He released him from the devils that were in him. The evil spirits begged Jesus not to torment them before the appointed time. They knew the Lord Jesus had power over them. They knew, also, that it was not yet the Day of Judgment. That is why they said, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?" Yet, they were submissive to Him because they waited for His permission to go into the swine and showed thereby their dependence on Him.

The second incommunicable attribute is called the Simplicity of God. Hellenbroek explains this briefly: That all in God is one, without composition of different parts. Deuteronomy 6:4, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord." This simplicity is not meant to be the opposite of pride as when we call a humble person a simple person. No, it means, here, a oneness in God without different parts.

The third incommunicable attribute is called Eternity. The word eternity is used in two different senses in God's Word. Sometimes eternity means the eternity with a beginning but without an end. Sometimes it is spoken of as

having no beginning and no end. Respecting the divine Being, eternity is expressed in Psalm 90, "From everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God." There is, therefore, neither a beginning nor an end. Eternity is, as such, an incommunicable attribute of God.

As the Church speaks of it in Psalm 89, namely, "I will sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever;" there is a beginning to that eternity. It will begin directly after natural death. Accordingly, God's children shall enter into eternity with eternal bliss that will never end. On the other hand, there will also be a beginning of eternity for the unconverted. That will be a dreadful eternity, namely, eternally abandoned of God. After death, whether in eternal bliss or in eternal wretchedness, there will be no succession of time as there is here, just as there is neither succession nor end of time with the Lord. Do you know where you can prove that to me from God's Word? *Answer:* 2 Peter 3:8, "That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day."

The catechism proceeds now with the question, "Where is God?" *Answer:* God is present everywhere. This is an attribute called Omnipresence and is the 4th incommunicable attribute. Evidence of this attribute is clear in Jeremiah 23:24, "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? saith the Lord. Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." This attribute Omnipresence (being present everywhere), is not only to be understood of His operations but also of His essence (His actual being) because He works by virtue of His essence.

Oh, boys and girls, do you ever think about this fact that the Lord is always present at every place in this world? He can see you anywhere and anytime even though you are in remote places. He is an all-knowing and all-seeing God. ◻

*(To be continued)*

## John Bunyan's Dying Sayings About Prayer

**B**efore you enter into prayer, ask thy soul these questions:

1. To what end, O my soul, art thou retired into this place? Art thou not come to discourse the Lord in prayer? Is He present; will He hear thee? Is He merciful; will He help thee? Is thy business slight; is it not concerning the welfare of thy soul? What words wilt thou use to move Him to compassion?

2. To make thy presentation complete, consider: that thou art but dust and ashes and He the great God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ that clothes Himself with light as with a garment; that thou art a vile sinner, and He is a holy God; that thou art but a poor crawling worm, and He is the omnipotent Creator. In all your prayers, forget not to thank the Lord for His mercies.

3. When thou prayest, rather let thy heart be without words than thy words without a heart. Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin will entice a man to cease from prayer. The spirit of prayer is more precious than treasures of gold and silver. Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.



## *Biblical Lifestyle*

### **The School of Prayer**

*Rev. J.M. Kleppe (1930-2020)*

**“Lord, teach us to pray”** (Luke 11:1b).

**I**n God’s Word the Lord often is referred to as One who hears prayer. God hears the young ravens crying, the hart panting, the cattle groaning, and the ground mourning; will He, then, not also hear the soul that cries to Him, albeit only with a sigh?

Prayer is something wonderful and delicate; it is rightfully called the breath of the soul. Actually, prayer (the inner and hidden dealings one has with the Lord) reveals the most intimate feelings of the soul and unlocks the secrets of the heart. Is it not a wonder that from out of the depth of our lost state there is still a way to heaven? What a wonder it is that persons may pray; we may fold our hands, close our eyes, and bend our knees, regardless of the circumstances in our life. We cannot understand it, but the Lord Himself says to a fallen one—one who was created in the image of God, “And call upon Me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify Me.”

For an upright seeker, for one who truly desires God’s honor, the way to Above is always open. It makes no difference what time it is: be it early in the morning or late in the evening, in the middle of the day or in the middle of the night. He may go even when it is dark as night for his soul or when he is experiencing much strife and only can sigh as Asaph, “How doth God know? And is there knowledge in the most High?” Even though the Lord does not answer immediately, He certainly hears when one calls out, “My heart cries out for Thee; my spirit thirsts Thy grace to taste.” This is still possible only because of Christ, the Altar of Incense in the heavenly court above, who stands before the face of His Father and intercedes for those whom the Father has given Him.

“Lord, teach us to pray.” This request was made when the disciples had heard the Lord Jesus pray. There is no better school of prayer; Christ’s whole life was a picture of prayer; praying was His life. During the day He often separated Himself to pray in the wilderness. At night upon a mountain, He sought His Father’s countenance. As He suffered He prayed. On the cross and in the Garden of Gethsemane He took the cup of sorrow from the Lord’s hand, saying, “Not My will, but Thine, be done.” He died praying, “Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit,” and now, being crowned with honor and glory, He continually prays for His people.

“Lord, teach us to pray.” There is not a better school of prayer than His. It is a school where a person is taught that he cannot pray and where the Lord’s children are taught that they need a prayer for a prayer. This instruction is given

not only when a person’s heart is so sealed that a prayer is not able to go out but also when the heavens are as brass and there is not a single prayer that can penetrate them. It is a school where also much prayer needs to be unlearned, namely, the selfish prayers that actually go against God’s honor and one’s own salvation. It is a school where, more and more, the Lord discovers to a person that his prayers regard only his own honor and his own existence.

In this school God’s children are never promoted but continually sent to a lower grade. The more experience they have in this school, the more knowledge they receive of themselves, and the more awe they have for such an extremely holy Being. This is a school from which they will never graduate here upon this earth; rather, they more and more need this great Teacher who prays for them when they no longer can find words wherewith to approach unto God. At this school students only can go lower; even Paul cried out, “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought.”

“Lord, teach us to pray.” Now, for such helpless ones, there is the Spirit of grace and supplication. Oh, when this Spirit stirs in them, it is He who actually prays with “groanings which cannot be uttered.” Then the soul bows deep into the dust and melts away before the high majesty of God and can only stammer, “Oh, Lord God.” The Spirit of prayer multiplies these words even if they were only stuttered, and thereby, this prayer becomes a true prayer before God. Thus, the prayers of the inner chamber only become more simple, more dependent, more childlike, and more unworthy to be heard. Yet, this is where prayer becomes so surprisingly easy; heaven then descends, for it is the Lord Himself who comes down; it is in such manner that the Lord is glorified by His own work.

