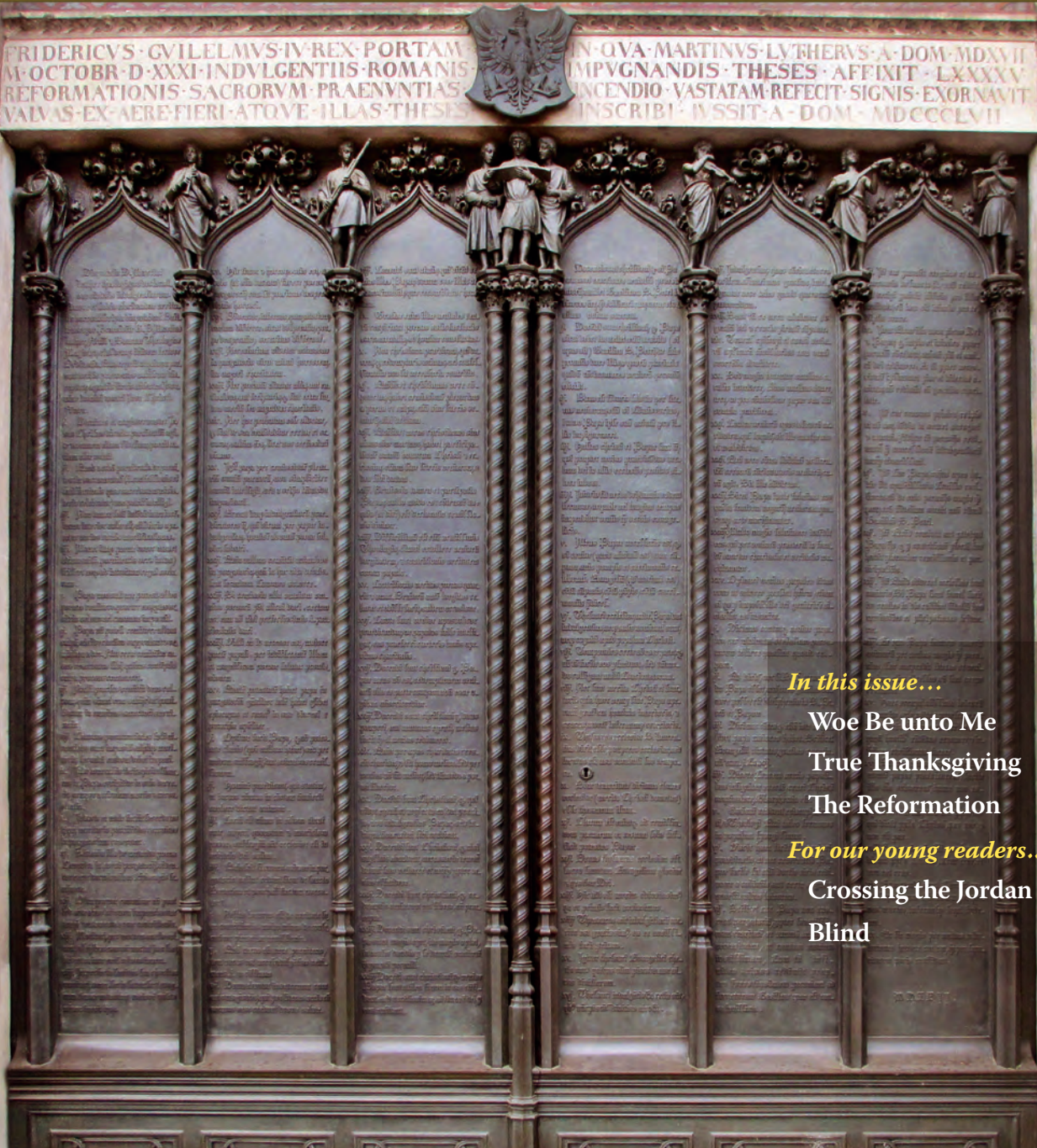


the Banner of Truth

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



In this issue...

Woe Be unto Me
True Thanksgiving
The Reformation

For our young readers...

Crossing the Jordan River
Blind

*"Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen...
but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons." DEUTERONOMY 4:9*



Meditation Woe Be unto Me <i>Rev. P. van Ruitenburg</i>	219	For Young & Old No Other Gods (4) <i>C.M. Van Der Sluis</i>	229
Bible Study The Life of Daniel (20) <i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>	220	Current Events	231
Biblical Lifestyle A Warning Against World Conformity (2) <i>Rev. W.C. Lamain</i>	222	TIMOTHY – for the Young The Confession of Faith (22) Article XXVI: Of Christ's Intercession <i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>	232
From Our Inheritance True Thanksgiving <i>Rev. P.L. Bazen</i>	223	Bible Stories for Little Ones Crossing the Jordan River <i>Submitted</i>	233
The Preservation of His People <i>John Newton</i>	224	Bible Quiz Blind <i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	234
Doctrinal Studies Godly Sorrow (4) <i>Rev. J.J. van Eckeveld</i>	226	Letters to My Young Readers	237
Church Hisstory The Reformation <i>Rev. D. Rietdijk</i>	227	News & Announcements	238
Questions & Answers Questions from Our Readers <i>Rev. H. Hofman</i>	228	Back Cover Ebenezer <i>John Newton</i>	240

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Meditation

Woe Be unto Me

Rev. P. van Ruitenburch, Chilliwack, AB

“For necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!” (1 Corinthians 9:16b).

Gospel?

We read here about the gospel. The word gospel literally means “good news” and occurs ninety-three times in the Bible, exclusively in the New Testament. The gospel is, broadly speaking, the whole of Scripture; more narrowly, the gospel is the good news concerning Christ and the way of salvation. The gospel is that we are hell-worthy sinners who can be restored by God and to God by repenting from our sins and believing in the Lord Jesus Christ. “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have eternal life” (John 3:14&15).

