

the **Banner** *of Truth*

September 2021
Volume 87, No. 9

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

In this issue...

Finding Wisdom

A Warning Against
World Conformity

The School of Affliction

For our young readers...

The Spies Meet Rahab

Beggars

"And they shall spring up as among the grass, as willows by the water courses." ISAIAH 44:4



Meditation Finding Wisdom <i>Rev. E. Hakvoort</i>	195	For Young & Old No Other Gods (3) <i>C.M. Van Der Sluis</i>	204
Bible Study The Life of Daniel (19) <i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>	196	Current Events	206
Biblical Lifestyle A Warning Against World Conformity (1) <i>Rev. W.C. Lamain</i>	198	TIMOTHY – for the Young The Confession of Faith (21) Article XXV: Of the Abolishing of the Ceremonial Law (<i>continued</i>) <i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>	207
From Our Inheritance Knowing the Son of Man <i>Rev. M. Heerschap</i>	199	Bible Stories for Little Ones The Spies Meet Rahab <i>Submitted</i>	209
Is There No Balm in Gilead? <i>Matthew Henry</i>	200	Bible Quiz Beggars <i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	210
Doctrinal Studies Godly Sorrow (3) <i>Rev. J.J. van Eckeveld</i>	201	Letters to My Young Readers	212
From Overseas The School of Affliction <i>Rev. C. Sonneveld</i>	202	News & Announcements	213
Questions & Answers Questions from Our Readers <i>Rev. H. Hofman</i>	203	Back Cover Prayer Answered by Crosses <i>John Newton</i>	216

Cover Photo: Weeping Willow along Endine Lake, Italy | © Pixabay

THE BANNER OF TRUTH

Publication Number: (USPS 041-540)

Monthly, Official Publication of the Netherlands Reformed Congregations of the United States and Canada. Typeset (Archetype 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.

Rev. J. den Hoed, Editor

972 Hemlock Loop, Lynden, WA 98264
Home: 360-354-0210 • Study/Fax: 360-354-0216

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Assistant Editor

14 Longview Drive, Towaco, NJ 07082-1540
973-265-8632 • E-mail: revcvogelaar@gmail.com

James Okken, Managing Editor

3 Joseph Court, Hackettstown, NJ 07840
973-809-2112 • Fax: 973-381-1483 • E-mail: jamesokken79@gmail.com

John Sweetman, Subscription Manager

11 Split Rock Road, Boonton Township, NJ 07005
973-335-4679 • E-mail: nrcbannersubscriptions@yahoo.com

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.

For free sermons write to: Treasured Meditations, P.O. Box 2753, Grand Rapids, MI 49501.

In all our publications, the Netherlands Reformed Congregations aim to remain true to inerrant Scripture and its Reformed heritage as expounded in the denomination's doctrinal standards: the Belgic Confession (1561), Heidelberg Catechism (1563), and Canons of Dort (1618-1619). The Netherlands Reformed Congregations are also in agreement with the Westminster Standards (1640s): the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechisms. The Netherlands Reformed Denomination in the United States and Canada consists of twenty-seven congregations and approximately 11,000 members. Our sister denomination in the Netherlands has 152 congregations and a membership of approximately 107,000. The North American churches have established a mission post and congregation in Loma Alta, Bolivia, South America.



Meditation

Finding Wisdom

Rev. E. Hakvoort, Norwich, ON

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding” (Proverbs 3:13).

We stand at the beginning of a new school year. Soon our students will go back to school to receive instruction and to be prepared for a place in society. It is a great privilege that we may still have our own schools where our children are taught in the true wisdom from God’s Word so that they may be grounded in the truth. Much needs to be learned, but I hope that our students every day will hear about that only one thing needful which can make them wise unto salvation.

That is the reason Solomon often speaks in the wisdom literature about true wisdom. Twice he even speaks about “finding wisdom.” About the mocker and scorner he says, in Proverbs 14:6, that they seek wisdom but find it not, but Solomon knew experientially how blessed the man is that finds true wisdom in the Lord. All the wisdom that comes from below could not help him, but by grace he had received a desire to receive the wisdom that comes from above.

When the Lord said to him in Gibeon, “Ask what I shall give thee,” Solomon did not ask for a long life, or riches, or the life of his enemies, but in dependency on the Lord he asked for understanding to discern judgment because he had learned by grace that he was but of yesterday and knew nothing. By nature, that is the image of all people. Oh, in Paradise, we had the true knowledge of God and communion with God. The Lord even said that it was very good.

By our deep fall in Adam, we lost this true wisdom and have become fools before God. There is no understanding that we travel to an all-decisive eternity and that we one day will have to give an account of what we have done in our life, whether it be good or evil. Oh, we can seek to fill our empty heart with earthly wisdom, and surely, we need Christian lawyers, doctors, nurses, and—not to forget—teachers. So, to learn earthly wisdom is in itself not wrong.

However, if that is all we live for, it is too short for eternity, but wonder of free and sovereign grace, in His wisdom and love, the Lord opened a way unto salvation. He gave Christ, the true Wisdom who testifies, “O ye simple, understand wisdom: and, ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart.” This is necessary because life is short and eternity is never-ending; this is also possible, even for the chief of sinners, in Christ who died to teach spiritual wisdom.

When God’s Spirit opens our blind eyes, we see our foolishness before a holy and righteous God since we live

without a God for our heart and without a Saviour for our soul. The love shed in our heart makes us long and ask for true wisdom. By God’s Spirit, students in the school of grace become eager to learn what we cannot miss to live and to die happily. James says in James 3:17, “But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Do you see that the Lord makes His people honest and sincere? As humble and restless students at the school of grace, they ask for true wisdom from above. Their heart is broken because the Lord taught that happiness is for the man who finds wisdom and gets understanding, but they miss that. It brings them to their knees where they confess, “O Lord, I have been so foolish by living for my own account! Is there still a way unto salvation that Thy name may be glorified?”

They have no rest until they may find it in Christ. What a wonder when the Lord opens their eyes for the true wisdom in Christ! A gladness which they cannot express fills their heart and makes their mouth overflow. Do you see why Solomon says that happy is the man that findeth wisdom and getteth understanding? They miss this wisdom in themselves but may see it in the chief Prophet and Teacher, Christ, who is able and willing to teach this wisdom unto lost sinners. With Mary, they can be found at His feet to be instructed in the ways everlasting.

At His feet all treasures of the world lose their value. All the riches on earth cannot fill the heart anymore because the merchandise of wisdom and understanding is so much better than the merchandise of silver and fine gold (verse 14). The gold of faith is so much better than all the gold of the earth. One day we must leave all earthly treasures behind, and without true wisdom it will be lost forever. However, those that learned this wisdom from above will then receive a treasure in heaven where moth and rust cannot corrupt, nor thieves can break through and steal.

My dear friend, did you, by grace, receive this true wisdom and understanding already? Our wisdom and understanding will not help us when we stand before the Lord to give an account of our stewardship. Yet, it is still the time of grace. Blessed is that boy and girl, that man and woman, who are given to seek true wisdom and understanding in God. What a blessedness that will be when they receive eternal happiness—when they see Christ in His glory. □



Bible Study

The Life of Daniel (19)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And now will I shew thee the truth. Behold, there shall stand up yet three kings in Persia; and the fourth shall be far richer than they all: and by his strength through his riches he shall stir up all against the realm of Grecia” (Daniel 11:2).

There is a spiritual warfare of which we read in these prophecies. The powers of the devil are not omnipotent, and the ultimate success of the power of the light should not be doubted; however, there can be tremendous opposition to the performance of the commandments of the Lord. The devil uses kings, earthly rulers, even presidents for his purpose which is to destroy the church, to harm and persecute those who confess the name of Christ, who is the Chief Ruler. In the history of the world, it may look like the anti-Christian powers will prevail. Do we not see how evil powers assemble together to oppress the church and, if possible, to erase it from the earth? They are powers of delusion that blind people and poison minds, also of young people. We do not have to prophesy; the Lord has told us what would happen in these last days. We read in Matthew 24:25, “Behold, I have told you before.” The last two chapters of Daniel are not easy to understand, but they speak about the struggles of the God-defying powers to have supremacy. These forces will also come against God’s kingdom; however, they will not prevail.

Wrestling between kingdoms

In the beginning of this chapter, we read of Darius, the Mede. Daniel knew and served this king. The Lord would show him the truth. God’s testimonies are very sure. Many prophecies have been expressed by man which never were fulfilled, but what God testifies in His word will certainly come to pass. The Persian kingdom, indeed, was mighty and powerful, but it would be conquered. Verses 1-3 imply several wars, blood, fire, and smoke. Another ruler would have the scepter of power. It was Alexander the Great. His reign would last but seven years and would be a time of luxury, wealth, prosperity, pleasure-seeking, and lawlessness, but how short this time was. More recently we have witnessed this limited time of glory and victory in the life of Napoleon, Hitler, and others. In those days Alexander the Great was very powerful, but he also had to go the way of all flesh.

We read in verse 4, “His kingdom shall be broken, and shall be divided toward the four winds of heaven; and not to his posterity.” His kingdom would be divided among four rulers. After the Second World War there were also four

world powers—Great Britain, France, Russia, and the USA. How soon that may change or has changed already. In verse 6 we see how those world powers are joining together, “And in the end of years they shall join themselves together.” We see that intent also in more recent history—European countries joining into a European Union. The nations of the earth have joined in the United Nations, countries joined in alliance against a common threatening enemy. However, in the last days, we see that anti-Christian powers are joining together to do away with God’s unchangeable law and to put man upon the throne as if he is the one who may decide what is good and right. Ungodly laws are made and forced upon those who want to follow in obedience what God in His Word has spoken. Sin is not sin anymore. The greatest sin seems to be discrimination, but the anti-discrimination laws begin to reach so far that those who cannot agree with the current humanistic, anti-biblical ideology are being pressured to give up their resistance and to bow before the new idol.