The psalmist sang in Psalter 5:2b, “The Lord from out His holy hill gives answer when I cry.” He continues in Psalter 186:3, “The meek shall see it and rejoice, ye saints, no more be sad; for lo, Jehovah hears the poor and makes His pris’ners glad.”

True seekers will be heard at God’s time, and that is the best time. This is not because of prayer but upon prayer, for Jesus’ sake. With one accord they will sing with David:

*Blest be the Lord, for He hath showed,  
While giving me a safe abode,  
His love beyond compare;  
Altho’ His face He seemed to hide,  
He ever heard me when I cried,  
And made my wants His care,  
And made my wants His care.*

—Psalter 81:3 (Psalm 31) ◻



## *For Young and Old*

### **A Wild Hunter Captured (4) 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*)

**T**ill now, Titus Klose had carefully counteracted anything that might bring back these memories. However, when the time of love has come, nothing hinders the Lord's work; He then calls those who sit in darkness to His wonderful light. During the singing of Psalm 68, Klose's soul was cut asunder by the invisible God.

Deeply stirred, he stood and involuntarily bowed his head in prayer to which the preacher had invited his listeners. Likewise, Klose did not know what he heard. That calling of a deeply depressed soul for help and comfort to a God of salvation—not with dead-sounding and well-learned terms as though systematically learned—but in a feeling tone that is characteristic of a poor, needy, supplicating soul—that pleading of one hopeless in himself but expecting all grace and love from a merciful God, touched deeply into the conscience of the wild hunter.

When the preacher read his text: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in there at: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it"—when he in the light of the Spirit—for which he had asked the Lord—sketched the dreadful loss of a soul which perishes forever, and the unspeakable joy of a soul eternally saved—then the adversary became wholly unarmed, and the lion changed to a lamb, who, standing on the brink of perdition, cried to the Lord.

Silent, with cast down eyes and amazed with himself, he walked from the church after the services and longingly desired the evening, at which time the preacher would again appear. The preacher's text at this service was, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock." These words completed what was still missing and impressed Titus deeply. When the services were ended, Klose decided not to go home before he had related to the preacher the feeling of his heart.

Tired and wet from the rain, the preacher Annear arrived at his home. His wife awaited him with dry clothing and after being refreshed by the comforts she had prepared for him, she said with an inward feeling of love, "Truly, did it not go better than you expected? I sought the Lord's countenance continually for you."

"Thou art a good wife," answered the preacher. "Thou art a good, faithful helper for me. I am foolish, but the Lord has given you wisdom. I have preached today with an exceptional liveliness for myself. When I ascended the pulpit, my spirit awoke to new strength during prayer. But..." The preacher sighed and a tear came to his eye.

"But," said his wife, "Are you still dissatisfied? Is there still grief?"

"For myself," answered the preacher, "I have had a blessing, but was there one listening to whom it was a savor of life?" Again, his wife tried to convince him of his unfounded grief when the maid came to inform that Titus Klose wished to speak to the preacher.

"Titus Klose!" they both exclaimed. "What brings him here?"

"And in such weather!" said his wife. "He must have a very urgent message."

"I do not trust the matter," said the preacher, "it is probably another trick he intends to play with his comrades, but let him come in the house." The unexpected and much feared guest appeared promptly. Dressed in his raincoat and bearskin hat, he did not look appealing. The preacher's wife invited him to have a seat while she anxiously kept her eye on her husband for fear that Klose would do him harm.

"The reason I have come," began Klose, meanwhile removing his hat, "will probably startle you, most honorable preacher, but you can be no more startled and surprised than I, who would have thought it absolute nonsense if someone assured me this morning that I would pay you a visit before this day was past. I do not believe that I have to introduce myself to you, my name being well known in his countryside. In spite of this, I am obliged that you should hear this from my own mouth. I am..." and here he became filled with emotion and tears came to his eyes, in so much that he momentarily ceased speaking. "I am a great sinner, yes, the greatest of sinners. There, that is all I can say for myself. I have been that from my youth, but it was not until today that it was revealed to me, and I feel and am convicted thereof, and I must confess it to others.

"My comrades and I had planned this morning—forgive me this wickedness—to go to your church to hinder you in the work of the Lord, but God fought for you with storm and thunder so that my comrades could not come, and I went my way alone. There, as I say it with amazement, there is where the Lord wanted me alone, so nothing would be in the way to stir up the work, not even Satan. I heard you pray and preach, and God used your words as a hammer to break my hard, stony heart. Beloved preacher, I am deeply grieved about myself. You pictured to me the deep abyss on the edge of which I stood and my soul on the verge of utter destruction. I also saw that I had plagued an almighty, righteous God who has blessed me since my youthful days. This distresses me very much. Oh, that I may be saved

from the wrath to come! You mentioned a number of times in your sermon today that the Lord has no desire in my death; that He wishes to save me, a lost sinner, and that

Jesus came into the world to seek and to save all those that are lost. Oh, that is wonderful—but—beyond my comprehension; I dare not believe it. ☐

*(To be continued)*



## Questions & Answers

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### Questions from Our Readers

*Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI*

*Why are wedding services open to all members of the congregation and not just to those directly invited to the wedding and reception? Should we all endeavor to go to more wedding services even if we are not invited and are not considered family or close friends?*

As Netherlands Reformed Congregations we strive to maintain biblical church structures and seek as much as possible to operate within the confines of the Church Order of Dordt. Broader ecclesiastical assemblies like Classis and Synod seek to give direction at times so that all things are done decently and in order (1 Corinthians 14:40). However, as a denomination we also have our historical and cultural roots, some of which have tentacles reaching the Reformed Congregations (Gereformeerde Gemeenten) across the ocean. As far as I can see, the issue raised, along with several more questions attached to the matter in question, has to do with both our historical and cultural roots. According to our Church Order of Dort (article 70), a wedding is an official church service and not merely a ceremony. This has to do with the way a wedding in Holland usually takes place. The formal marriage vows as well as the legal solemnization of the marriage do not take place in church but before the civil magistrate, in other words, before the government of the land. Couples married in the city hall then have the choice to have their vows publicly confirmed before the Lord in an official worship service in the church where they are (baptized) members. Assuming faithful church membership, it will be no question if the ceremony at the city hall is followed by an official wedding service in church.

Uncertainty arises when we try to apply this blueprint across cultural boundaries and transfer whatever is possible to our cultures on this side of the ocean. To a certain extent, there are similarities, e.g., when we consider that in North America the officiating minister is considered as the authority officiating at a wedding on behalf of the civil government. At any rate, a wedding service is still, among us, performed per request of the couple, approved by the consistory, announced to the congregation twice for lawful objections, and attended by consistory members who are available.