The gospel preached

The Lord did not only call Saul of Tarsus from darkness to His marvelous light but also called him to the ministry of the gospel. Paul, in verse 15, would rather die than hinder that gospel, and in verse 16 Paul warns and threatens himself, “Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!”

Laid upon me

Why does Paul use such strong language? Well, God laid it on Paul’s heart. He carried the responsibility of preaching the word, and he could not leave it. It was a holy must, a necessity laid on him. He was like Jeremiah who said: “I will not make mention of Him, nor speak any more in His name. But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jeremiah 20:9).

Urgent

Not only Paul but all preachers need to feel the urgency of preaching the gospel. They should have the conviction to die rather than to not preach. “I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22b). Note the repeated word “all.” Paul cannot possibly be quiet; he cannot preach just casually as if he would have been called to simply entertain his hearers. He is also not just providing counseling; he is not lecturing but is moved with compassion and trembles within, knowing what is at stake and proclaims the Word. His hearers have a soul for eternity; he is a herald and must preach well and woe!

The wrath of God

What is at stake? Salvation is salvation from God’s wrath. Do you realize that? A holy and good-doing God is angry with sin and must punish sinners. You need to know that. Without knowing the wrath of a holy God, you will not and cannot value the gospel. You will actually hate it. Not understanding the anger of God makes us shallow, and without understanding the state of death, preachers cannot really love their people either. I need more insight, more life, more love, more urgency, and you dear reader, whether you belong to God’s people or not, you need more insight into God’s anger. All our righteousnesses are filthy rags, and our daily needs—loneliness, pain, mourning, sickness—you name it; all pale compared to the just anger of a holy God who has made us in His image. Read this: “Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him” (Romans 5:9). From WRATH—are you still under the wrath of God? Does the offer of

the gospel that saves from God’s wrath sound like good news to you?

Love

Ministers need to have a deep love for God’s glory, love for souls, love for God’s people, and love for the Lord

Jesus Christ. Therefore, pray that the love of Christ would constrain your pastor. The Lord will ask the blood from the hands of ministers if they deceive sinners or do not preach the full gospel, thus keeping sinners away from Christ. The Lord Jesus was willing to absorb that wrath in order to save His people. He was crucified to merit and apply salvation to the elect. We must preach Jesus Christ and hold Him up high like Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. Woe unto me if I do not do that. “For the love of Christ constraineth us...” (2 Corinthians 5:14a).

Preaching

Preachers are not called to only inform and explain the Bible and describe the experiences of God’s people. They must be a herald announcing the anger and judgment of God, calling sinners to repent and believe, persuading and commanding them. We need to preach Christ. Not only how a rich Jesus and a poor sinner meet—that is also essential—but we also need to proclaim the Son. The Heidelberg Catechism clearly writes: “It is declared

Without knowing the wrath of a holy God, you will not and cannot value the gospel. You will actually hate it. Not understanding the anger of God makes us shallow, and without understanding the state of death, preachers cannot really love their people either.

and publicly testified to all and every believer; that, whenever they receive the promise of the gospel by a true faith, all their sins are really forgiven them of God for the sake of Christ merits; and on the contrary, when it is declared and testified to all unbelievers, and such as do not sincerely repent, that they stand exposed to the wrath of God and eternal condemnation, so long as they are unconverted” (Heidelberg Catechism. L.D. 31, Q. 84).

Pray

Paul asked for prayer, prayer that utterance may be given unto him, that he may open his mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel (Ephesians 6:19). You also should pray for ministers and elders to do the same. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him” (Psalm 2:12). □



Bible Study

The Life of Daniel (20)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And the king shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done” (Daniel 11:36).

The last part of the book of Daniel is not to be chronologically placed after the rule of King Darius. Chapters 7-12 comprise the visions of the four beasts, the revelation of the seventy weeks of years, and finally the struggles of the wicked powers in the world against God and His kingdom. There will not only be terrible events and judgments of God upon Israel, but we also read what will be experienced in the latter days by God’s Church, Jews and Gentiles. However, also in these days the Lord is above all the disturbances, strife, and battles of the nations, and He will certainly attain His ultimate object, the final completion of His kingdom on earth.

A mighty ruler

We read here of the rise of Antiochus Epiphanes. Scripture tells us that he was a despised person, but by flatteries and enticement and also with violence, he would become a powerful ruler. He was actually by origin a captured slave from Rome, a despised person. As Absalom in the days of King David, by feigned kindness and flattery he won over the king of Pergamos for his cause.

We will now consider the second part of this chapter; the rise of Antiochus is portrayed in verses 21-24. He ultimately would obtain regal dignity which did not belong to him. In verses 25-28 we read of his first campaign against Egypt. This appeared to have been successful, for in verse 28 we read that he returned with great riches. However, the following verse speaks of another expedition against Egypt

which was not so successful. The Romans helped Egypt and chased him away.

Then his rage was turned “against the holy covenant” (verse 30). That does not mean a holy people, but Israel was still a people highly privileged by God as His own people. Jerusalem was the place where the true God was worshiped, and the rage of the enemy was actually not only against the Jews but against the God whom Antiochus Epiphanes did not acknowledge but before whom he once would stand to give an account of his horrible deeds.

We read in verses 30-35 about persecution and oppression of the Jewish people. In verse 31 we read what Antiochus Epiphanes did to the temple; his armed forces would stand as guards in the temple of Jerusalem, and what is the worst, we read in verse 31, “they shall pollute the sanctuary of strength.” The temple will be desecrated, an altar of a heathen god erected in the sacred place, and even the worship of God and the bringing of sacrifices shall cease to exist. Oh, how must the God-fearing Israelite, the remnant that the Lord would have preserved in those days, have mourned? It seemed that God had forsaken them.

In many places in the world today, the Church of God is persecuted also; people cannot come together in God’s house. There is place only for the idolatrous worship of the state, and compliance with what the government dictates is required; otherwise, prison camps, tortures, and the rage of the enemy are waiting for them. The country of China is an example of the power of state which the anti-Christian rulers have over the people. No, the enemy will not always come with open threats. He is even more dangerous when he comes with what we read in verse 32, “shall he corrupt by flatteries.”