In verse 7-13, we read about the terrible battle of the king of the north, Syria, and the king of the south, Egypt. In Matthew 24 we read “wars and rumours of wars.” These wars have occurred throughout history, but tensions rise, and there will also be many wars in the end of times.

Other general signs of these times are:

- 1) False prophesyings (Matthew 24:5)—they come in the name of Christ and shall deceive many. Pride of man will be very evident in false prophecies. They will even say, “I am Christ.”
- 2) As already mentioned, wars and rumors of wars.
- 3) Iniquities shall abound.
- 4) The love of many shall wax cold (Matthew 24:12b).

Other special signs are:

- 1) The preaching of the gospel over the whole world (Matthew 24:14).
- 2) The conversion of many of Israel.
- 3) The great tribulation and coming of the antichrist. There will be great apostasy and it may seem as if the Church has disappeared. “Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?”

A glorious land

The war between the kings of the north and the south shall also be over dominion of the holy land. There is a special name for this land, the inheritance which the Lord has given to His people Israel. Verse 16 says, “the glorious land.” The word “glorious” points to great beauty, some-

thing that is wonderfully adorned. We may well ask what is then the beauty of the land? No, there was no external beauty for the human eye to see in Canaan. The people had been the object of God's punishing hand, and the enemies ravaged the country; cities had been destroyed, yet it is called the glorious land. The beauty is that they are still God's covenant people, that there are still unfulfilled promises for them. We have seen that Daniel had been shown that a mighty Deliverer would come. God's Church, which the Lord gathers out of all countries from Jew and Gentile, is a blessed nation and the citizens are a peculiar people. The Lord has created them unto Himself that they would show forth His praises.

However, before the King comes back to publicly manifest the beauty and the glory of His own inheritance, there will be a fearful time for the church. Also, this chapter speaks of a strong ruler who will assume regal dignity although it does not belong to him. He decides to take the kingdom for himself. He is a master of intrigues. This person is Antiochus Epiphanes. By flattering, he wins over the kings of Pergamos to his cause, and the Syrians give in peaceably. In verse 21, he is called a vile person. He would indeed be a very wicked ruler. He would defile the sanctuary and terrible oppression would take place of those who wanted to serve the Lord according to His will. In him we see a picture of the antichrist who will be there before Christ comes back on the clouds.

The book of Daniel, as we saw, can be divided into two parts: the first part (chapters 1-6) begins with the circumstances of the appearance of Daniel and his three friends at the court of Nebuchadnezzar. It continues to tell of his relationship toward the king and concludes with the death of Belshazzar and also Daniel's own deliverance from the lions' den under Darius.

The last part (Daniel's prophecies, which are not to be chronologically placed after Darius' rule), comprises the visions of the four beasts, the revelation of the seventy weeks of years, and finally also the struggles of the wicked powers in the world against God and His kingdom. Both parts give an insight into the terrible events and judgments of God upon Israel but also what God's Church, from Jew

and Gentile, can expect in the latter days. This last part also shows how God the Lord is above all those disturbances, strife, and battles of the nations, and how He attains His ultimate object, the final completion of His kingdom.

These days there are so many characteristics of the end of times. How long will the pure preaching of God's Word be tolerated from the pulpits, in biblical teaching in the classrooms, and in scriptural instruction in the homes? We know that God reigns and He has promised, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." In the darkest times, He will not leave or forsake His blood-bought church. There is comfort and hope for those who do not see any possibility in themselves to remain standing when persecution may come upon us. They have learned to know that they are ready to halt and stumble. In them there is no might against that great company that comes against them, but may their eyes be upon Him who sits upon the throne.

The prophet Habakkuk also saw terrible times before him, but he said: "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: Yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy in the God of my salvation" (Habakkuk 3:17&18). What a wonderful word is that "yet"; it is a word of faith that He who promised to remain with His inheritance will not forsake them.

Faith will be tested, God's own Word will be tried, and the poor worm Jacob may fear that it will not stand the test, but God cares for His own work. Therefore, the same Habakkuk could also say in verse 19a, "The LORD God is my strength." Is He also this for you? Has your strength been broken, have your self-made hiding places been destroyed, have you learned to find refuge in this blessed Christ? He says to such people, "Fear not, I am with you, you are precious in My sight, I have loved thee with an everlasting love." In the midst of God's judgments upon the earth, He will give rest in His covenant faithfulness, in His unfailing love. Blessed are all those who put their trust in Him. ◻

(To be continued)

God Is the Highest Good

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758)

God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of Him is our proper happiness and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here—better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any or all earthly friends. These are but shadows, but God is the substance. These are but scattered beams, but God is the sun. These are but

streams, but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean.

Therefore, it becomes us to spend this life only as a journey towards heaven, as it becomes us to make the seeking of our highest end and proper good, the whole work of our lives; we should subordinate all the other concerns of life to it. Why should we labour for anything else, or set our hearts on anything else but that which is our proper end and true happiness?



Biblical Lifestyle

A Warning Against World Conformity (1)

Rev. W.C. Lamain (1904-1984)

(Translated from *Voor Stille Uren* 1993 Den Hertog B.V., Houten, the Netherlands, ISBN 90 331 1133 0, 4th printing)

“And be not conformed to this world” (Romans 12:2a).

Although this admonition of the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, was addressed to the congregation at Rome, it is also necessary for us. In the first place, this admonition was addressed to those who no longer served the world, for the apostle wrote to the beloved of God and the called saints.

That cannot be said of all people, not even of all confessors of the truth. Among the great masses of people, it is only a small number in whose heart the love of God has been poured out. The Truth speaks of two of a family and one out of a city.

As it concerns the called saints, the Lord Jesus has declared, “Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me.” God’s elect were given unto the Son by the Father in all eternity, who has given Himself to pay for their sins so that He can draw them out of this present-day evil world according to the will of their God and Father (Galatians 1:4).

In the day of His good pleasure, they are drawn out of the world with the cords of God’s eternal love. For them the world has lost its allurements, and this is a fruit of the regenerating grace of the Holy Spirit. They have said farewell to the world. For them the drawbridge has been pulled up, and they can nevermore return to the world. “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance.” They have given their heart and their hands unto the Lord, and they say with David, “Thou seekest my heart, my eyes remain fixed on Thee.”

They have fled from the world and are walking in the paths of righteousness. Their heart and their eyes are drawn to above, and their walk is in heaven. Because they are not of the world, the world hates them. For them there has come a separation, an eternal separation. God does a complete and perfect work in the heart of His people, yet it appears that the admonition also for them is not superfluous. In the way of uncovering, they become aware that they carry the world inside of them; that the world so often still has such a large place in their heart. The language of David is not strange to them: “My soul cleaveth unto the dust” (Psalm 119:25).

How does the world—when the life with God wanes in the soul—have the overhand. It is a benefit that the Lord Jesus prayed in John 17:15, “I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the evil.” If those people, who are initially delivered by God, are not kept by the power of God, they would sink back into the world to be buried there forever,

but God keeps them, and in His power they remain standing. They are ready to halt and stumble at any moment.

God’s children lie susceptible to all kinds of temptations, and, in addition to that, they have a heart which leads them astray. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?” How deeply are the cords of the world embedded. Will they rise above sin here below? Alas, no. It is to their sorrow that they must experience that no good lives in their flesh. How quickly they are taken in by sin, and they are drawn into the world which lies engulfed in evil. They are sold unto sin, and, at times, they are swept along before they are aware of it.

There are times that they may live as though they are above the dust. There are times that God’s favorites may be with the Lord Jesus upon the mount, that they may be in His immediate presence and taste of His dear good pleasure. When the love of God is poured out in their heart and they are filled with a childlike fear, then the world loses its allurements, and they have an aversion to the same. However, when the life of God departs from their heart, then the world soon occupies it. To see how far they can backslide, look only at the old judge Eli. How far did Solomon not stray? Even the godly King Jehoshaphat made a covenant with the wicked Ahab. Hezekiah became world-conformed when he showed his treasures to the princes of Babylon.

The Lord Jesus in His walking about on earth has continuously warned his hearers not to be swept away with the world. Going along with the world is so soul-destroying that it robs us of the inward experiencing of God’s favor. It strengthens the world, and it is to God’s dishonor.

Not to be conformed to the world means to not become the same as the world; do not find your pleasure therein. It is a woeful situation when there is no longer a difference between the world and the Church. Lot had gone a long way with the world, and although he vexed his righteous soul in Sodom, even after the destruction of Sodom, the sad results became visible.

It is not having grace in itself but the fear of the Lord which keeps us from sin. Calvin wrote, “The world will claim that the works which they have done are good.” Paul calls out that judgment must be made according to God’s commandments as to what is good and right. The world praises itself in its own imagination and lives on happily. Paul, however, confirms that God does not desire anything but what He has commanded. It should be our continual sighing that by means of God’s grace, we may die to self and also to the world with all of her desirability. We need a continual desire to be kept by God so as not to stray either

to the right or to the left. How blessed is the soul who may say and experience with Paul, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14).