Because it is an official church service, the church is open for attendance by the whole congregation. It is an official church service, often complete with votum and blessing, normal liturgy, and collection. Why miss such a service if you are available? Practically speaking, this obviously does not mean that the whole congregation can or will attend because weddings are held during the week, at any given time. It is not expected that every member would take off from work for this as we normally would expect with a Prayer Day or Thanksgiving Day service.

Now, to your point in question, perhaps because the Bible clearly speaks of *invited* (!) guests, it is understandable that there have come different customs because of different cultural contexts. Some may argue that a wedding is a family and friends affair and should not be attended by others. I will not deny that a wedding may be a family and close friends affair but at the same time will maintain that it is an official church service and as such is open to those who wish to attend. There is nothing wrong with showing our interest, love, or concern, as well as our involvement in and with the local congregation where we are member, even if we are not invited to the reception afterward.

The churches in Canada have adopted the approach of a church wedding service, but in the United States the wedding has remained more a mix between ceremony and official service. This simply has developed over time. However, to resort to a beach or backyard wedding versus a church wedding I hope I have made it clear that the former is not to be done. Some have argued that in the Bible weddings did not take place in the temple either. That may be true, but whatever is bound to the formal administration of God's Word, including the sacraments, belongs in the official worship service of the church. Our fathers, because of fear for superstitious activity and beliefs did not consider a funeral to be an official worship service, but because of the same fears and arguments, I would still rather conduct a funeral in the church than in the funeral home nowadays.

Having performed numerous weddings in several different countries and continents, my personal opinion is that it is desirable to have denominational-wide uniformity in

this. I doubt somewhat whether this is feasible. Hence, it is important that each consistory has its rules in place and enforces them. At a minimum, I would say that an office bearer is present and that the congregation is at least *invited* to attend. After all, it is a member of the church who is getting married.

While on this subject, I have noticed to my dismay in recent years that more and more people do not attend the church service but do show up at the reception afterward. I find this a sad and painful development, and I believe an exhortation is in place to not follow this trend, regardless of the day and time of the wedding.

In closing, God's Word speaks of several wedding feasts. Some stress the invitation and subsequent refusal to attend (e.g., Matthew 22 and Luke 14). The other refers to the

beginning of the miracles of Christ. John 2 relates how Jesus and His disciples were called to the wedding, and Christ manifested forth His glory. Ultimately, that is what must count and be implored on every wedding, is it not? Never do we read that the Lord Jesus turned down an invitation to visit. Sadly, on the contrary, we do read that *His invitations* were and are still turned down. Now, where the presence of Christ is truly desired, would you and I not want to be present there as well? Whether or not we attend the reception afterward is far more subservient to the first part of the wedding, the administration of the Word of God, I would think. ☐

Please send your questions to Rev. H. Hofman, 112 Pratt Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49001, or [hofman@premieronline.net](mailto:hofman@premieronline.net).

## Curatorium Announcement

It is with some hesitation that we make an announcement this year as a Curatorium. As circumstances remain uncertain, the Curatorium does not have firm confidence about the ability to meet in the near future due to the restrictions surrounding the pandemic. On the other hand, it has been a long time since we have had our last meeting to examine our present students and extend an invitation for persons to be heard, respecting entrance into our theological school. For this reason, with a hope for timely relief, though we have not yet actually set a date for a meeting, we would like to invite any who may receive an attest from their Consistory to make an application to appear and explain how they believe the Lord has dealt with their soul and called them to the holy office of the ministry. Once a date is set for the Curatorium to meet, it will be communicated to the Consistories.

We hear the Bride inquire, in Solomon's Song, "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest, where Thou makest Thy flock to rest at noon: for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of Thy companions?" (Song of Solomon 1:7). The desires of a living soul cannot but go out after that nourishment by which alone it can continue to exist, and after that truth by which it receives true rest in all its trials and afflictions. By experience she fears the wanderings of her heart after flocks to whom she does not belong, and do not belong to Christ, and feels her need for continual guidance and drawing from Him whom her soul truly loveth. There is no soul-refreshment so necessary and profitable in all her tribulations as what proceeds from Him who gently leads His sheep to drink abundantly of the pure river of water of life and to feed in the fruitful pastures of free and sovereign grace. "Tell me, O Thou whom my soul loveth, where Thou feedest."

"If thou know not, O thou fairest among women, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock, and feed thy kids beside the shepherds' tents" (Song of Solomon 1:8). Though she sees in herself nothing but blackness, He deems His Church the fairest among women and directs her to no new inventions but to those public ordinances ordained of old wherein His shepherds continue to faithfully tend His flock, especially keeping the kids close to their tents. There are none of the entire flock who do not depend upon this holy ordinance of the Lord both for their nourishment and protection from the wolves—blessed ordinance and blessed shepherds, both in the eyes of the sheep and in the eyes of Him who calls, sends, and qualifies them to gather and feed His flock, that they may be herded at last to the right hand of Him that sitteth on the throne, to be led by the Great Shepherd into the eternal pastures of the land that floweth with milk and honey, that good land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills.

If the soul of a man is drawn and compelled by the Spirit of that Great Shepherd to this blessed labor in His kingdom, he should lay that before his Consistory, who should then contact the clerk of the Curatorium. The applicant should also forward his own request to the clerk, asking to be heard. Vacant congregations should seek the aid of their moderator in these matters, and all information should be submitted as soon as possible.

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

Address of the clerk of the Curatorium:  
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## Current Events

### California's Strange New Class Curriculum Proposals

The California Department of Education has proposed an ethnic studies “model curriculum” that includes chanting the names of Aztec gods and other strange things to build unity among schoolchildren. The curriculum was just one of many diversity programs to gain attention in recent months. Much of its language and content bears resemblance to other programs that have been associated with critical race theory—a controversial way of analyzing identity that has been the subject of intense debate. The California curriculum’s introduction argued that the program would help marginalized groups by affirming their identities and contributions in our society.

—FoxNews.com

### Canada's Religious Freedom in Decline

Canada’s first and only religious freedom ambassador, Andrew Bennett, warns that even though Canadians are not subjected to religious persecution, like in China or Iran, there’s been a gradual erosion of religious freedom which he finds concerning. “It’s been a slow process, but it’s manifesting itself more clearly in our present time, in a variety of different ways,” he said. “There is a ‘narrowing’ of religious freedom that manifests in areas such as conscience rights, where legislative changes being made don’t include provisions to allow the faithful to adhere to their deeply held beliefs. Society also has a ‘narrow understanding’ of what religious freedom is, relegating freedom to what happens within the walls of a designated place of worship.” Bennett continued, “I can’t separate my public self from my religious self. Religion throughout human history has been expressed publicly.”