However, even in the time when this heathen king oppresses them, there will be a people “that do know their

God” (verse 32). There will be those that “understand among the people” (verse 33), those who may point out others to the way of wisdom. In verse 34 we read, “They shall be holpen with a little help.” It is the time of the uprising of the Jews under the leadership of Judas Maccabeus. Verse 35 says that “some of them of understanding shall fall” in this time of testing. The chaff will be separated also from the true grain. However, “it is yet for a time appointed.” Whatever happened in those terrible days when Antiochus Epiphanes seemed to be allowed to do whatever he wished, it was for a time appointed, that is, God ruled even when the temple service had been made impossible.

Is this not a picture of the situation in our countries? Is it not a time of testing already? Will it not be a wonder if pressure increases, and persecution is everywhere so that we would appear to be nothing but chaff? It will only be God’s preserving grace if we are kept.

Human pride

There is a poison in all of our blood, the poison of human pride. In Paradise we have listened to the liar from the beginning, to his promise that “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” That is exactly what we see happening in our days but what also lives in our own hearts. It is only God’s restraining grace if it is not made manifest in our actions. It is the spirit of the time to worship the idol of self and to deny any absolute authority. Not the Lord, but we make our own laws; we will decide what is good and evil, and no one else has to tell us this. Then not only do men make laws, laws which the Lord says are evil, but everyone is forced to agree with this idol worship. What a blessing it is if our eyes are open and we see what we really are. From verse 36 and following, we read about the character of Antiochus Epiphanes.

1. He is sovereign, “and the king shall do according to his will.”
2. He shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every god, so he assumed divinity. How clearly we see here not only the character of this ungodly ruler but a picture of the antichrist. We read of him in 2 Thessalonians 2:4, “Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.”
3. He will speak marvelous things against the God of gods. It means that his sayings, because of their blasphemous character, will cause astonishment.
4. He shall prosper, that is, he will be successful in his impious course.
5. He will have no regard for the God of his fathers (verse 37), no regard for the desire of women. We read this expression “the love of women” also in 2 Samuel 1:26 where David says “thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women.” That desire is human love.

It is as if there is no natural love anymore, no affection, no tenderness for that which should be the object of love and care. Calvin says, “This king, then, should cultivate neither piety nor humanity.” What a terrible picture which, though they were cruel people, did not apply to Antiochus or Herod but to him who as a god will sit in the temple. Also, the next verses in the chapter show that the antichrist has no piety or reverence toward any god whatsoever. He himself demands to be worshiped as a god and that the people unconditionally follow his dictates and requirements.

Comfort

You might say, what a depressing picture we read in this prophecy. Is this all that we can learn from this portion? We may not soften the truth as so often is done in our days, the truth of God’s justice but also the truth of the hatred of His enemies. It is a blessing if we may learn to know that truth experientially in our own lives so that we become before God who we are; then we see that we also are bitter enemies of Christ and His redeeming work. However, there is, indeed, comfort even in this chapter. We read in our Heidelberg Catechism in Lord’s Day 48 about the violence “which would exalt itself against Thee; and also, all wicked councils devised against Thy holy Word; *till* the full perfection of Thy kingdom take place, wherein Thou shalt be all in all.” It does not say “*so that*” perfection takes place, but *till*, that is *certainty*! That we also read in verse 36 of this chapter “and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished: for that that is determined shall be done.”

Even in previous verses there are some small indications that the reign of the antichrist will be temporary. Examples:

1. Verse 24—“even for a time”
2. Verse 27—“for yet the end shall be at the time appointed”
3. Verse 29—“at the time appointed”
4. Verse 35—“even to the time of the end: because it is yet for a time appointed”

That also appeared to be the truth of the life of this wicked Antiochus Epiphanes. We read in verse 45, “Yet he shall come to his end, and none shall help him.” That was the end of one who magnified himself as a god. Another Ruler will come. In the next chapter you can read of Him. Young and old, what will your end be? Will it be like Antiochus but also the end of all who remain enemies of God? Then you will come to your end and none shall help you. Oh, fall yet before the Lord into the dust and supplicate Him to make you willing at the day of His power. Blessed are those whose hope also in our perilous times may be upon the great Ruler, the King of kings, the precious Lord Jesus. He is the Refuge, also in our days, in all our afflictions, for those who flee to Him. ◻

(To be continued)



Biblical Lifestyle

A Warning Against World Conformity (2)

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).

Israel in former days was a people who had to live separately and was not allowed to be united with the heathen nations. That is also how it is with the Church of the New Testament. God’s Church must be separated from the world, also in her visual revelation. “Holiness becometh Thine house, O LORD, for ever.”

Alas, how has the glory of the Lord departed, even unto the steps of God’s house? The world came into the church, and God left the church. There are many complaints today that the truth has so little power. We seldom hear of true conversions or that God still works in the advancing of the faith of His people. The Lord maintains the life of His children, but that close communal life is so often missing. There can be such leanness in the soul of God’s children; how little is found of life which is fresh and blossoming in which they may proclaim that God is just. The greatest cause is that the world is in the church, and world conformity is so great that the glory of Zion has departed. Wisdom and reproof are missing in the gates of the city. Because of silence and living along with the world by God’s people, the door for the world to enter is opened more and more.

Certainly, the times are changing, but God is the Unchangeable One. His Word and Law maintain the same power and rule which they have always had. They remain the rule and guide of faith and life. When we no longer walk according to His Word, we will not have light upon our way.

We must not become conformed to the world in the gluttonous and excessive eating and drinking. The world says, “Let us eat and drink; for tomorrow we will die.” We must not live to eat, but eat to live. What the result is of excessive eating and drinking we can read in the history of Nabal. The belly and meats shall one day be done away with. Christ spoke of those being blessed who hungered and thirsted after righteousness. They, and only they, shall be satisfied.