The close and immediate union with Christ will cause us not only to die to the world but also to live unto God and

to be conformed to Christ. That the exercises may frequently be the portion of our soul, we would, in the power of Christ, use this world, not misuse it, and by means of the leading of the Spirit, be followers of Christ. He did walk with His feet upon earth, but His heart was in heaven. □

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

Knowing the Son of Man

Rev. M. Heerschap (1911-1993)

"But that ye may know the Son of Man..." (Luke 5:24).

How different it would be in God's church in our sad days of estrangement if we with the sick of the palsy might be privileged to experimentally take that place. Then more breaking-through work would be perceived and heard of, whereas we now so often remain in the childbirth and seek our ground in the benefits and in our feelings. Today it seems as if many can be saved without Jesus, and there is no growth in grace and in the knowledge of Him. We must continually implore the ministration of God's Spirit so that we may examine and investigate whether God's work is magnified in us, for there can be no rest outside of Christ. God's people can often see much in Him and may exclaim with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," but still miss Him in the appropriation of faith as their Surety and Mediator. Thus, they miss immediate liberation. Although the Lord is free in the application of this matter, truly concerned people of God look forward to liberation, and He which hath begun a good work in them will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

The man sick of the palsy and salvation-seeking people may, through God's grace, experience this. The Lord said to him, "I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Two benefits are glorified unto this man—the forgiveness of sins and the restoration from his palsy—and he could return free into his house. God's people in regeneration are, from God's side, brought into the state of reconciliation and are declared free in Christ, but the application and appropriation of faith is continually necessary for the salvation-seeking one in order to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made him free. This can be enjoyed in the condition of our life under the covering righteousness of Christ. Then the guilt lies covered,

but in the state of our life, this occurs before the tribunal of God's judgment when the sinner is cut off from everything. Then, as a lost sinner we are acquitted from guilt and sin, and we receive from the Judge, upon the ground of Christ's merits, a right unto eternal life. We are free from guilt and sin, restored unto the Father through Christ, and reconciled with a Triune God to extol and praise Him with the psalmist: "The Lord sustains thee and has dealt most graciously with thee."

In the exercises of faith, these people become a dependent people, a people who daily must live from that which is granted. Grace does not make great people, for they cannot live out of their justification. They also must continually be brought to the feet of the Lord Jesus to be ministered

through Him and out of Him. Then we do not look down upon the concerned church, but there we meet each other in the Lord and at the throne of grace. We are sometimes so rich with our experiences that we see no value in Christ's work as Surety.

We are great and converted people, dry and barren; no scent or taste emanates anymore from God's people.

May the want of Him yet be bound upon us and become a binding matter in our life. May the north wind of the Spirit blow upon the garden of His Church so that there may be found many sick of the palsy. The Lord can do wonders to manifest His guilt-forgiving love and to cause those sick of the palsy to walk in liberty and not be silent about the good which the Lord has done. They will praise Him in their life and sing psalms unto God while they are yet alive. One day they will go home to be with the one sick of the palsy forever and ever, to that place where there shall be no more palsy. There they will be privileged to eternally sing the song of the redeemed: "Thou hast redeemed us unto God by Thy blood." Amen. □

*Grace does not make great people,
for they cannot live out of their justification.
They also must continually be brought to
the feet of the Lord Jesus to be ministered
through Him and out of Him.*

Is There No Balm in Gilead?

Matthew Henry (1662-1714)

“The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. For the hurt of the daughter of my people am I hurt; I am black; astonishment hath taken hold on me. Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?” (Jeremiah 8:20-22).

We have here the prophet himself bewailing the calamity and ruin of his people, for there were more of the lamentations of Jeremiah than those we find in the book which bears that title.

Observe here (1) how great his griefs were. He was an eyewitness of the desolations of his country and now saw those things which, by the spirit of prophecy, he had foreseen. In the foresight, much more in the sight, of them, he cries out, “When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me” (verse 18). I die away at the considerations of it. I do but labor in vain; nay, every attempt to alleviate the grief does but aggravate it.

It is our wisdom and duty under mournful events to do what we can to comfort ourselves against our sorrow by suggesting to ourselves such considerations as are proper to allay the grief and balance the grievance. However, sometimes the sorrow is such that the more it is repressed, the more strongly it recoils. This may sometimes be the case of very good men, as of the prophet here, whose soul refused to be comforted and fainted at the cordial (Psalm 77:2-3).

He tells us (verse 21) what was the matter: It is for the hurt of the daughter of my people that I am thus hurt; it is for their sin and the miseries they have brought upon themselves by it. It is for this that I am black, that I look black, that I go in black as mourners do, and that astonishment hath taken hold on me so that I know not what to do nor which way to turn.

Note, the miseries of our country ought to be very much the grief of our souls. A gracious spirit will be a public spirit, a tender spirit, a mourning spirit. It becomes us to lament the miseries of our fellow-creatures, much more to lay to heart the calamities of our country, and especially of the Church of God, to grieve for the affliction of Joseph.

Jeremiah had prophesied the destruction of Jerusalem, and though the truth of his prophecy was questioned, yet he did not rejoice in the proof of the truth of it by the

accomplishment of it, preferring the welfare of his country before his own reputation. If Jerusalem had repented and been spared, he would have been far from fretting as Jonah did. Jeremiah had many enemies in Judah and Jerusalem that hated, reproached, and persecuted him; in the judgments brought upon them, God reckoned with them for it and pleaded His prophet’s cause. Yet, Jeremiah was far from rejoicing in it, so truly did he forgive his enemies and desire that God would forgive them.

Observe here (2) how small his hopes were (verse 22): Is there no balm in Gilead—no medicine proper for a sick and dying kingdom? Is there no physician there—no skillful, faithful hand to apply the medicine? He looks upon the case to be deplorable and past relief. There is no balm in Gilead that can cure the disease of sin, no physician there who can restore the health of a nation quite overrun by such a foreign army as that of the Chaldeans. The desolations made are irreparable, and the disease has presently come to such a height that there is no checking it.

Or this verse may be understood as laying all the blame of the incurableness of their disease upon themselves; and so the question must be answered affirmatively: Is there no balm in Gilead—no physician there? Yes, certainly there is; God is able to help and heal them; there is a sufficiency in Him to redress all their grievances.

Gilead was a place in their own land, not far off. They had among themselves God’s law and His prophets with the help of which they might have been brought to repentance and their ruin prevented. They had princes and priests whose business it was to reform the nation and redress their grievances. What could have been done more than had been done for their recovery? Why, then, was not their health restored?

Certainly, it was not owing to God but to themselves. It was not for want of balm and a physician but because they would not admit the application nor submit to the methods of cure. The physician and physic were both ready, but the patient was willful and irregular, would not be tied to rules but must be humored.

Note, if sinners die of their wounds, their blood is upon their own head. The blood of Christ is balm in Gilead; His Spirit is the physician there, both sufficient, all sufficient, so that they might have been healed but would not. □

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

—William Tiptaft



Doctrinal Studies

Godly Sorrow (3)

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

“For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death” (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Because of the drawing love of the Lord, such a sorrowing one cannot let the Lord go. Jacob could not let go, the Canaanitish woman could not let go. All those who sorrow after God cannot let go, and they say with Job, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him” (Job 13:15a). All of Job’s misery could not take away his hope upon the Lord.

All of these sorrowing ones learn to despair of themselves but not of the Lord. That is why in their sorrowing condition they cling to the Lord by day and by night, for here there is no one who can comfort them; only God alone is able. People cannot help us here. Our feelings and our experiences cannot help us; only one thing can comfort us. That is the Lord Himself when He says, “I am thy salvation.” That is the true comfort when we have heard it out of His own mouth.

This sorrow causes us to turn away from all of our own strengths and abilities. These sorrowing ones cannot comfort themselves. God alone is able to comfort them.

That is not a false passivity whereby thousands blame the Lord, but it is distress, distress of the soul. That is why they cannot let go of God, and cry unto Him by day and by night.

The fruits of Christ’s sorrow

There are people who are satisfied with their sorrow. They comfort themselves with their sorrow, and they consider themselves converted. They make their sorrow a foundation for eternity, but does sorrow save a person? The foundation of salvation and of the true joy can only be found in Christ. If there is one who has been sorrowful, it has been Christ. He had to complain, “My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death.” He was sorrowful because they had cast Him out and despised Him. He wept over Jerusalem. He was sorrowful because the disciples were displeased with Him, because the wrath of God burned in His mediatorial soul. He was sorrowful because of the depth of the forsaking of His Father into which He had sunk when He cried out, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” He was also sorrowful because of the hellish terrors and the attacks of Satan.

If there has been one person who was truly sorrowful, then that was Christ. That sorrow toward God flows forth

from Christ only. Jesus wept and that is why God’s children weep. Their tears toward God are the fruits of the tears of Jesus. That is why we must lose the ground or foundation of our sorrow in our tears and our weeping. They stand outside of the communion with God and outside of Christ. That is how God’s children learn to know themselves. They are so often troubled whether or not their tears are the evidence of true godly sorrow.

No rest outside of Christ

Still, it is important to emphasize that godly sorrow may not be detached from Christ. The danger otherwise becomes so prevalent that people begin to make a foundation of their tears and feelings of sorrow. Because this sorrow is the fruit of the work of Christ, this sorrow again drives a person out to Christ. It is a certain true mark if this sorrow has brought us by Christ. I know that it can be a long, difficult way of vexation and impossibilities before

one is brought by the Saviour. These sorrowing ones cannot find rest other than in Christ only. Who will ever be able to fully fathom godly sorrow and to

experience and bemoan the depths of sin? Here below it is always too short and too little.