—TheEpochTimes.com

### Situation in Nigeria Continues to Worsen

Catholics in Nigeria have buried many priests and believers killed in their country’s brutal conflict but this month they witnessed the first funeral of a seminarian. An 18-year-old died urging his attackers to repent and forsake their evil ways. The conflict has claimed many Christians and even Muslims opposed to the violence. In a sobering February 23 statement, the Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria warned that the “nation is falling apart.” Conditions could quickly get worse, the bishops said, because the “clamor for self-defense is fast gaining ground. Many ethnic champions are loudly beating the drums of war, calling not only for greater autonomy but even for outright opting out of a nation in which they have lost all trust. Calls for secession on an ethnic basis from many quarters should not be ignored or taken lightly.”

—KnoxNews.com

### Conflict and Persecution in Congo Ongoing

Suspected Islamist attackers killed three soldiers and thirteen civilians and burnt down a church in a raid on a village in Democratic Republic of Congo’s northeast. The attackers opened fire when they entered the village of Ndalya on a Sunday morning. It was not clear who carried out the attack, although a spokesman blamed the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan armed group active in eastern Congo since the 1990s. The group killed about 850 people last year, according to U.N. figures. Eastern Congo borders with Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, which are home to more than 100 different militias. *(There have been decades of ongoing persecution in Congo even though it is estimated that 95 percent of the population are Christian. —Ed.)*

—Reuters.com

### Renewed Hope for Christians in Sudan but Slow Progress

A Sudanese Christian leader was beaten in February after protesting the burning of a church building. According to sources he was beaten, handcuffed, blindfolded and detained by national security personnel. He was released from detainment after a few hours. He was attacked after speaking out against the burning of The Sudanese Church of Christ. That marked the ninth church since 2019 to be incinerated by Islamic extremists. Sudan was listed as the 13th most difficult country in which to be a Christian. The 90% Muslim nation, known for its strict adherence to Sharia law and persecution of Christians, is currently undergoing a change in government structure due to the removal of its dictator in 2019. While Christians have renewed hope for expressing their beliefs, they need our continued support as the government solidifies new regulations for its people.

—Persecution.org

### U.S. Equality Act (H.R. 5) Is No Act of Equality

The proposed Equality Act (H.R. 5) turns sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) into protected classes under the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1968 Fair Housing Act. The bill creates obvious liberty, equality, privacy, and safety concerns. H.R. 5 would empower the federal government to impose civil and criminal punishments on citizens who dissent from SOGI ideology, including medical professionals, parents, women and girls, businesses, and charities. The bill would violate their rights to freedom of conscience, religion, and speech. The bill would also take away basic authorities of local communities to determine who is allowed in single-sex facilities and whether biological men and boys are allowed to join women’s and girls’ sports teams.

—Heritage.org

### Democrats Introduce Bill for Federal Tax-Funded Abortions

Tax-funded abortion for “every person” in America is the goal of a new bill. A coalition of leading Democrats introduced a bill in March that would repeal existing law and require taxpayer-funding of abortion, making it a federal policy to “ensure access to abortion services” for every American. The bill, known as the Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Healthcare (EACH) Act, would repeal current restrictions on federal funding of abortion. It also would end the Hyde Amendment, a historically bipartisan provision dating to the 1970s that prohibits any federal funds from being used for abortions. Until President Biden took office, it had been supported by every Republican and Democratic president. The sponsors of this bill framed the issue as one of equality because they claim the Hyde Amendment limits low-income people and women of color from obtaining an abortion. Republicans told House Speaker Nancy Pelosi they won’t support any budget bill that does not include the Hyde Amendment. They also stated that the Hyde Amendment is still popular in public opinion.

—ChristianHeadlines.com

I ask whether you pray because there is no duty in religion so neglected as private prayer.

—J.C. Ryle



# Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

## **The Confession of Faith** (17) **Article XXIII: Of Justification** (continued)

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

Before we go on to the next article of the Confession which speaks of sanctification, we want to return to an expression which we made in the previous articles regarding describing differences held by the English and Scottish theologians, on the one hand, and the rest of the Western European theologians on the other.

In my first article about justification I wrote, “In some of the English writers we do not find this description in the same way as we do in the Dutch writers of the past. However, the most important matter is, of course, what God’s Word says of it.” In the following article we wrote, “He, (that is Christ) was justified in His resurrection and in Him the entire Church is justified. We may even go further because the justification is also from eternity in the decrees of God, as Paul expresses it in 2 Timothy 1:9b, “Grace, which was given unto us [the elect] in Christ Jesus before the world began.” It means that the elect are justified from eternity in the decree of God and also in the resurrection of Christ.

To explain our statements, we will quote a few writers and their different opinions to show what the real differences are. The Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter XI, Section IV) states, “God did from all eternity, decree to justify all the elect; (Galatians 3:8; 1 Peter 2:19&20, Romans 8:30): and Christ did, in fullness of time, die for their sins, and rise again for their justification. Nevertheless, they are not justified until the Holy Spirit doth in due time actually apply Christ unto them.” Robert Shaw says of this: “They are not actually and formally justified until they are vitally united to Christ by faith.” In Thomas Watson’s *Body of Divinity*, we also read about justification. He says, “Are we justified from eternity? No, for by nature we are under a sentence of condemnation (John 3:18). We could never have been condemned if we were justified from eternity. The Scripture confines justification to those who believe and repent. ‘Repent ye therefore, and

be converted, that your sins may be blotted out’ (Acts 3:19a). Therefore, their sins were not cancelled, and their persons remained unjustified, until they did repent. Though God does not justify us because of our repentance, yet He does not do so without it. The Antinomians erroneously maintain that we are justified from eternity. This doctrine is a key which opens up the door to all licentiousness; for what sins do they not care to commit, as long as they maintain that they are ‘ab eterno’ (justified from eternity) whether they repent or not.” Thus far our quote from Thomas Watson.

When I read the explanation of the same Westminster Confession by Isaac Chauncy, he begins by saying that it is as an antidote against the errors of the Antinomians. He says (translated), “When is a sinner justified? From eternity God has justified the elect sinner in Himself by an eternal in-staying (inblijvende—remaining in) deed, for Christ is an eternal Surety for sin, by which guarantee saints are justified before His coming in the flesh; the elect are also justified in His resurrection (Romans 4:25; 2 Corinthians 5:19; 1 Corinthians 15:14,21&22; Acts 2:24).”

Professor K. Dyk writes in the *Christian Encyclopedia* about justification, and the first thing which he writes about is the justification from eternity. “From eternity God has considered the elect in Christ and He saw them just in their Surety.” This belongs, he says, to the doctrine of God’s decrees. In his *Systematic Theology*, Professor L. Berkhof gives several grounds for the doctrine of justification from eternity, but he also makes objections against it.