We must also not be conformed to the world in our going out and about. We read of Sarah that she was in the tent, and her quiet, separated godly life is given us as an example for all women. Dina, the daughter of Jacob, on the other hand, is mentioned as a warning example for all young girls. She went out to visit the daughters of the land, and what a terrible destruction came over her; there were the bitter results for Hamor and Shechem and also for the entire city.

Oh, how many different types of entertainment has the

devil prepared to occupy both young and old, to engage them in the idleness of the world, and to draw them away from the truth. The homes are empty, the roads and highways are full, and the places for entertainment and relaxation are fully occupied. The theaters are filled with people, and the football stadiums are visited by thousands. The bars are filled until late in the night, and young people are even taught dancing in the schools.

What terrible destructive and tempting times we are experiencing. The church is more and more placed in the background, and there is little or no interest in the catechism instruction. It is generally an exception if it is different. The knowledge regarding the truth and the pure foundations of salvation have become so sparse that “truth is fallen in the street.”

“Be not conformed to this world.” There is a pestilence which walketh in darkness and a destruction that wasteth at noonday. Many families do not want more than one, two, or three children. The families are kept small by artificial means. People do not want the burdens and cares of a family. Children bind us down too much and also give us too many financial concerns. The promises which God gives to those who walk in His ways are greater, yea, much greater, and surpass all the concerns and troubles of a large family.

Oh, confessors of the truth, consider that “the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew Himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward Him.” There is written over against this that He will not leave unpunished those who transgress His commandments. It is also one of the reasons that God departs with His Spirit and hardens our heart under the ministration of His Word.

“Be not conformed to this world” by taking refuge unto the god of Ekron and unto the gods of this present-day world. Everything has to be organized. We must have our rights and have a dignified existence. Even from the so-called “Christian side,” propaganda is brought forth with all kinds of texts to try and justify it.

Certainly, the way is narrow, but where there is any comprehension of the truth, and it still makes an impression upon our conscience, we will destroy our soul by joining ourselves to those who are part of the world. Our life is in God’s hand, and all of our ways are in Him. He does not make ashamed those, even if it is only because of our upbringing, who have respect for God and for His Word and have some impressions in their conscience.

The times will come that no one will be able to buy or sell who does not have the mark of the beast, but no matter

how fearful it will then become, the God of Elijah still lives, yea, He is the same. That we might humbly and freely place our trust upon God. Seek strength to remain standing beside that God who hears the ravens when they cry and who opens His hands and satisfies all those who live according to His good pleasure.

“And be not conformed to this world.” Also, in the going up and the time spent under God’s Word, do not cover your face as Jezebel did or as we read in Isaiah 3 of the vanity of the woman. Read the last part of that chapter with understanding, and you will realize how God dishonoring that sinful life was. Where there is but the least conviction in a conscience, and people still have some impression of the truth of God’s Word, nails will not be painted and lips will not be colored. If there is the fear of God in the heart, then there will be an aversion to all flaunting and “showing off” which is condemned in God’s Word.

Come to God’s house with modest clothing. Do not follow the fashions of the world. See that you do not upset God’s people and that it does not cause an obstacle in the heart of God’s servant in the preaching of God’s Word. Even when out in the streets of the town, let your clothing be far from being world conformed. Let all shocking

behavior be far from us. Look at your picture in Romans 3, and the desire to embellish your looks with all of the fringes and baubles of the world will pass away.

Parents, be an example for your children. Children, listen to the admonishments of your mother, and do not mock with the warnings of your father. Do not mock with the warnings of your minister or your elders. Your last fashion statement will be a coffin. We are going to the grave where we will say “my mother and my sister” to the worms (Job 17:14). The flesh of the wicked will one day come to eternal destruction. God’s children will be brought in to their King in raiment of needlework adorned with the righteousness and holiness of Christ. Yea, one day they will walk about in white garments which have been made white with the blood of the Lamb.

Do not cast away this word of warning. Take it to heart, young and old, great and small. May God fill you and adorn you with His fear, and by means of regenerating grace ask, “Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?” May our walk be in heaven, and from there to await our Saviour. “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” ◻

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



From Our Inheritance

True Thanksgiving

Rev. P.L. Bazen (1941-2017)

“Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”
(Ephesians 5:20).

Although Thanksgiving Day in Canada is in October and in the United States will be next month in November, we all need the same thing to give thanks, and that is “a broken and a contrite heart.” In the past season mercies have been granted unto us as individuals, families, congregations, and nations, and it is God’s mercy that we are what we are. Some have been seriously ill, some have walked upon the brink of the grave, and we are reminded from day to day that we have no continuing city here below.

Sin mounts up to heaven, and man will live himself out without God, but still the mercy of the Lord is great in giving us food and clothing for our bodies and the instruction of His Holy Word from week to week. Do you ever think of these matters? Do you have a grateful heart for all that you have received? True thanksgiving is a God-given blessing in the heart, and we must constantly be reminded from whence all our blessings flow.

Paul told the Ephesians that they must give thanks “unto God.” God, who is a most glorious and perfect Being, who is the Fountain of all good and who is merciful, gracious, and longsuffering, is so worthy of all honor. It is in God alone that we live, and move, and have our being, in nature and in grace. “O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker” (Psalm 95:6). The heathen give honor and thanks to their gods of wood and stone, and should we not praise the God of heaven and earth?

Further, we read in this text, “Giving thanks always for all things.” We are called to give thanks for every matter, condition, situation, and occasion, yes, for all things. If people curse us, mock us, persecute us for walking in the ways of the Lord, must we give thanks to the Lord for this? Christ said, “Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.” And then to give thanks? My friends, we need the grace of God to do this.

“Giving thanks always,” in prosperity and in adversity. What a blessing that we still have food, nutrition, clothing,

and, above all, the Word of God. Many people do not have these blessings and must live with so much less than we do. Many people in this world are starving, many receive little or no medical care, many do not have the Word of God, and many are being deceived. Do we, do you, give thanks that we still have the means of grace, the Word of God, and the ministration of the holy sacraments? Do we give thanks that God still works with His Spirit and gives instruction to His people? Must we not give thanks to the God of heaven for such blessings?