Encouragements

Certainly, there are moments of hope in the lives of these sorrowing ones. When a word of the gospel shines into their darkened soul as a ray of light with power, then, at times, they may lift up their sorrowing head. If the possibility of being saved is uncovered unto them by means of the promises of the gospel, then there is opened unto them an unspeakable room. When the declarations of God’s love may fill their heart, then in spite of all the tears and sorrow, there may be tasted a wonderful joy in the Lord. Then it is so good to be near unto God (Psalm 73).

Those sorrowing ones begin to learn, however, that these encouragements are not yet Jesus Himself. It is only with Him that one’s tears can be wiped away, when He comes and takes away the burden of guilt from the shoulders, and where one’s shame and nakedness may be covered with the mantle of His mediatorial justice, and where one, in and through Christ, may see the friendly countenance of a reconciled God and Father. □

(To be continued)



From Overseas

The School of Affliction

Rev. C. Sonneveld, Alblasserdam, the Netherlands

“It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes” (Psalm 119:71).

We read in Job 5:17&18: “Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty; for He maketh sore, and bindeth up; he woundeth, and His hands make whole.” These words, uttered by Eliphaz, are very instructive. Although they were spoken to the wrong person, at the wrong time, and in the wrong disposition, they certainly contain a profound scriptural truth. It is the same truth that we find in the words of our meditation, and we would do well if we take them to heart.

Painful for the flesh

It is evident from Psalm 119 that David was a dear child of God. He was a man with a new heart and a new life. However, he also suffered from an old disease—the disease of stubbornness and going astray (verse 67). It is a disease that we all carry. Since we in Adam turned our backs upon the Lord, we stray farther and farther away from Him. We have a proud spirit and an innate aversion to God’s statutes.

Happily, the man after God’s heart was cured from the dominion of this terrible disease. How did that happen? What was the means that God used in curing him? It was affliction. Surely, David needed instruction out of God’s Word and the power of the Holy Spirit to be humbled. Yet, he also needed a special school—the school of affliction. How humbling to think of that. Such is the foolishness of man that “we shall never obey God or we must first be forced to it by the rod of His chastisement” (Calvin). Even David could not do without that. He needed remedial teaching in the school of grace.

Of what did David’s afflictions consist? He was persecuted by his enemies (verse 87) and in constant danger of his life (verse 109). All God’s children receive their share of such afflictions. They may also have to cope with other evils such as poverty or illness, a wounded heart or a heavy spirit, hardships in the home or in the upbringing of the children, a visible or a hidden cross. Such evils are painful for the flesh, but the worst thing is that, by nature, we do not see from where they come, that we have deserved them, and why we need them.

Profitable for the soul

Therefore, it is such a blessing if divine love is poured into our heart by the Holy Spirit. Affliction itself does not bring us to the right place. Instead of humbling us, it will even harden or stupefy us. However, when the love of God is shed abroad, the rod of affliction will be sanctified to the soul. We see it in the life of Simon of Cyrene, of David, and of many others in God’s Word. Can it also be seen in your life? Have you been discovered to your enmity and peevishness? Have you been won over to bow under God’s justice and to abhor yourself in the dust? Has it ever become a wonder that you are still alive? Does the Lord lay too much upon your shoulders, or is He right in all His ways and works?

The school of affliction may be painful for the flesh, but it is profitable for the soul. The Lord makes room for that blessed Mediator who subjected Himself to His Father’s will and bore the punishment for all His children. Oh, a sight of Him will humble the soul even deeper! It will cause the sinner to mourn bitterly but also draw out his heart

unto Him whose name is Jesus. Where can a Savior be found who is so suitable, so sufficient, so altogether lovely? Grace has been poured into His lips, and He gives beauty for ashes. How great it is when a poor and needy sinner may look unto Him, yea, flee unto Him and cleave unto Him by faith.

Then the Father lays aside the rod of His anger and embraces His child in tender mercy.

Nevertheless, affliction will again and again be the portion of God’s people on this side of the grave. Why? Because that old disease is still rooted in their heart. When David fell into grievous sins, a fatherly chastisement was needed to bring him back. Although he received a full pardon through Christ, the sword did not depart from his house. No, we should not ask for affliction, but in the school of affliction, profitable lessons are learned.

Glorifying unto God

The psalmist learned to love God’s statutes and precepts. That was ultimately the Lord’s purpose in afflicting David. The school of affliction rendered a blessed fruit as we can see in our text. David did not only feel the *necessity* of the rod of chastisement, he was also granted to *approve* of it with all his heart. By nature, we are like the dog that bites the stick, but a humbled soul knows of times when he

The school of affliction may be painful for the flesh, but it is profitable for the soul. The Lord makes room for that blessed Mediator who subjected Himself to His Father’s will and bore the punishment for all His children. Oh, a sight of Him will humble the soul even deeper!

may kiss the rod. Then it appears that honey is dripping from it. Then the yoke of Christ becomes easy and His burden light.

Reader, do you still live in rebellion or indifference? How dreadful if that does not change. To live in rebellion is a foreboding of eternal afflictions. Oh, turn before it is too late. The loving invitations of the gospel are still extended to you. May you learn to surrender and to justify a holy God. Then Christ will be exalted to the highest, and your soul will be delivered from the horrible pit.

Child of God, your Master wants you to live in a tender fear and to honor His name. To that end, afflictions are necessary on your pathway. David remained a straying sheep till the end of this Psalm (verse 176) and till the end of his life. That will also be your experience. Still, the Lord is faithful to His people, and He is never mistaken. Oh wonder, the day is coming that those straying sheep will adore God for all His dealings here below. Then they will sing forever, "It is good for me, that I have been afflicted; that I might learn Thy statutes!" ☐



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

To become a member of our church, we have to make public confession of faith by answering the questions of Voetius, but true faith as the Heidelberg Catechism describes it is not required in these questions. If it is confession of faith, why is faith not required? If faith is not required, then what do the words confession of faith mean? What does the Bible say?

This time of the year the confession of faith classes generally will have resumed in the congregations. Every year the consistory is eager to learn whether there will be such a class, and if so, how many have indicated a desire to attend. Rightly so, because it is both a weighty as well as an encouraging matter when young people decide to take this class. For some, this decision involves serious, heart-searching questions, while for others (let us be honest) the decision appears less difficult. Let us hope and pray that a decision to join the confession of faith class be a matter that is taken before the all-knowing God who knows the heart most perfectly. The question raised above is a commonly asked question and, I think, related to more questions regarding confession of faith.

I could give a very short answer, but perhaps it might be beneficial to broaden this subject. My short answer would have been: public confession of faith is not in the first place a personal testimony *that I believe* but more *what I believe*. At first glance, this statement may surprise you as now it appears that I am stating that confession of faith is nothing more than a confession of the truth. This, however, is not the case. When Philip asked the eunuch in Acts 8 if he believed with all his heart, the eunuch answered: "I believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Notice here that the eunuch did not say, "I believe in Jesus, the Son of God." Let us observe the wording. The point is the church (or

consistory) does not rule over the inner man and, therefore, does not judge personal faith in confession of faith. To state that in our churches faith is not required is incorrect. The point is that (unlike many charismatic and revivalist groups think) the church has no biblical authority to judge the heart. We wholeheartedly hope that confession of faith is a heartfelt and Spirit-wrought confession, but this is and ought to remain a personal matter between the confessor and the Lord. In other words, the church may go no further than the questions of Voetius which only affirm soundness in doctrine and an outward walk corresponding with the content and spirit of the doctrine. Our reformed fathers understood their place very well and, therefore, carefully guarded and observed this boundary. Summarizing the above, the following points are important to remember:

1. Not the church, but the Lord reigns over and judges the heart. It is for this reason that the focus of Voetius's questions is on the doctrine heard, learned, and confessed as well as the promise to continue steadfastly in this doctrine and to conduct oneself conformable to the doctrine.
2. Confession class is far more serious than a course someone takes, and the examination before the consistory is far weightier than a final exam someone takes in college. However, confession of faith is not a personal bearing witness of faith or a profession to be converted but rather a formal taking upon oneself the oath that was made at baptism. Just like in baptism no one has the right to remain unconverted, yet the church allows baptism to take place (not judging the faith of the parents except for doctrine and walk of life) so in confession of faith, doctrine and life are judged but not the heart.

3. Public confession of faith is not a confession that I become a member but rather that I want to remain a member. Rev. C. Hogchem writes in his *Leesboek bij de Belijdenis Catechisatie* "It is one of two: or we break membership, that is the bond which one has with the church on account of birth and baptism (...) or we perpetuate (or affirm) this membership by pronouncing the desire to remain with the church..."
4. Our Reformed fathers stressed that the examination before the consistory is never an examination of personal faith but rather an ecclesiastical examination regarding knowledge. If we cross that boundary, we cross the scriptural boundary of judging someone's state for eternity.

Let us not forget that the Lord knows the heart, and only He knows and judges what lives in the heart. It is not up to us, office bearers, or others to stand in God's stead. This in no way disarms or minimizes faith from being faith and a confession from being a confession. On the contrary, it ought to fill every professing member with deep concern and true reverence. Abraham said, "I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, which am but dust and ashes" (Genesis 18:27b). We take nothing away from the solemnity of the oath (see Matthew 5:37 and James 1:22, as well as the Heidelberg Catechism Lord's Day 36-37). This ought to ban all presumption towards taking the matter lightly, as well as not taking this step at all, thereby making a confession as well. The latter is often forgotten, I am afraid, by those who needlessly or carelessly postpone this step.