We will consider another book which was written by the brothers Erskine and Fisher. In question 64 they ask, “When does God justify the wicked? Although the Lord has decreed from eternity to justify all the elect, nevertheless they are not actually justified before the Holy Spirit, at the set time, applies Christ and His righteousness.” We also want to quote from Rev. G.H. Kersten in his *Dogmatics*, where he writes,

“Brakel, and also Comrie, Holtius, Brahe, and all sound theologians who speak of justification from eternity, all reject the God-dishonoring doctrine of the Antinomians (Volume II, page 182). We all believe that not one of these theologians go along with the Antinomians as time and again they condemn their doctrine. Furthermore, we can read on page 185 in the same volume that “not one of the Reformed theologians teaches that the actual justification takes place in the decree of God and in the resurrection of Christ.”

In addition to this, Rev. Kersten writes, “Not one Reformed theologian can deny the justification before faith, and that this is from eternity in the decrees of God. On which basis are the elect given by the Father to Christ? On the basis that the Lamb, to the perfect satisfaction of the profaned justice of God is slaughtered before the foundation of the world. Christ gave Himself as Surety for the debt of His people who were predestinated to salvation, and this Surety is accepted by the Father to the reconciliation of their sins. Thus, from eternity, in the making of the Covenant of Redemption, God’s justice is satisfied and the acquittal took place. The apostle says it clearly in 2 Corinthians 5:19a, ‘God was in Christ, reconciling

the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.’”

2 Timothy 1:9 also speaks of this, and the last time we also mentioned Romans 8:9-30. Here there is spoken of those who were foreknown by God, predestinated, and called; “whom He called, them He also justified: and whom He justified, them He also glorified.” They are now already glorified in Christ. All this is also necessary for us to become partakers of the grace which Christ has merited. The world passes away, and the pleasures thereof, but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

We have seen and read the different thoughts about this important subject of justification, and we must say that the Reformed fathers were not so far apart from one another as none spoke of an actual justification from eternity and in the resurrection of Christ but agreed that the actual justification is by faith. May our sins become such a burden to us that we come to a real need for that precious Mediator who gave Himself for His Church from eternity and in the fullness of time, and then to apply it in this time state.



## *Bible Stories for Little Ones*

### **Balaam and Barak** (1)

(Based on Numbers 22)

We know that the Lord had promised the children of Israel they were to live in the land of Canaan, and now He was leading them there. The way to the promised land was not easy, however. The people who lived there were not happy that strangers were coming to live or pass through in what they considered to be their land. Even when the children of Israel asked them very politely if they could pass through, the people refused.

You can well understand how these people felt. What do you think our reaction would be if a large group of people came into our country? Wouldn't we also become afraid? They might have plans to take us captive or even attempt to destroy us.

We, of course, know that God was with the children of Israel. He was going to give them the country which He had promised to them and which rightly belonged to them. Many of these people whose coun-

tries they were passing through wanted to fight with the Israelites.

The children of Israel continued to walk and walk until they came near the country of Moab. The king of Moab was afraid. He asked his men, “What can we do about these people? There are so many of them! They are doing awful things to the other countries and they defeat everyone they fight against.”

Then the king, whose name was Balak, had an idea. He sent messengers to a magician whose name was Balaam. Balaam was not a child of God, but he had heard of Him. Some people are of the opinion that Balaam was, at one time, a prophet of the Lord.

“Come and help me,” King Balak asked Balaam. “Help me to get rid of these people. Please come over and curse them because I have heard that whatever you curse really is cursed, and whatever you bless, really is blessed.”

Did Balaam say yes to the king's request right away? No, Balaam knew that he should first ask God what to do. "Stay here overnight," he said to the messengers of Balak. "Let me first find out what the Lord wants me to do."

That night Balaam spoke to God about the strange people whom Balak was asking him to curse. Of course, the Lord did not want Balaam to curse them. "Do not go with these men," God told him. "You cannot curse them because they are blessed."

King Balak was not happy when his messengers returned without Balaam. "Maybe he wants better presents," he thought, so he sent different messengers, very important ones, with numerous gifts for Balaam. Balaam still would not go with the men. "Even if the king gives me his entire house full of money, I cannot go to curse this people if God does not permit it. "But," he said, "stay here tonight, and I will ask God again."

This time God's answer was yes. "You may go with these men," God told Balaam, "but you may only say what I tell you to say and do what I tell you to do."

The next morning Balaam rose up early to go back with the messengers. Even though he had told the men he wanted to wait to hear what God would say, deep down in his heart he really wanted to curse the people and get a lot of money from the king. God was not pleased to see how greedy Balaam was for money, so He sent an angel to stand in Balaam's way to stop him. Balaam did not see the angel. Balaam was riding on a donkey, and that donkey did see the angel and was frightened.

God made animals at the time of Creation just like He made us. Animals, however, do not have a soul. There are times that animals are more afraid of their Creator than we are. They sense a special Presence in storms and tornadoes that we do not fear. When Balaam's donkey saw the angel, she tried to go around

him, but there was nowhere to go except into a field. This made Balaam angry. Why wasn't the donkey going the way she was supposed to go? He hit his donkey many times to bring her back on the road, but the angel again stood in the donkey's way.

This time there was a wall on either side of the path. There was no place for the donkey to go, but she had to keep going. Finally, she squeezed tightly against the wall, trying to get past the angel. Balaam became even angrier because his foot was injured from being scraped against the wall. Balaam hit the donkey again and again. Now the angel of the Lord moved so that the donkey could not get past him at all. All the donkey could do was to sink down on her knees under Balaam.

Balaam became furious. He continued to hit the donkey, and then—something very unusual happened. It was something, as far as we know, that had never happened before and, likely, has never happened again—the donkey began to talk. The donkey actually spoke to Balaam. (This really happened; it is written in the Bible which is God's Word, and everything written in it is true because God cannot lie. It was God who made the donkey talk.)

"What have I done to you that you hit me so many times?" asked the donkey.

Balaam was so angry that he did not even sound surprised to hear an animal talk! "You are acting so strangely," he said. "If I had a sword, I would kill you."

"Am I not your donkey?" she asked. "You have always ridden me, and I have always obeyed you. I have never caused trouble before, have I?"

"No," agreed Balaam, and then the Lord opened Balaam's eyes. Now Balaam saw the angel, and he saw the sword that would have killed him if he had kept going. He saw why the donkey had acted so strangely. Then Balaam fell down on his face and bowed.



*Balaam angrily beats his donkey.*



# Bible Quiz

## Caught

Dear Boys and Girls,

“Jamie!” Jess stomped her foot angrily and glared at her little brother. “You’re supposed to run away as fast as you can!”