“Giving thanks always,” even in the day of affliction. The psalmist said, “It is good for me that I have been afflicted” (Psalm 119:71a); and the apostle wrote, “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Hebrews 12:6). The Lord molds His people in affliction and gives them the privilege to give thanks to His most glorious name for all things.

“For all things,” not only for great things but also for the smallest favors which God gives—not only for temporal matters but, above all, for spiritual and eternal things. An aged child of God used to pour out her heart to the Lord in thanksgiving for giving her the smallest matters. To her these were great; then the wonder becomes greater that the Lord looks upon a fallen sinner in mercy.

In what name and to what name must we give thanks?

“In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The person who gives thanks must be in Christ in order to refer to the word “our.” “Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature” (2 Corinthians 5:17a). Thanksgiving must be done in and through the name of Jesus Christ. God’s children are brought in humility before the Lord in the name and for the sake of Christ, in the name of Him who was born in Bethlehem’s manger, suffered, and died upon the cross, was buried, arose, ascended, and sits as the only Intercessor at the right hand of the Father. One day He will return on the clouds to judge the quick and the dead.

God’s children are taught from heaven to give thanks “unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” Those that seek refuge for time and eternity desire to be taught more and more by Him through His Spirit. For the Church of God, Thanksgiving Day begins here, and one day they will have an eternal Thanksgiving Day. My friends, as you read this page and think back on the past year, have you lacked anything? Has the past season been profitable for you? Has the Word of God profited you? How is it with your soul? These are things to consider, and if you have any understanding of these matters, you will give thanks from your heart unto God and the Father in the name of Him who is the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the Lord Jesus Christ. ◻

The Preservation of His People

John Newton (1725-1807)

That He is King of kings, and Governor among the nations is farther evident from the preservation of His people, for the world is against them, and they have no protector but Him. The wrath of man, like the waves of the sea, has bounds prescribed to it which it cannot pass. So far as He is pleased to overrule it to His own praise, He will permit it to operate, but the remainder that is not subservient to the accomplishment of His purpose, He will restrain. He works so secretly, though powerfully, by the agency of second causes that only they who are enlightened by His Word and Spirit can perceive His interference.

He permitted Ahithophel to give that counsel to Absalom which, though wicked, was in the political sense of the word, prudent; that is, it was the probable method of putting David into the power of his rebellious son. David had prayed that the Lord would “turn the counsel of Ahithophel into foolishness.” Had the Lord instantly deprived Ahithophel of his reason, this prayer would have been more visibly but not more effectually answered than by the counter-advice of Hushai, which, though rash and extravagant, being suited to gratify the vanity and folly of Absalom, rendered the other abortive. Sometimes the enemies of His church

divide and wrangle among themselves, and then one party, to mortify and oppose the other, will protect those whom otherwise they wish to destroy. Thus, Paul escaped from the malice of the Jewish council by the sudden disagreement which arose between the Pharisees and Sadducees, though they came together equally determined to destroy him.

At other times kings and statesmen act so inconsistently with their professed aims, and take steps so directly calculated to prevent what they wish to obtain, or to bring upon themselves what they mean to avoid, that we can only say that they are infatuated. A very small compliance seemed likely to have secured the affection of the twelve tribes to Rehoboam. We are ready to wonder that he could not be prevailed upon to speak mildly to the people for one day with a view of engaging them to be his servants forever. When we read that the cause was from the Lord, and that in this way His purpose of separating the kingdoms of Israel and Judah was effected, the wonder ceases. Very observable, likewise, was the coincidence of circumstances which preserved the Jews in Persia from the destructive designs of their adversary Haman. If the king had slept that night as usual, or if his attendants had read to him in any

book but the Chronicles of the empire, or in any part of that Chronicle but the very passage in which the service of Mordecai had been recorded, humanly speaking, Haman would have carried his point.

In this manner, by a concurrence of circumstances, each of them, if considered singly, apparently trivial and all of them contingent with respect to any human foresight or prevention, the Lord often pours contempt upon the wise and mighty and defeats their deepest laid and best concerted schemes in the moment when they promise themselves success.

Many salutary and comfortable inferences may be drawn from the consideration of this subject. Some of them I may perhaps have formerly mentioned, but they will well bear a repetition. We have need to be reminded of what we already know.

1. It should inspire us with confidence. If the Lord of hosts, the Lord of lords, be for us, what weapon or counsel can prosper against us? However dark and threatening appearances may be, we need not tremble for the ark of God. The concerns of His Church are in safe hands. The cause so dear to us is still more dear to Him. He has power to support it when it is opposed and grace to revive it when it is drooping. It has often been brought low but never has been, never shall be, forsaken. When He will work, none can hinder. Nor need you fear for yourself if you have committed yourself and your all to Him. "The very hairs of your head are numbered." There is a hedge of protection around you which none can break through without His permission; nor will He permit you to be touched, except when He designs to make a temporary and seeming evil conducive to your real and permanent advantage.

2. It should affect us with an admiring and thankful sense of His condescension. Lord, "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?" "Who humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in heaven." Yet He stoops still lower; He affords His attention and favor to sinful men. His eye is always upon His people, His ear open to their prayers. Not a sigh or falling tear escapes His notice. He pities them as a father pities his children; He proportions their trials to their strength or their strength to their trials, and so adjusts

His dispensations to their state that they never suffer unnecessarily or in vain.

3. How great is the dignity and privilege of true believers. Is the man congratulated or envied whom the king delighteth to honor? Believers are more frequently despised than envied in this world, but they may congratulate one another. The King of kings is their Friend. They have honors and pleasures of which the world knows nothing. Their titles are high; they are His "sons and the daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Their possessions are great, for "all things are yours." They are assured of what is best for them in this life and of life eternal hereafter. They are now nearly related to the King of kings and shall ere long be acknowledged and owned by Him before assembled worlds. They who now account the proud happy will be astonished and confounded when they shall see the righteous whom they once undervalued "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."