With respect to Lord's Day 7, I see no reason to believe that the questions answered at public confession of faith are at odds with Lord's Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism. In Lord's Day 7, we read a solid and biblical definition of what true saving faith is. If it is well, all those who make public confession of faith will know what is confessed in that Lord's Day. Let no one minimize what a true confession of faith is, but it is not the task, privilege, or liberty of the church to say if this is indeed the case of those who make this confession. That would be the same as telling the parents that by baptism they are baptizing their children in truth or not. I think anyone reading this will realize that this would be an overstepping of one's boundary.

Dear reader, I admit that there remains tension in what I wrote, but if in my answer I had succeeded to remove that tension, I know I would have defeated the purpose of the article. In other words: let that tension remain. It is one thing that I make public confession of faith; it is quite another *how* I do it. I often tell my confession of faith class: let your affirmative answer in confession of faith be at the same time a cry to the living God: "Here I stand, I can do no otherwise. So help me God." Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. ◻

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



For Young and Old

No Other Gods (3)

C.M. Van Der Sluis

The parting

Naturally, a great deal of talking was done throughout the village about the departure of Anna Brongers. Everyone had his or her own thoughts about it. Also, the aged Rev. Lensveld visited her and asked if she were not going in her own chosen way. He seriously pointed out to her the prayer of Moses which was, "Lord, if Thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence."

The impression affected her for a moment, but the cares and pleasures of this life choked the seed. With laughter she cast off all seriousness. The last Sunday before their departure came, Anna was also in church. She cast a glance toward her foster parents and saw their heads bowed with grief.

Rev. Lensveld preached from the catechism about the first commandment. "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me." He preached so seriously and put forth the question, "What is idolatry?" It is to have something else upon which man sets his expectation instead of the only true God who reveals Himself in His Word. To Anna it was as if the minister referred just to her, but surely, she was not an idolatress, was she? Yet, as the minister explained it, she was full of idolatry because she placed her expectation upon herself and man. That just this night he had to preach about this! Listen! "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God." Did Anna know this God? No, she felt this as she never felt it before. It was getting warm in the church; would the minister never say Amen?

Again and again, it resounds with power, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me!” This was a personal message, either to advantage or disadvantage, well or woe, life or death. The people now leave the church, also Anna. Upon coming outside all impressions were swept away as with the wind. She must shake hands with many people as they part, and then she goes for the last night to the home of her foster parents.

The ship will leave from Rotterdam as early as four o’clock in the morning. Many will accompany Anna and Farmer Van Aalten to the ship because more families are making this voyage. They are going to prove how successful they will be—so they reason—in the new world. There stands a man on the wharf; he peers at the deck of the large ship. He is Mr. Brinkman who had made the journey to Rotterdam to bid the last farewell to Anna. There she goes in her own chosen way. In secret silence Mr. Brinkman sighs to the Lord: “Surely, Lord, she cannot run away from Thee! O Lord, follow her, protect her, and break her heart; cause her to be humbled before Thy countenance.” He felt he would never see her again.

Anna was filled with different thoughts. She was so glad she had definitely made up her mind to go; now she was going to a better future. Wasn’t she convinced of this? Yet, one more last parting wave to Mr. Brinkman and her sister, and then...then the ship sails through the New Waterway, toward the ocean and the new country. However, while there, Anna would learn what it means, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Lord.”

In the strange country

No, it was not as Farmer Van Aalten had expected. The disappointments joined themselves together as a chain. They were separated by many miles from everything, and as a natural consequence nothing came of going to church. Sundays were spent in the things pertaining to the world as Farmer Van Aalten wouldn’t even think of reading a sermon with his family. However, Farmer Van Aalten did not lose courage so easily; he would find a way out of his difficulty.

Then something happened which was not expected. Anna was going to leave them and marry a wealthy man.

Now she no longer needed to work so hard, and the vain thoughts which Anna Brongers cherished of herself as Mrs. Olthof rose to a great height. She thought of nothing except of her husband and money. Holland was forgotten; her foster parents were banished from her thoughts, and what was worse than all else...she had forgotten God! Even the message of Mr. Brinkman’s death made no impression upon her.

Man is wretched indeed when God leaves him to go forward in his own chosen way. There was no humble thankfulness in her heart with the birth of her daughter Elsie, only rising pride with what she now possessed. Putting her confidence in her own strength, in their money and goods, her life would go forward. What harm can befall them? She seldom if ever thought of the words of the last Sunday in Holland, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Alas, there was no room for these words.

However, the Lord is God and He shall accomplish that which He pleases. In the end the fuming horse must fall. The Lord says in His Word, “I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquities with stripes.” Misfortune, as Mrs. Olthof called it, (although there is no such thing) came into her home. Death soon came and cut off the life of her husband. There she was with her child and her money in a strange land...without God! Without a Refuge! Yet, no matter how great the loss was, she clung so much the more to her child and her money.

Her cares increased, and she finally decided to convert her possessions into money and go back to Holland. There, secluded by herself in a small village, she would live her life. Who could keep her, the wealthy Mrs. Olthof, from doing this? She had money, and this gave her respect. She could do as she pleased. She had no need for God; she didn’t even think of Him.

By calculating very closely she would be in Holland again exactly at Christmas. A letter had informed her sister of this, and she wrote, saying, “...then we can celebrate Christmas together in Holland.” Yes, without God! So a poor person presumes with his so-called religion. In this way the journey was planned...the months became weeks, and finally the day of departure came. □

(To be continued)

God intermixeth mercy with affliction. He steeps His sword of justice in the oil of mercy; there was no night so dark, but Israel had a pillar of fire in it; there is no condition so dismal, but we may see a pillar of fire to give light. If the body be in pain and the conscience is in peace—there is mercy. Affliction is for the prevention of sin—there is mercy. In the ark there was a rod and a pot of manna, the emblem of a Christian’s condition—mercy interlined with judgment.

—Thomas Watson



Current Events

Significant Restrictions on Freedom of Religion

Most people live in environments with significant restrictions on freedom of religion. These are the findings presented by the US Secretary of State who released the 2020 Annual Report on International Religious Freedom. The report “describes the status of religious freedom in every country” outside of the United States. It identified some of the successes for religious freedom in the past year, but it also highlighted the increasing persecution against religious groups in countries. According to the report as well as recent reports by other governments, religious persecution is globally on the rise. The Director of the Office of International Religious Freedom stressed that “four out of every five people in the world [are] living in environments with high or very high restrictions on religious freedom.”

—ADFIInternational.org

Canada Churches Are Being Burned

An apparent ongoing anti-Christian campaign in Canada has resulted in a total of 45 churches being attacked with some of the buildings being burned to the ground. Terrorists are responsible for the attacks against mainly Roman Catholic churches serving indigenous congregations. The fires and the vandalism span six provinces and the Northwest Territories. Some of the attacks have been in the heartland of First Nation’s territory. It is reported that terrorists have also targeted other churches not affiliated with the Roman Catholic church. The assistant Pentecostal minister at Living Waters Church said, “Burning down churches is not in solidarity with us indigenous people. As I said, we do not destroy people’s places of worship.” The church fires were reported across Canada following the recent discoveries of unmarked graves on the sites of former boarding schools for Indigenous children, many of which were run by churches.

—CBN.com

Supreme Court Divide for Major Abortion Case

Conservative justices make up the majority of the Supreme Court, but this latest term has taught Americans that not all conservatives are created equally. Instead of a 6-3 divide between conservative and liberal justices, some of the court’s major decisions reveal a 3-3-3 divide. “I think the most conservative members are Justices Thomas and Gorsuch, and close by probably Alito,” a professor at South Texas College of Law says. “In the middle,” he says, “are Justices Roberts, Kavanaugh, and the court’s newest member Barrett.” Still, next term the court will tackle several hot-button issues like an abortion case out of Mississippi that strikes at the heart of Roe versus Wade. So how will this new alignment on the court play out? The professor has predicated he doesn’t think there are enough judges with the backbone to change Roe vs Wade.

—CBN.com

Church in Bangladesh Attacked by Buddhists

A church in Bangladesh was attacked and demolished by Buddhist radicals. Local reports indicate the attack took place after weeks of threats. There are about 50 Christians living in Suandrapara who worship at this church. On July 12, Buddhist radicals reportedly confronted the Christians and told them they had to tear down the church within three days. When the Christians did not succumb to these threats, the radicals attacked the church three days later, damaging the church’s gate, cross, and other parts of the building. After the July 12 attack, the radicals demanded the Christians stop all kinds of church activities and reconvert to Buddhism. The Christians were given seven days to meet these demands. On July 22, three days after the radicals’ deadline, they attacked again and demolished the church’s wall, door, and tin roof. The attackers told the Christians that there would be dire consequences for any who reported the attacks to the media or local police.

—Persecution.org

Planned Parenthood Dispensing Cross-sex Hormones

A Planned Parenthood employee is speaking out against the organization’s practices of dispensing cross-sex hormones to trans-identifying teenagers. She feels morally conflicted about the volume of young people coming into the clinic claiming a transgender identity and yet showed signs of emotional and mental health issues. She also expressed great concern over the speed at which they were being prescribed cross-sex hormones, such as testosterone. The young clients were prescribed hormones with almost no examination of their underlying problems, and medical oversight was practically nonexistent, the employee alleged. She said the youths are cash cows, and they are kept on the hook for the foreseeable future in terms of follow-up appointments, bloodwork, meetings, etc.