Jamie planted his little mud boots sturdily and folded his arms. “I want to be ‘it,’” he declared, pushing out his lower lip.

Danny and Weston skidded to a halt, panting. Weston knelt in front of Jamie and tried to explain patiently. “Jamie, when you play tag, you have to try to NOT be caught. You shouldn’t stand in the way on purpose, okay?”

Jamie’s curly head bobbed up and down slowly, and the game resumed. Danny was ‘it,’ and the others ran away. Jess ran for the woods and Weston spurted towards the vegetable garden. Danny hesitated a moment, then he took off after Weston.

Jamie was jogging slowly toward the rabbit hutch, looking back every few steps. Was Danny coming his way? No, he wasn’t. Jamie liked to be ‘it.’ He wouldn’t be tagged unless he moved closer to where Danny was running. Jamie puffed out his rosy cheeks and took a quick glance at where Jess was. Maybe she wouldn’t notice if he just pretended that he happened to cross Danny’s path. Jamie veered away from the rabbit hutch and loped directly in front of Danny, who was running at top speed to catch Weston. Danny circled quickly around his little brother to avoid crashing into him, but Jamie pushed himself in front of Danny again, glowering. He wanted to be ‘it!’

Danny threw up his hands and laughed. Tapping Jamie on the shoulder, he gave in. “Okay, okay, Jamie, you’re ‘it,’ okay? You can’t be it every time though!”

Perhaps you have a little brother or sister who does this, or one who jumps out of his hiding spot during hide-and-seek and says, “Here I am, get me!” You are older than they are and understand that it is better to escape or be hidden than to be caught. However, you might also have times that you try hard to be in the way of something good. You might crowd others in line to try to be one of the first ones. Maybe it is a line of children waiting for their hot lunch at school. You are hungry, and the plate of brownies with the rainbow sprinkles will be the first to be empty. It could be a line of children on a class trip at the zoo. Whoever raises their hands first will

be the ones chosen to feed the penguins, but you know that if you don’t push yourself to the front, the zookeeper won’t be likely to see you.

How hard we try to be in the right place for things we wish for! The question is, WHAT is it we wish for? A soldier in battle would not try to place himself in the way of a bullet; he would rather duck, run, throw himself on the ground, or put up something to shield himself, while at the same time fighting back. However, there is a type of arrow that wounds but that would be a blessing to receive. A deep wound from this arrow is actually a blessing! If the Lord uses His Word to convince us of our sins and of how deeply we have fallen away from God, it is as an arrow that sticks fast and does not leave. It now wounds our heart when we realize that we have never lived to God’s honor, have never heeded His warnings and callings, and have done nothing but grieve Him. This hurts us. We would not want that, would we? We want to be happy, not hurting, sad, and afraid. We always try to put up a shield when we hear anything in church that speaks to our heart. We don’t want such an arrow to hit us.

How foolish this is. That arrow is such a blessing. We should actually be trying to be in the way of these arrows. This means that, before we go to church, we should ask the Lord to bless what we will hear. We should ask Him to help us to listen. We should ask Him to help the minister. We should ask Him if His Holy Spirit will come with the Word to bring it into the heart. We should try to sit still and not let our thoughts drift away to other things. We should pray along with the minister when he prays, paying attention instead of hoping he will be finished soon. It is the same with Bible and catechism lessons or the Bible reading at mealtimes. You might not understand everything, but the Lord is able to use just a few of the words in the sermon or lesson as an arrow into your heart. It is an arrow that hurts because you have grieved God, but it is an arrow of love. To be caught by an arrow, to be caught in the net of God’s Word, is a wonder, and those that are caught will never be let go. They will be happy in the end while those who tried to avoid being caught will be cast away from God forever.

It would be foolish for fish to crowd each other to be the first to be caught in a net, wouldn't it? Yet, it is not foolish to want to be caught in the net of God's Word. By nature, we are so foolish that we only want to be caught in the nets of the world—a net of wasting so much of our time; a net of crowding our minds full of unimportant things; even a net of wanting to do the things the law of God commands us we may not do. It would be foolish for people to crowd each other to be the first ones to run out into a hailstorm and be pelted with cold, hard ice. Yet, often, we are just as foolish. It is as though we avoid the good net of the gospel and run towards the bad nets of sin. We can go to places or spend much time with those who will cause us to easily be caught in a wrong net. Soon, we are trapped in sin and find it difficult to escape. Only the Lord is able to save us out of the nets of sin. Do you begin your day by sliding out of bed onto your knees? Do you ask Him then to KEEP you throughout the day?

Ask Him also, daily, if you may be caught in the net of His Word, caught by an arrow He sends in love into the heart of sinners who do not deserve to be caught.

### The Gospel net

Match the endings to the correct beginnings to form a verse. Answers can be looked up in Luke 5, Mark 16, Luke 19, and Matthew 13.

1. And Jesus said unto Simon, ...
2. And He said unto them (*the disciples*), ...
3. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save ...
4. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, ...
  - a. Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.
  - b. That which was lost.
  - c. Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.
  - d. And gathered of every kind.

### Fishing

Unscramble the words.

5. "Now as He walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw \_\_\_\_\_ (msoin) and \_\_\_\_\_ (eadnrw) his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers."
6. "\_\_\_\_\_ (nismo) \_\_\_\_\_ (tpree) went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken."
7. "And immediately \_\_\_\_\_ (sjues) stretched forth His hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?"

8. "\_\_\_\_\_ (oimns) \_\_\_\_\_ (retep) saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing."

### Evil nets

9. When does a wolf catch the sheep? (John 10:12)  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What do the wicked do to the poor? (Psalm 10:9)  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. What is one of the ways a person can spread a net for someone else? (Proverbs 29:5)  
\_\_\_\_\_
12. What do wicked men do to catch others? (Jeremiah 5:26) \_\_\_\_\_
13. What catches men as fish in a net and birds in a snare? (Ecclesiastes 9:12) \_\_\_\_\_

### Seeking to be in the way of the net

14. "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly \_\_\_\_\_." (Matthew 13)
15. "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the \_\_\_\_\_'s, the same shall save it." (Mark 8)
16. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His \_\_\_\_\_; and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matthew 6)
17. "But if from \_\_\_\_\_ thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find Him, if thou seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul." (Deuteronomy 4)
18. "Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My \_\_\_\_\_, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee?" (Ruth 3)
19. "Seek the LORD and His strength, seek His \_\_\_\_\_ continually." (1 Chronicles 16)
20. "Now set your heart and your \_\_\_\_\_ to seek the LORD your God." (1 Chronicles 22)
21. "One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the \_\_\_\_\_ of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple." (Psalm 27)
22. "When Thou saidst, Seek ye My face; my heart said unto Thee, Thy \_\_\_\_\_, LORD, will I seek." (Psalm 27)