4. We may lastly infer the extreme folly and danger of those who persist in their rebellion and opposition against this King of kings and Lord of lords. Though He exercises much patience and long suffering towards them for a season, the hour is approaching when His wrath will burn like fire. It is written and must be fulfilled, "the wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." Oh! the solemnities of that great day when the frame of nature shall be dissolved, when the Judge shall appear, the books be opened, and all mankind shall be summoned to His tribunal! Will not you yet tremble and bow before Him, ye careless ones, while He is seated upon a throne of grace and while the door of mercy stands open? Once more I call, I warn, I charge you, to repent and believe the gospel. If today you will hear His voice, it is not yet too late, but who can answer for tomorrow? Perhaps, "this night thy soul shall be required of thee." Are you prepared for the summons? If not, seize the present opportunity. Attend to the "one thing needful." Seek His face that your soul may live. If not, remember that you are warned; your blood will be upon your own head. We have delivered our message, and if you finally reject it, you must answer for yourselves to Him whose message it is. □

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Has your religion ever kept you awake at night? Have you ever esteemed it a mercy that you are out of hell?

—William Tiptaft



Doctrinal Studies

Godly Sorrow (4)

Rev. J.J. van Eckeveld, 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).

How does such a sorrowing one come to the knowledge of the Saviour? In which way does he acquire this knowledge?

It should be noted that this godly sorrow justifies and is in agreement with God. God’s honor and justice are so bound upon the heart that it becomes our deepest sorrow that we have dishonored God with our sins, the God who is so worthy to be served. David says in Psalm 51:6, “Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part Thou shalt make me to know wisdom.” He may, therefore, heartily agree with God.

Calvin speaks more than once about God’s justification. In his second sermon on Genesis 15:6, he says the following, “After He has pronounced the sentence, ‘Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them,’ He is not satisfied just to be Judge and to have pronounced His sentence orally, but He desires that this people acknowledge it with their Amen, which means that everyone acknowledges his wrong which he has committed and that he considers himself completely condemned and that the punishment is just and righteous.”

Calvin, therefore, has spoken of the justifying of God in His righteous judgment. Calvin further states in the same sermon, “There you have in one word upon which God insists, when He strips us of all of our self-supposed virtues because that He alone wishes to be acknowledged as righteous and that we are lost and condemnable in ourselves.” What a lesson it is to acknowledge God as only righteous, as Calvin so states.

Calvin’s message is totally in agreement with the Heidelberg Catechism where it is stated in the answer to question 12 that, “God will have His justice satisfied.” With that godly sorrow, God works toward the moment that we will learn to acknowledge and accept God’s holy justice, even if it means our total condemnation. That acknowledging of God’s justice is an act of love; then we love God in His righteousness. Then we come to the realization that we could never be truly happy if God’s justice would be offended because of our salvation.

When in this sorrow I heartily learn to acknowledge the Lord in His justice, where I accept that I am doubly worthy of His punishment, what a wonder it becomes when the gospel is then opened for my soul and the light may fall upon Christ.

Joy in Christ

What a blessed joy when Christ reveals Himself to the sorrowing heart by means of the gospel. Paul writes in his epistle to the Galatians that it had “pleased God...to reveal His Son in me” (Galatians 1:15&16). In using the word “reveal,” Paul uses a word which means removing the veil. What a wonder when the Lord removes the veil. That is possible for such a sorrowing one as he sits in church under the preaching. Yea, truly, and especially it is there where the gospel is heard. It may also be in the inner chamber of prayer when the Bible is opened. Those moments are unforgettable, especially the first time when the veil is removed. At that time, you can see something of who Jesus is. In Him is everything such a sorrowing one needs. Already at the first glimpse by faith upon Christ, there is a blessed fullness wherein everything is contained, and the soul may rejoice in Him.

A sorrow which deepens with time

When a person is brought to the saving knowledge of Christ, is that the end of the godly sorrow? No, the sorrow becomes even deeper and more intimate. Then I come to rightly see what my sins have cost Him. My sins are never more bitter than when I see them in the wounds and the blood of the Saviour. You must not think that godly sorrow is something which is connected only to the onset of spiritual life; that sorrow accompanies them until their last breath. Even though I might know that my anchor lies firm in the righteousness of Christ and that my sins and guilt have been atoned for, it is still my daily sins which continue to make a separation between God and my soul, and which take away my view of my precious King. That sorrow is, therefore, an ongoing matter in the lives of God’s children.

I have come to the realization that, even though the veil is at times removed and I receive a view upon the Saviour, I continuously pull the veil over my eyes with my sins. Yet, the faithful Lord is willing time and again to remove that veil and by renewal to cause me to see more and more of and to discover the completeness in the work of Christ. According to the measure of faith, the sorrowing heart may then experience the steadfastness in the mediatorial work of that blessed Christ. □

(To be continued)



Church History

The Reformation

Rev. D. Rietdijk (1929-1993)

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

“For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith”
(Romans 1:17).

Soon we shall again remember the works of the Lord in the Reformation. Never may we forget what God has done in the church of Europe. The year 1517 is written in the annals of church history as the year in which we consider the Reformation to have begun. However, it did not exactly begin on the evening of October 31, when Luther nailed his 95 theses on the door of the castle in Wittenberg. That was his first public act, a very minor act in the eyes of Luther, but the result of what had long been taking place in his life.

In 1512 the light of the gospel arose for him while meditating on Romans 1:17. That was the end of the severe wrestling of a man who was seeking a gracious God. Luther had sought peace with God in the way that the church of his day showed him. He had walked the legalistic path prescribed for him to the end. He went into a monastery because he thought he would find rest there for his soul and steeped himself in the traditions of the church. However, neither the confession, nor the prescribed prayers and penances, nor self-chastisements could give him peace because in all those things he found his own wicked heart.