—ChristianPost.com

Gunmen Kidnap 140 High School Students in Nigeria

Gunmen have kidnapped 140 students from a boarding school in northwest Nigeria, a school official said on Monday, the latest in a wave of mass abductions targeting schoolchildren and students. Heavily armed criminal gangs often attack villages but since the start of the year they have increasingly targeted schools and colleges. “The kidnappers took away 140 students, only 25 students escaped. We still have no idea where the students were taken,” a teacher at the school said. “Tactical police teams went after the kidnappers,” a police spokesman said. Around 1,000 students and pupils have been abducted in different Nigerian states since December last year. Most have been released after negotiations with local officials, although some are still being held.

—CBSNews.com

God preordained for His own glory and the display of His attributes of mercy and justice, a part of the human race, without any merit of their own, to eternal salvation, and another part, in just punishment of their sin, to eternal damnation.

—John Calvin



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (21)

Article XXV: Of the Abolishing of the Ceremonial Law *(continued)*

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

The Ceremonial Laws also speak about the great feasts of Israel, namely, Passover, Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. The Passover was held on the fourteenth day of the month Nisan, which is around the first of April. On that day, Israel remembered how the Lord had delivered them out of Egypt. All the first born of the Egyptians had died, but the Israelites were safe behind the blood. This feast pointed to Christ, who would work out the true deliverance from the hellish Pharaoh, and would go as a lamb to the slaughter. It was also the beginning of the harvest; the people were not allowed to eat of the new harvest prior to the Passover. This is our Easter.

Pentecost was held fifty days after Passover and is also called the Feast of Weeks. Passover was the beginning of the harvest while Pentecost was the end. On this day two loaves of bread, baked from the new harvest, were brought before the Lord. Israel also remembered that they had received the Law from Sinai on that occasion, and we commemorate the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

The Feast of Tabernacles at the end of the year was the third great feast of the Israelites and lasted seven days. During those days Israel lived in tabernacles made of branches to remember the wandering of their fathers in the desert from Egypt to Canaan. Great thankfulness was also shown to the Lord for the blessings bestowed upon them in the land of Canaan. We can compare this feast to our Thanksgiving Day.

There were also smaller feasts which they observed, such as the day of blowing of trumpets, which would be comparable to our New Year (Numbers 29:1). Another is the Day of Atonement, at which time atonement was made for sin (Leviticus 23:26-31). A third is the Sabbath Year, during which the whole country must rest. In that year they were not allowed to sow or to harvest. The last one we will mention is the Year of Jubilee. Then all the slaves were freed, and all the possessions were given back to their

brothers who had been forced to sell because of poverty. You can understand that many Israelites were anxiously awaiting the beginning of that year. All these things the Lord had described in the Ceremonial Law.

The Ceremonial Law also spoke of sacred things, which included all kinds of offerings to be brought before the Lord. Each offering, such as burnt, sin, thank, and cleansing offerings, was brought under different circumstances. When an animal died in the place of a sinner, it pointed to Christ, who was yet to come. In Colossians 2:17a Paul, speaking about the Ceremonial Law, says "Which are a shadow of things to come." However, when Christ was come, they no longer had any power. This is also the meaning of this article. It seems to be very simple, but it has in the past given many problems. The article says, "We believe, that the ceremonies and figures of the law ceased at the coming of Christ, and that all the shadows are accomplished; so that the use of them must be abolished amongst Christians." Since everything of the Ceremonial Law is fulfilled in Christ, they are no longer in use. In essence the Old and New Testaments are both the same as both speak of the grace by and in Christ. We may not say that we do not need the Old Testament any longer because both are God's Word and are one. However, the form is different; the Old Testament is the promise, and the New Testament is the fulfillment of the promise in Christ.

Several prophets had foretold that the Ceremonial Law would not remain forever. In Isaiah 19:19 we read, "In that day shall there be an altar to the LORD in the midst of the land of Egypt, and a pillar at the border thereof to the LORD." We read in Jeremiah 3:16 that the time will come when the tabernacle will no longer be visible in Israel and in Daniel 9:27 that the Lord shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. The Apostle Paul spoke very clearly of these things in Galatians 4:3-5, "Even so

we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." This is a testimony that the Ceremonial Law came to an end.

The Lord Himself has broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and heathens. At the Synod in Jerusalem this matter was spoken about in Acts 15:10, and Peter said, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" The Lord Jesus Himself has shown the way in this, when in John 4:23-24 He said, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." This also points to the end of the Ceremonial Law.

The decision of the Council at Jerusalem was maintained for some time, but later the church turned the wrong way. After this Synod, especially the Judaists caused much trouble in the early Christian church. However, the struggle was even heavier against the doctrine of Rome which gradually returned to the Ceremonial Law in many parts of their religion. Calvin says that the Church of Rome imitates the Ceremonial Law as a monkey. The veil of the most holy place, rent when the Lord Jesus died, is repaired by Rome in their human institutions. In the Reformation the Lord delivered out of the house of bondage although there remained some differences between Luther and Calvin. Luther wanted to keep that which was not forbidden in God's Word while Calvin and Zwingli wanted to keep only those things which God's Word commanded. In England John Knox fought for the liberation of the church and the abolishing of the ceremonies. Many followers of the Reformers immigrated to North America.

In Holland there have been differences about the holy days, about the official robes, and later on about the observance of the Sunday. Especially during the years 1658-72 there were many problems since Coccejus taught that the fourth commandment is ceremonial and no longer necessary to be observed. For many it became a day of feasting with only one

church service; in harvest and haying time the people worked in the fields on Sunday, even the ministers. Voetius and Brakel, based upon the Word of God, fought against it with all their might. Gradually the consciences of the church people were awakened, and they began to understand that it was God's commandment to observe Sunday, also under the New Testament.

In our days our governments and people in general do not listen to God's Word but go their own way. Many things are done on Sunday which previously were not allowed. We think only of visiting each other on Sunday and going on holidays on that day so that there is no possibility to go up to God's house, and the time, or a major part of it, is spent in the world. That must be condemned as it will lead to a complete break with God's Day. When we have company on Sunday what, in general, is spoken about? Is it not the world? It is a means of the devil to pick away the seed. It is against the fourth commandment.

We read further in the article, "So that the use of them must be abolished amongst Christians; yet the truth and substance of them remain with us in Jesus Christ." This does not mean that a part of the Old Testament no longer has value for us. In our dispensation we must also read and consult the Old Testament Books of the Bible. This was done by the Lord Jesus when He spoke of His own sacrifice, work, and person. The apostles very often used the Old Testament to defend their doctrine. We must live according to the spirit of the Old Testament, which was to the honor of God, and this is the same in both the Old and New Testaments.

When we say that the shadow of the law came to an end, it does not mean that the law is no longer a rule in the life of a Christian. The law explains God's will to us. Out of the law we know our misery, but it is also a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, and this under the administration of the Holy Ghost as it is His special work to glorify Christ.

Is this also found in us? Do we seek the honor of God, or is it a burden to keep the law of God? I wish there would come a time in your life that you felt the responsibility of keeping the law and that it became a burden too heavy to carry any longer. Then a crying would be born for that Mediator who is very God and real righteous man. He has fulfilled everything which is necessary for the salvation of His Church.

You read your Bible every day, you say? Well! that is good so far as it goes, but does the Bible ever read you?

—Thomas Bradbury



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Spies Meet Rahab

(Based on Joshua 2)

The children of Israel had reached Canaan. Now they could enter the country and make their home there. They could not do that, could they? Were there not other people living in the country? How could they just push their way onto someone else's land? Joshua knew what to do. He decided to send two spies into the country first. These spies would look here and there and try to find the best way to make their way into Canaan. They would see whether the people were strong or weak and whether the Israelites could just come in or whether they would need to fight.

The two spies sneaked into a city, a city called Jericho. It wasn't easy to enter cities in those days. Those cities had big walls all the way around. In fact, the walls were so wide that you could put a house on top of them. There were people who lived in houses on the walls around the city. The two spies found one of the houses on the wall and asked to stay there overnight. A woman named Rahab lived there. Rahab was kind to them, but she had once been very wicked. She had done some very wrong things in her life.

Listen to this. Rahab had been wicked; she had done some terrible sins, but—God was working in her heart, changing her, giving her a new heart. We may think we are good people, we go to church, we read the Bible, and we don't think we do too many terrible things. However, something else is necessary. We, too, need a new heart. Rahab had been a very wicked woman, but she was given a heart to fear God. (Later, the Lord Jesus came from one of Rahab's many descendants, or grandchildren.) The king of Jericho soon heard that there were spies in his country. He heard that they had been seen at Rahab's house. Right away he sent his men to her, saying, "Bring out those spies that are staying at your house."

Rahab had already hidden the spies. "Yes," she said, "there were two men staying at my house, but I didn't realize who they were. Last night they left and went that way. Hurry! You might still catch up with them." And, of course, the king's men hurried off.

Had the spies really left? No, they were hiding on Rahab's roof. Rahab had lied. The spies had not left her. She knew where they were. She knew they were hiding in her house. Wasn't it wrong to lie? Yes, it was. Rahab should not have done it. Yet, God was

merciful and kept her and the spies safe.

As soon as the king's men had left, Rahab told the spies to run the other way. Before they left, she had something important to ask them. "I have heard a lot about your people," she told the spies. "I have heard about your God, and all the things He has done for you. I know that your God is the true God, and I know He is going to give you this land. Now..." Rahab said to the spies, "please promise me something. I have been very kind to you. I fed you and hid you. Will you please be kind to me and my family, and save us when you come through and destroy our city?"