23. "The young \_\_\_\_\_ do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing." (Psalm 34)

24. "Depart from evil, and do good; seek \_\_\_\_\_, and pursue it." (Psalm 34)

\* \* \* \* \*

Answers to April's "Fainting (2)" quiz:

1. Weary verse 28
2. War verse 20
3. Ways verse 33
4. Great verse 5
5. Majesty verse 11
6. Psalter 34:2
7. Psalter 127:1
8. Psalter 248:4

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Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth

180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435

E-mail: [auntlenabeth@gmail.com](mailto:auntlenabeth@gmail.com)

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Answers to previous quizzes were received in March from:

Benson Bakker (2) **13**  
Clay Bakker (2) 4  
Anabelle Berkenbush 20  
Alyssa Berkenbush  
Emma Berkenbush (3) 3  
Rachel Berkenbush (3) 3  
Britni Blom **13**  
GaryJon Blom (2) 10  
Jenina Blom (2) 20  
Lawrence Blom (2) 14  
Marissa Blom **13**  
Martena Blom 23  
Willem Blom 13  
Kaylee Den Boer (3) 7  
Sarina Den Bok 13  
Sawyer Dob 5  
Brian Driesen 1  
Cody Driesen (2) 20  
Kacie Driesen (2) 16  
Toby Driesen (2) 20  
Kaylynn Ekema (2) 20  
Geraldyn Engelen 13  
Shawn Engelen 13  
Trevor Engelen 13  
Kyal Grisnich **12**  
Logan Grisnich 13  
Taryn Grisnich 9  
Jason Groenendyk 1  
Linda groenendyk 3  
Ruben Groenendyk 16  
Kate Hoogendoorn 10  
Weston Hoogendoorn 5

Charity Hup 4  
Derek Hup 13  
Justin Hup 13  
Serena Hup 2  
Autumn Kegel 4  
Sophia Kegel 4  
Alia Kelderman 11  
Anthony Knibbe **6**  
Ashley Knibbe 19  
Courtney Knibbe 19  
Lindsey Knibbe 19  
Lydia Knibbe 17  
Nathan Knibbe 19  
Whitney Knibbe 19  
Rebecca Krygsman 20  
Sarah Krygsman 22  
Abby Maassen 2  
Cody Maassen **6**  
Lydia Mol 16  
Teddy Mol 16  
John Murphy 13  
Colin Overbeek (6) **7**  
Jayden Overbeek (6) **20**  
Samuel Rozeboom 5  
Ale Rus (2) 14  
Jessa Rus (2) 17  
Kaela Rus 2  
Lakia Rus (2) **6**  
Esther Teunissen 14  
Aaliyah Timmer 14  
Drake Timmer 15  
Maurice Van Garderen 17

Emmalyn Van Garderen 17  
Ellie Van't Zelfde (2) 8  
Levi Van't Zelfde (2) 8  
Alivia Vande Hoef (2) **23**  
Micah Vande Hoef (2) **18**  
Wyatt Vande Waerdt **6**  
Esther Vanden Broek 10  
Ian Vanden Broek 10  
Caleb Vogelaar  
Matthew Vogelaar  
Brandon Vrieselaar (4) **20**  
Brianna Vrieselaar (4) **20**  
Kyra Vrieselaar (4) **20**  
Noah Vrieselaar (4) **20**  
Jaydon Weeda 7  
Jonathan Wesdyk 16  
Nathan Wesdyk **12**  
Rebekah Wesdyk 15  
Allyson Ymker (2) 14  
Cameron Ymker (2) **18**  
Heidi Ymker (2) 19  
Julia Ymker 3  
Lauren Ymker 3

**17 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is 342!**

## Letters to My Young Readers



Welcome to our new member:  
Jason Groenendyk

Love,  
Aunt LenaBeth

**Benson Bakker**

You have fancy-looking trucks, and you did so well drawing them, Benson. I like the details. It must be fun to go with your dad to haul animals. Roosters can be unpredictable, can't they? Mine wasn't happy until I had a coop big enough that he could be with the hens. Maybe yours will be happier once he is with the others. My rooster keeps order in the coop so that the hens can't bully each other. I hope you had a happy birthday. I wish you the Lord's blessing in the coming year. "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found..."

## To all of our subscribers

We are experiencing multiple problems with the delivery of *The Banner of Truth*, especially in Canada. The difficulties have been observed in both individual and bulk mailings. Our printer and shipper are working diligently to resolve these issues which may be related to the Coronavirus pandemic. You can help by notifying us whenever the expected issues are not received in a timely manner. We apologize for the difficulties which have been encountered.

—The Banner of Truth editorial and subscription staff

# News & Announcements

## ■ Ministerial Calls

### Extended:

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

To Rev. F. Janssen of Rijssen (South), the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

To Rev. G. Van Maanen of Elspeet, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Grand Rapids (Covell), Michigan.

To Rev. A.H. Verhoef of St. Catharines, Ontario, by the congregation of Sunnyside, Washington.

### Declined:

By Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregation of Barendrecht, the Netherlands.

By Rev. F. Janssen of Rijssen (South), the Netherlands, to the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

By Rev. A.H. Verhoef of St. Catharines, Ontario, to the congregation of Sunnyside, Washington.

## ■ Obituaries

DECKER, James "Jim" – Age 94, April 3, 2021; Brandon, South Dakota; Wife – Johanna "Joyce" (deceased); Children – Gloria & Larry Smyrak, Larry & Deb Decker, James & Celeste Decker; 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren; predeceased by parents Theodore & Laura, brother William. (Rev. H. Hofman, Luke 7:11-17.)

KRELING, Irene – Age 90, April 8, 2021; Kalamazoo, Michigan; survived by sister Geraldine Van Gemert, several nieces and nephews, and many friends; predeceased by parents Anthonie & Jozina (Meeuwse), sister Nellie Vander Klok, brother Henry. (Rev. H. Hofman, Job 23 & Ecclesiastes 9:15.)

MAASSEN, Joan (nee Dibbet) – Age 86, March 16, 2021; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Raymond (deceased); Children – Ronald & Joyce Maassen, Daryl & Darlene Maassen, Marlin Maassen, Sharla & Jim Boon, John & Judy Maassen, Thomas & Paula Maassen, David & Lisa Maassen James & Renita Maassen, Paul Maassen, Shelly Maassen, Mary & Dean Maassen, Timothy & Carrie Maassen, Tamela & Terry Van Beek; 52 grandchildren, 72 great-grandchildren, 1 great-grandchild; Brother – Jacob Dibbet; Sister – Arlene Hoogendoorn; Sisters-in-law – Girlie Dibbet and Sally Koedam; predeceased by sons David and Christian Maassen, brothers John and Richard Dibbet, sisters Alice Van Voorst and Gertrude Draayer, grandchildren Sheila Maassen, Logan Maassen, Colin Van Beek and Danita Valink. (Rev. H. Hofman, Ecclesiastes 11:3b.)