The word righteousness in Scripture persecuted him. When he found the word again in Romans 1:17, he cried out, “Will you never cease cursing me?” In his thoughts not only the law but also the gospel cursed him. For according to him righteousness seemed to be the vindictive righteousness of God. Then the light arose for him over this matter. It is not the vindictive righteousness that is revealed in the gospel but the granted righteousness of Christ, a righteousness that was granted to him out of grace.

Later, he said, “This was for me as a gate to Paradise.” Luther had deeply understood what he called “the blessed exchange.” “Thou, Lord Jesus, art my righteousness, and I am Thy sin.” The Reformation began with the conversion of one man, one sinner who understood that he had no righteousness before God but was justified freely through the redemption that is in Christ.

In this matter the Reformation is unique. For ages the church was in the bonds of tradition and legalism. Even when men spoke of the Lord Jesus, they spoke of Him in a legalistic manner, presenting Him as an example. The access to Christ was obstructed by placing the saints before Him as mediators, especially the virgin Mary. No one understood anything of the liberty that Christ grants. The word grace

was emaciated to mean only a reward for good works. Faith was a darkened faith because men had to believe what the church said, not what the Lord says in His Word. By no one in the history of the church was the doctrine of the justification of the ungodly brought forward so prominently as by the simple monk of Wittenberg. Luther made these words, “Sola scriptura, sola fide, sola gratia, solus Christus” (that is: only Scripture, only faith, only grace, and only Christ) to shine brightly.

The Reformation is unique. We can never go back before the Reformation, for before the Reformation it was but darkness as experienced by Luther. Even the church fathers spoke of this only as a heavily veiled deep secret. It was an act of God. The mighty eternal King of Zion drew the church out of the darkness of unbelief and legalism. He built the walls of Zion. He took pity on her ruins. He caused the Word of His grace to shine forth again. “For He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the LORD behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death; to declare the name of the LORD in Zion, and His praise in Jerusalem; when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the LORD” (Psalm 102:19-22).

This is written for the generations to come, for us, but also for our children. We must remember these works of the Lord. We may not forget them. We have no reason to be proud. I thought telling these things that were written for the generations to come must not lead us to pride but to deep humiliation before the Lord. For what is left of that mighty stream of the Spirit that sprang forth in Europe in Wittenberg and proceeded via Calvin in Geneva and Bucer in Straatsburg? We must acknowledge that we are standing at the ruins of the Reformation, that the stones of the ruin lay roundabout us. We cannot lay the blame of it upon the Lord. It is our fault. We have not preserved the glory of that work.

Luther has said, “After me others shall come that shall darken this doctrine again,” and that has happened. We have no cause to glory but rather to pray as the poet of Psalm 102 prayed. He prayed for Zion. He believed that the Lord would still arise upon Zion and rebuild her as of old, that He shall appear in His glory and that He will regard the prayer of the destitute.

We must take heed also for ourselves when we consider these things. I wrote that the Reformation began with a conversion. That is true for every generation, also for this generation. The church must be *ecclesia reformatata semper reformanda*, that means: a Reformed church always reform-

ing. If we forget that, the church always sinks away in the legalism that arises out of man. We must always ask ourselves whether we still confess and experience what Luther confessed and experienced. We must not in self-sufficiency think that we still have it but ask ourselves whether we have kept this treasure of the gospel. In careful obedience to the Scripture, we must examine ourselves whether we exercise this faith that was delivered to us by the saints. For the church of those days and of our days there remains one way of salvation, and that is the way of grace in Christ

Jesus. All that is outside of Him is insufficient, for only in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. His righteousness delivers from death, and that righteousness we must have for our own. Orthodox contemplation shall not save us; only the communion of faith and spirit with the Vine shall give us the life that remains forever. That faith lives on the promises that in Christ Jesus are yea and amen unto the glory of God.

The just shall live by faith. ☐



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

Why does a minister raise his hands to give a blessing? Why do we have the laying on of the hands at an ordination service? It seems we believe that a blessing cannot come from a man. Can you please explain what is meant in these situations?

This question was sent to me several years ago and still needs to be answered. It was sent by a young person who had just witnessed the ordination of a candidate into the sacred ministry of Word and sacrament. Recently, while preparing a baptism sermon about Jacob blessing Ephraim and Manasseh (Genesis 48), this question surfaced at the top of several other questions still waiting to be answered. Sometimes a certain question needs time to be answered. I imagine there are many things in church which, children, you also hear, see, and wonder about: what do they really mean? Well, let us seek a biblical answer.

First of all, let us find out when the laying on of hands occurs in the Bible. The Marginal Notes to the Dutch *Statenvertaling*, explaining Genesis 48, mention five such occasions:

1. In **blessing** —Matthew 19:15: *“And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence.”*
2. With **sacrifices** —Leviticus 1:4: *“And he shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt offering; and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him.”*
3. In **judging, condemning, and punishing** —Leviticus 24:14: *“Bring forth him that hath cursed without the camp; and let all that heard him lay their hands upon his head, and let all the congregation stone him.”*

4. In **consecrating and ordaining** for offices—Numbers 8:10: *“And thou shalt bring the Levites before the LORD: and the children of Israel shall put their hands upon the Levites.”* (See also Acts 6:6 and 1 Timothy 4:14.)
5. In performing **miracles** —Mark 6:5: *“He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.”* (See also Luke 4:40 and Acts 28:8.)

The laying on, or raising of the hands is, first of all, a symbolic act, meaning that something spiritual is pointed out. In the case of a minister raising his hands, it means that a task, gift, or blessing is pronounced upon another person or persons, meaning that this blessing or authority now rests upon them. From that moment on, this blessing or authority is carried by the other(s); it accompanies them.

Now, concerning the nature of blessing, let us not forget that it is the *Lord Himself* who blesses. In Numbers 6:27 we read, “And they shall put *My name* upon the children of Israel; and I will bless them.” The Roman Catholic Church teaches that the blessing proceeds from and is conferred by the priest himself on account of his position. The higher he stands upon the hierarchical ladder, the more power he has to confer the blessing. This is false. He who blesses does so only *as an instrument* on behalf of, and not as bearer or source of the blessing. At the same time, we must note that the content of the blessing pronounced is not merely a wish or desire. The very fact that God Himself is the origin of the blessing proves that it would be blasphemous to think that the Lord only desires or wishes something for someone. No, He is the One who gives and fulfills what He promises. The outcome is not a matter of doubt or uncertainty.