The men promised they would save her and her family, and then she let them down through her window. Remember, Rahab lived on the wall of the city, so she could let them down all the way to the ground outside the city with a rope. Rahab used a bright red rope to let the men down. The spies told her, "Be sure to hang this bright red rope out your window when we attack the city. You may bring your father, mother, brothers, and sisters into your house also, and then you and they will not be killed."

Then the men said, "We can save only the people inside your house. If anyone leaves your house at that time, he will not be safe. Remember, you must hang out that red rope." Soon the spies had climbed down the rope to the ground, and they ran off toward the hills.

After three days the king's men had stopped looking for the spies, so the spies hurried home and reported what they had seen. They told Joshua, "Truly God is with us and has given us this land, for even all the people are afraid of us."



Rahab helps spies escape.



Bible Quiz

Beggars

Dear Boys and Girls,

Cole nearly laughed with relief when he saw the large house in the distance. His mouth was parched, and his knees kept buckling. He put his hand on Tex's back for a moment to steady himself, took a deep breath, and made his way toward the house. How long had he been lost in the woods? He didn't know. What had begun as a hike on a steep, narrow trail had ended in hours of wandering. Probably by now someone was looking for him. Tex's tongue hung out of his mouth. He, too, was parched and could barely drag his paws another step.

Cole knocked hesitantly. He did not know what kind of reception he would receive. He did not know if the people living here were kind, or if they would not want to be bothered. He did not even know if they were trustworthy, but Cole had no choice. The phone he had when he began the hike had dropped into the lake earlier in the afternoon. He would just ask if he could take a few sips from the faucet at the back of the house and call his parents.

Cole waited. Was anyone going to come to the door? He knocked harder. He was at the mercy of whoever lived here—he had nothing to give them or pay them, and he did not know if they wanted to help him or not, but he could not go away either. He needed the drink and the help too much to leave. The waiting seemed very long, but when the door did finally creak open, Cole almost cried with relief. Someone had answered his knock!

Cole was a bit like a beggar—someone needing and asking something without being able to pay. A beggar cannot claim to be worthy of what he is asking for, either. Beggars are often in great need. Think of beggars in the Bible—Bartimaeus would not stop calling even though the people told him to be quiet; the lepers outside the city that was besieged were so desperate that they decided to beg for food at the camp of the enemy (when they arrived there, the enemy had already fled). They have no other choice; they cannot leave. They do not feel worthy of receiving anything, but they need it so much.

There are beggars who do not ask for money or food or drink. Instead, they ask for God and His grace. These beggars are people who beg of the Lord.

They do not know how great their need is until the Lord shows them, and now, they go to Him again and again. They realize that if they ever receive an answer, it is through God's mercy and goodness and not because they deserve it; they deserve quite the opposite. While they are begging the Lord to be merciful to them, they know that the Lord would be just if He would cast them away instead. Why do they not go away then? They need His mercy too much, and they know that the Lord is ABLE to provide it, even when they do not know if He WILL.

The Lord is able to save them from their sins through Jesus Christ, and He is able to answer all their prayers. He is able to be their God in this life and for eternity. The woman in the Bible who cried after the Lord Jesus did not stop either, even when He told her that He had not come for dogs. She had nowhere else to go. These people would like just a little place in that line of beggars who are waiting at the throne of grace—even if they are the very, very last one. What a wonder it is to them if they MAY wait in that beggar's line and are not yet sent away.

*The beggar does resemble them that pray
To God for mercy, and will take no nay
But wait, and count that all His hard gainsays
Are nothing else but fatherly delay;
Then imitate him, praying souls, and cry:
There's nothing like to importunity.*

—John Bunyan

Beggars at God's throne...what are they doing? They are praying. They do not look like real beggars, dressed in rags with a cup in their hand. They look like everyone else, but their heart has a great need. Sometimes they have many needs, and they may bring them all to the Lord. They ask the Lord to care for them and keep them from danger and from sin; they ask the Lord to convert, forgive, be with, guide, and help not only themselves but also their family members and other loved ones. They ask the Lord for His will and not their own will in their lives; above all, they go back to the Lord again and again and beg Him, "Lord, wilt Thou grant me that only comfort in life and in death—to belong to Thee?"

Who may come to this throne of grace to beg? Anyone—no one is turned away. Ask the Lord to make you a true beggar, such as it says in Psalm 130, “Lord, hear my voice: let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.”

* * * * *

Take an answer from the box for each of these questions.

Lazarus	Bartimaeus	Lame man	Cripple man
---------	------------	----------	-------------

What did these beggars ask for?

- b. Mercy _____
- b. Alms _____
- s. Crumbs _____
- i. Healing _____

Where were they begging?

- o. Rich man’s gate _____
- m. In Lystra _____
- l. The wayside _____
- i. The temple’s gate Beautiful _____

What was the answer they received?

- i. Jesus healed his eyes. _____
- r. He was carried up into heaven. _____
- r. Peter and John came by, and in the name of Jesus he walked. _____
- p. Paul told him to stand up, and he leaped and walked. _____

Now take the letter from the first question, place it in the first blank behind each name, the letter from the second question, place it in the second blank behind each name, and the letter from the third question, and place it in the third blank behind each name. This will give you the ailment each beggar suffered from.

- 1. Lazarus: ___ ___ ___ es
- 2. Bartimaeus: ___ ___ ___ nd
- 3. Lame man: lame from ___ ___ ___ th
- 4. Cripple man: ___ ___ ___ otent on his feet

Fill in the blanks.

5. In 1 Samuel we read, “He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory: for the pillars of the earth are the LORD’S, and He hath set the _____ upon them.”

6. In Psalm 109 we read, “Let his children be continually _____, and beg: let them seek their bread also out of their desolate places.”

7. In Luke 16 we read, “Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot _____; to beg I am ashamed.”

8. “And there was a certain beggar named _____, which was laid at his gate, full of sores.”

9. “And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham’s _____: the rich man also died, and was buried.”

10. In Luke 18 we read, “And it came to pass, that as he was come nigh unto _____, a certain blind man sat by the way side begging.”

11. In Luke 23 we read, “This man went unto Pilate, and begged the _____ of Jesus.”

12. Acts 3 tells us, “Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the _____ hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; Who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms.”

For the Older Children

Finish these beggar’s pleas using answers in box below. (Mark 10, Psalm 116, Psalm 118, Luke 18)

- 13. Jesus, Son of David _____
- 14. O LORD, I beseech Thee, _____
- 15. _____, I beseech Thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity.
- 16. _____ of mine adversary.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - avenge me - deliver my soul - save now - have mercy on me
--

For the Younger Children

17. Fill in the missing words from Acts 14. “And there sat a certain man at Lystra, impotent in his _____, being a _____ from his mother’s womb, who never had _____: The same heard Paul speak: who stedfastly beholding him, and perceiving that he had faith to be _____, Said with a loud voice, _____ upright on thy feet. And he leaped and walked.”

Choose an answer from the box on next page.

18. What do Proverbs 3:27 and 14:21 tell us to do to the poor? _____

19. What do Matthew 5:42 and 1 John 3:17 tell us to do for those in need? _____

20. What do Philippians 2:4 and Romans 13:7,8 tell us to do for others? _____

- Give and do not hold back
- Do good and have mercy
- Look on their needs as well as our own, love them, and give them what they are due

Answers to August's "Help" quiz:

1. burden, relieve, grief, sought, poor, mercy, cry, answer, prayer, humbly, voice, trouble
2. rovers, verse 21
3. came, verse 25,
4. fire, verse 22
5. sink, verse 7
6. vision, verse 9
7. bid, verse 40
8. Psalm 46:1
9. Psalm 121:2
10. vain, Psalm 60:11
11. hope, Psalm 146:5
12. help, Isaiah 41:13

Answers to previous quizzes were received in June from:

Benson Bakker 17
Clay Bakker 5
Sawyer Bakker 4
Britni Blom 22
GaryJon Blom 12
Marissa Blom 21
Martena Blom 27
Willem Blom 15
Carly Brouwer 4
Derek Brouwer 22
Thomas Brouwer 22
Kaylee Den Boer (2) 19

Zachary Den Dekker 1
Kaylynn Ekema 25
Weston Ekema 13
Kari Groen (2) 16
Kurtis Groen (2) 17
Jack Kamp 2
Autumn Kegel 7
Sophia Kegel 7
Jada Kelderman 1
Madeline Mol 12
Olivia Mol 16
Blake Pannekoek 5

Lauren Pannekoek (2) 16
Amara Stam 1
Carlyn Stubbe 6
Marla Stubbe 6
Megan Taylor (4) 17
Colin Ten Hove 17
Hannah-Jo Ten Hove 4
Esther Teunissen 16
Aaliyah Timmer 17
Drake Timmer 13
Hunter Timmer 19
Kadin Timmer 19

Laurencia Timmer 12
Sierra Timmer 17
Wyatt Timmer 13
Ashton Timmermans 7
Zachary Van Brugge 1
Austin Van Den Top 9
Caleb Van Den Top 9
Collin Van Den Top 9
Taylina Van Wingerden 7
Ellie Van't Zelfde 9
Levi Van't Zelfde 9
Alivia Vande Hoef 26

Micah Vande Hoef 21
Wyatt Vande Waerdt 10
Jayden Weeda (2) 11
Heidi Ymker 22

6 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is 411!