## ■ New from Bible Truth Books

*Dick The Young Beggar* by A. denUil—Dick, a poor beggar, often felt deeply unhappy because he was so cold and hungry. At home, he received nothing but swearing and beatings. Every day he roamed the city trying to sell shoelaces...or begging. One day, however, he noticed a lady had dropped her wallet... Hardcover, for readers ages 10 and older, 77 pages, \$6.25.

*A Frenchman from Geneva* by P. deZeeuw—A collection of three stories ("The Winegrower of St. Victor," "The Gardener from Ferrara," and "The Watchmaker from Geneva") about the life and trials of John Calvin. Historical fiction, hardcover, for readers ages 12-15, 286 pages, \$10.90.

*Fifty-Two Weekly Morning and Evening Meditations* by Rev. A.M. den Boer—During his time as minister of the Grand Rapids-Covell congregation, Rev. DenBoer wrote weekly meditations for the congregation's bulletin. These meditations have now been compiled and published as a book of weekly readings—one for each Sabbath morning and evening. Hardcover with sewn-in bookmark, 224 pages, \$11.10.

*Martin Luther on the Flood*—Martin Luther's last writing was an effort to write a commentary on Genesis. This book represents the final fragment left behind by Luther—an exposition of Genesis 6:1-4. His writings on these verses are comprehensive, yet written in his easy-to-read style of language. With particular opening and solemnity, he expounds on the third verse: "And the LORD said, My Spirit shall not always strive with man." Paperback, 43 pages, \$8.45.

*Occasional Sermons* by Rev. J. Pannekoek—Rev. Pannekoek (1916-1971) served the Reformed Congregations of North America (GGiN)—A collection of nine seasonal sermons. Hardcover, 140 pages, \$16.50.

*The Omnipotent Jehovah* by J. Kershaw—A collection of four previously-unpublished sermons by John Kershaw (1792-1870). The sermons are entitled, "Scriptural Evidences of Being Born of God" (John 1:13), "The Treasury of Spiritual Blessings" (Ephesians 1:3), "Death, the Christian's Everlasting Gain" (Philemon 1:21), and "The Omnipotent Jehovah (Revelation 19:6)." Paperback, 70 pages, \$6.20.

The prices above do not include postage.  
Bible Truth Books  
P.O. Box 1290  
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-1290  
Phone / Fax: 616-776-2593  
BibleTruthBooks@igatweb.com

## ■ Young Adult/Post High School Youth Camp, Northern Michigan August 19-21, 2021

A three-day/two-night trip to northern Michigan is being planned by a joint Grand Rapids and Kalamazoo Committee under the oversight of the Grand Rapids Beckwith consistory. We are planning to stay in a beautiful lodge located in Boyne Falls, Michigan. On Friday we plan to drive to Mackinaw City and take the ferry across to scenic Mackinac Island. Rev. H. Hofman and Elder W. Greendyk hope to provide meaningful topics and discussions. For further information, please text 616-558-4316 or email [NRCMackinawTrip@gmail.com](mailto:NRCMackinawTrip@gmail.com)

## 55th Wedding Anniversary

Our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

**Rev. & Mrs. C. Vogelaar**

were given to commemorate their 55th wedding anniversary on April 21, 2021.

It is our wish that they may experience the nearness of the Lord in the manifold cares and that His everlasting arms are underneath.

*"And He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation"* (Psalm 107:7).

14 Longview Rd., Towaco, NJ 07082

## ■ 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](mailto: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](mailto:office@ccschool.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 an URGENT NEED for the next school year with 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.

#### **TEACHERS NEEDED**

We have openings in both elementary and junior high grades for the 2021-22 school year. Qualified applicants require a teaching degree and an earnest interest in teaching in a Christian school and are a member in good standing of one of Netherlands Reformed congregations or a denomination with similar teachings.

#### **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.

For more information or to apply, please contact Tim Mol (education chairman) at 973-204-5677 or email tjmol@yahoo.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 email nrce\_office@nrce.org.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, has openings for the 2021-2022 school year in elementary classrooms, special education, and secondary science, Language Arts, and/or computer technology. 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. Full or part time inquiries encouraged. Please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or danbreuer@nrceia.org for further information. Visit [www.nrceia.org](http://www.nrceia.org) to learn more about our school. Log in to the main site by registering as a new user and wait for approval.

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

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](http://www.rcsnorwich.com) for more detailed information or contact the director, Mr. John Heikoop, at [director@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:director@rcsnorwich.com) or 519-863-2403, ext. 223. Cover letters and resumes may be submitted to [hr@rcsnorwich.com](mailto:hr@rcsnorwich.com).

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](mailto: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](mailto:artdenhoed@gmail.com), or Maaike Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email [trinityrcs@embarqmail.com](mailto: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](http://www.ponatahi.school.nz) (vacancies). For further information, please contact the Ponatahi Christian School Board of Trustees via email at [come2carterton@gmail.com](mailto:come2carterton@gmail.com).

#### **To All Candidates for Teacher Positions**

Please visit [advertising.nrcea.education](http://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](mailto:advertising@nrcea.education)**

Password: **Schooljobs!**

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

#### **||| The Banner of Truth in Audio Format**

Monthly copies of the articles which appear in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3 files are produced by a committee in Norwich, Ontario, with the support of the Norwich consistory, and they make the MP3 files available to the consistories of the end user. 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](mailto:blamain@netscape.net) to arrange for a free subscription or discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

## Christ's Kingdom and Priesthood

Jesus, our Lord, ascend Thy throne,  
And near the Father sit;  
In Zion shall Thy power be known,  
And make Thy foes submit.

What wonders shall Thy gospel do!  
Thy converts shall surpass  
The num'rous drops of morning dew  
And own Thy sovereign grace.

God hath pronounced a firm decree,  
Nor changes what He swore:  
"Eternal shall Thy priesthood be  
When Aaron is no more.

"Melchizedek, that wondrous priest,  
That king of high degree,  
That holy man who Abraham blessed,  
Was but a type of Thee."

Jesus our Priest forever lives  
To plead for us above;  
Jesus our King forever gives  
The blessings of His love.

God shall exalt His glorious head  
And His high throne maintain;  
Shall strike the powers and princes dead,  
Who dare oppose His reign.

—Isaac Watts