Letters to My Young Readers

Benson Bakker

What type of breed chicks are you raising, or do you have a mixed flock? I'm glad you still have sixteen left. It sounds like fun to wash out the trailers, especially on a hot day. Are you having a good summer? Time goes by so fast, doesn't it? By the time you read this, you might be doing school work again. Which grade are you in now? I hope the Lord will bless the Bible lessons to your heart. Above all, ask him often, "Teach me Thy way..."

Welcome to our new members:
Zachary den Dekker, Jada Kelderman,
and Zachary Van Brugge.

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. A. Schot of Nunspeet, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Covell Ave., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Declined:

By Rev. B.J. van Boven of De Valk-Wekerom, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Brant County (Bethel), Ontario.

■ Obituaries

COOPER, Henry – Age 99, July 15, 2021; North Haledon, New Jersey; Wife – Jozina (nee Sweetman) (deceased); survived by nephew John & Sherry Wigboldus; pre-deceased by brother Marinus. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Genesis 5:27.)

VANDE HOEF, Gerrit – Age 97, July 20, 2021; Sioux Center, Iowa; Wife – Cornelia “Nellie” (nee Blom) (deceased); Sisters – Judy Groeneweg, Gertrude Den Boer; Sisters-in-law – Tillie Blom, Jennie Blom; survived by several nieces, nephews, and other extended family. (Rev. H. Hofman, Ecclesiastes 12:5b.)

VAN PAGEE, Laurens – Age 84, July 25, 2021; St. Catharines, Ontario; Children – Christina, Elizabeth, David, and Larry Van Pagee; and grandchildren. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Luke 15:11-24.)

■ Report of the Classis Far West Youth Conference

The young people of the Classis were able to gather for this year’s conference, hosted by the Nobleford congregation, on Saturday, July 24.

After a few welcoming words Rev. G.M. de Leeuw opened the conference and presented a topic based on Genesis 37. He explained how the conflict in the family of Jacob, as the result of the brothers having different mothers but the same father, resulted in hatred towards Joseph. Joseph was sold to the Midianites and brought to Egypt to accomplish God’s purpose of bringing the children of Israel into Egypt. Even today Egypt is less hostile towards the Jews.

After a short intermission Rev. H.D. den Hollander gave a thought-provoking topic on how we can come to know about God by general revelation but can only know who God is by special revelation. He went on to explain that although God is the final cause of all things, yet man is responsible for his actions since he has his own cause. God uses man to achieve His purpose, which is the glory of His name.

In Memoriam

Mr. Henry Cooper

It pleased the Lord to take the oldest member, Mr. Henry Cooper, from our congregation on Thursday, July 15th, 2021, at the age of ninety-nine. Mr. Cooper served our congregation as a deacon from 1968-1971 with love and his God-given talents. He is survived by one nephew who resides in Wisconsin.

—The Franklin Lakes NRC Consistory

In Memoriam

Mr. Laurens van Pagee

Late in the evening of the Lord’s Day, July 25, 2021, the moment came that Mr. L. van Pagee exchanged time for eternity at the age of eighty-four years old. In all simplicity, with the love of his heart, he served the St. Catharines’ congregation for a period of eighteen years (1981-1999), first, twelve years as deacon and then, six years as elder. May the Lord remember the mourning family, bless his labors in the past, and sanctify the calling unto all our hearts.

—The St. Catharines NRC Consistory

After lunch the youth enjoyed some activities at Calvin Christian School and returned to the church for supper. That evening there was an opportunity for a sing-a-long before Rev. H.D. den Hollander answered some questions.

May the Lord grant His blessing on the instruction given and grant an acknowledging heart that we could gather again with our young people.

—Submitted by Elder M. Slingerland, Nobleford NRC

■ The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

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

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

35th Wedding Anniversary

On August 1, 2021, our dear parents, and grandparents,

Rev. & Mrs. H. Hofman

commemorated 35 years of marriage.

Many times the Lord has fulfilled their wedding text, and we pray that He will continue to do so in the future.

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

112 Pratt Road, Kalamazoo, MI 49001

50th Wedding Anniversary

Our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Ken & Marg Both

hope to celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary on October 8, 2021, the Lord willing. It is our wish that the Lord may continue to uphold them in the unknown future

“O God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come.”

Box 200, Rosedale, BC V0X 1X0

65th Wedding Anniversary

On August 8, 2021, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Gary & JoAnn Van Beek

celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary.

“But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

734 Riverview Drive, Rock Valley, IA 51247

Education

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, continues to invite applications from teachers of any grade or subject specialty to fill anticipated vacancies beginning January 2022, DV. We would be thankful to hear from versatile and dedicated applicants to enable continued provision of Christian education to our children and young people. All applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination, and must be eligible for Alberta certification. For more information about any position at CCS, please contact the principal, Mr. Marc Slingerland at 403-381-3030 or marc.slingerland@ccschool.ca. Should the Lord incline your heart to apply, please submit a cover letter, resumé or c.v., and references to office@ccschool.ca.

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.

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.**

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

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 looking for a Director of School Operations. The director is the chief executive officer and educational leader of our school. He will strive to direct the school according to the mission, vision, and guiding principles of our Christian school, relying on the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, and the policies and procedures of RCS.

The director reports to Board of Rehoboth Christian School. Primary duties are:

- **Leadership**—The director administers the school internally through principals, vice-principals, curriculum co-ordinators and the office team.
- **Instruction and Curriculum**—The director is responsible for the implementation of the school's educational program.
- **Personnel**—The director is responsible for the supervision of all RCS personnel.
- **Students**: Along with the administration, the director is responsible for the education, safety and conduct of the students of RCS.
- **Operations**—The director provides oversight of all school operations, including the following of board policies and directives.
- **Communication**—The director represents RCS within our local community and to the public.

The successful applicant shall have the following qualifications:

- NRC male member in good standing with a solid knowledge of the Scriptures and Reformed doctrines.
- A strong desire for the spiritual and temporal welfare of our students.
- Good written and verbal communication skills.
- Strong management skills.
- An educational degree is strongly preferred, but not necessary for this position.

For more information, or to apply for this position, please email schoolboard@rcsnorwich.com or contact the RCS board president, Evert Veldhuizen, at 519-537-1139.

* * * * *

We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. Please visit our website at www.rcsnorwich.com for more detailed information about available positions, or contact the interim director, Mr. Andy Stubbe, at director@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 223. Submit cover letters and resumes to 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 or 604-794-7114 for more information and an application package.

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

Come 2 Carterton, New Zealand
PONATAHI CHRISTIAN SCHOOL

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

**To All Candidates
for Teacher Positions**

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

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **Schooljobs!**

Natural Foolishness

Thomas Boston (1676-1732)

(Taken from *Human Nature in its Fourfold State*
[The Sinfulness of Man's Natural State])

“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually” (Genesis 6:5).

Everything in nature is against believing in Jesus Christ. What beauty can the blind man discern in a crucified Savior, for which he is to be desired? How can the will, naturally impotent, yes, and averse to good, make choice of Him? Well may the soul then say to Him in the day of the spiritual siege, as the Jebusite said to David in another case, “Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither” (2 Samuel 5:6b). The way of nature is to go into oneself for all according to the fundamental maxim of unsanctified morality, “That a man should trust in himself” which, according to the doctrine of faith, is mere foolishness—for so it is determined that “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool” (Proverbs 28:26). Now faith is the soul's going out of itself for all—and this, nature, on the other hand, determines to be foolishness (1 Corinthians 1:18-23). Therefore, there is need of the working of mighty power to cause sinners to believe (Ephesians 1:19; Isaiah 53:1). We see the promises of welcome to sinners in the gospel-covenant are ample, large, and free, clogged with no conditions (Isaiah 55:1; Revelation 22:17). If they cannot believe His bare word, He has given His oath upon it (Ezekiel 33:11); and, for their greater assurance, He has annexed seals to His sworn covenant, namely, the holy sacraments—so that no more could be demanded of the most faithless person in the world to make us believe Him than the Lord has condescended to give us, to make us believe Himself. This plainly speaks nature to be against believing; and speaks of those who flee to Christ for a refuge to have need of strong consolation (Hebrews 6:18) to balance their strong doubts and propensity to unbelief. Further, it also may be observed how in the word sent to a secure, graceless generation, their objections are answered beforehand; and words of grace are heaped one upon another as you may read in Isaiah 55:7-9; Joel 2:13. Why? Because the Lord knows, that when these secure sinners are thoroughly awakened, doubts, fears, and carnal reasonings against believing will be getting into their breasts as thick as dust in a house raised by sweeping a dry floor.

I would say to my soul, O my soul, this is not the place of despair; this is not the time to despair in. As long as mine eyes can find a promise in the Bible, as long as there is a moment left me of breath or life in this world, so long will I wait or look for mercy, so long will I fight against unbelief and despair.

—John Bunyan

Prayer Answered by Crosses

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek more earnestly His face.

'Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer;
But it has been in such a way
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour
At once He'd answer my request,
And by His love's constraining power
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry powers of hell
Assault my soul in every part.

Yea, more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed;
Blasted my gourd, and laid me low.

"Lord, why is this?" I trembling cried.
"Wilt Thou pursue Thy worm to death?"
"'Tis in this way," the Lord replied,
"I answer prayer for grace and faith.

"These inward trials I employ
From self and pride to set thee free,
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou mayest seek thy all in Me."

—*John Newton*