All that God in Christ speaks is yea and amen, to the glory of God by us (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Considering the above, it is truly solemn when we consider the *number of times* a blessing is laid upon one or more! Think of Holy Baptism, confession of faith, marriage, ordination of ministers, installation of office bearers and, last but certainly not least, in every worship service at the beginning as well as in the end, when the whole congregation receives the blessing (see 2 Corinthians 13:14 and Numbers 6:24-26). What a solemnity to enter the worship service under this blessing and what a responsibility to leave that place. Are we not often guilty of forgetting this before as well as after the worship service? I believe there is a direct relationship between a blessing despised or neglected and seed that is lost as outlined in the parable of the sower (Matthew 13).

In closing, when reflecting upon the above, I often have to think of something my late father once experienced and told me many years later. It was in the early years of his ministerial labors that something had taken place in his

congregation that needed correction. As the Lord's Day approached my father had intended to sharply rebuke the congregation for whatever had taken place. However, after he ascended the pulpit and began the service with the votum and blessing, suddenly the very words of what he pronounced fell deeply into his heart. He saw something that caused the tone and content of what he had planned to say to change. As wrong as everything was that needed correction, the Lord's *first words to the flock* were: grace, mercy, and peace... My father had other words prepared, but the Lord intervened with the words of the blessing... So it went, and so it ended that Sunday morning! I believe this is an example of the power and significance of the blessing, both for flock and shepherd, he who blesses and they who receive it. Let what takes place under the laying on of hands never testify against us. □

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 (4)

C.M. Van Der Sluis

Shipwrecked

Yet...things did not go as expected. The ship with which she was to make the voyage left a day early, and this would necessitate Mrs. Olthof to wait a week longer. Does this mean that her plans must be abandoned? That, never! She may as well reserve a passage upon a freighter because she was bent on having her way, which was to celebrate Christmas in Holland. The nearer the time came, the more she longed for Holland.

We read of Jonah that he, too, tried to flee but could not because a great storm came for his sake! So also, here. From the beginning the voyage went well, but one of the vehement autumn storms unleashed itself upon the North Sea. Then, then Mrs. Olthof began to fear because the ship was tossed about by the waves and who could help her now? To whom could she flee? Could she help herself? Could her child help her, or the people? No, no one, and nothing!

The captain tried to calm her by calling to her, "There is really no danger, Mrs. Olthof; I have experienced much worse storms than this."

How different all things now were from what she expected. Oh, if something should happen now! "Oh Lord, save us; Oh, do save us!" she cries. However, with this cry there was

no humility; it was only a cry because of fear of death, to have her life spared. The things which she had not thought of for a long time came to her mind now. As a specter, her entire life's journey went before her eyes, and the admonishments of Mr. Brinkman hammered, as it were, against her conscience. Yes, Father Brinkman meant well, but she refused to listen, and now he is in heaven and she is being tossed about upon the raging sea with death before her eyes.

Rev. Lensveld was right when he had said, "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God." Now, for the first, she felt that she did not know this God; yea, just now when her idols left her.

Suddenly, a violent shock was felt. What could have happened? Presumably the ship had struck a mine which was loosened and driven about by the storm. A large hole was punctured into the forepart of the ship. Immediately, the captain gave orders to commence the pumping installation to try keeping the ship afloat. Soon it could be seen, however, that the ship could not be saved by the pumping.

Oh, to be so close to the coast of Holland and yet to perish in the waves. By renewal Mrs. Olthof began to cry in her trouble. Then there was a voice in her heart, "For He is thy Lord; and worship thou Him." Just that she could

not do...Bow and worship? Just that she would not do. Her heart had become hardened under all the callings and warnings of the Lord. The Lord had stricken her, but she was not grieved.

The captain now gives orders to leave the sinking vessel and to occupy the two lifeboats. Mrs. Olthof stands with her child on the deck; her purse with money is dangling on her arm...it contains her entire possessions. It seemed to be an impossible task to get into the boat with such a furious sea. A sailor climbs down and will take little Elsie, after which Mrs. Olthof will follow. There is no time to be wasted. After putting Elsie into the lifeboat, the sailor returns to help the mother down...but, oh, how dreadful! The rope holding the boat to the ship snaps, and a large wave with one sweep takes the little boat far out into the sea—going farther and farther from the ship and the desperate mother.

There stands the mother. Distracted and void of reason she groans, “My Elsie, oh, my child!”

The captain sees and understands what she is about to do. He quickly runs to her and holds her fast. She was just ready to jump after her child.

The captain tries to calm her by saying, “We will quickly go into the other lifeboat, Madam, and then we will go seek for her;” but he knew very well this was impossible with such a wild sea.

All leave the ship which began to sink lower. Twenty-six persons float, as it were, in a nutshell upon the wild waves. With fixed gaze they looked at the ship which once more rose under the gray clouds, after which it was sucked into the depth of the sea. This was its end! Not a trace could be seen of the other lifeboat. Indeed, their only thought was the saving of their own lives. With much difficulty they attempted to keep the boat afloat.

Four fearful hours were spent before the strength of the storm began to abate. They now began to send up rockets with the hope of attracting the attention of another ship. After some time, a ship came into sight; it was an English cargo steamer. They are seen and soon taken on board. The distracted mother is taken to the captain. She relates what had taken place, and he was so kind that for eight hours he looked for the little boat.

Just as they were about to cease looking, a boat is seen... capsized; it is drifting about. This is a sure sign that Elsie perished in the water! With this, all hope of recovering the child has been taken away from the mother, and... unconscious, she is carried to the cabin.

Immediately the ship goes forward upon its delayed voyage, and thus the shipwrecked persons come to England without Elsie. From there Mrs. Olthof sailed to Holland. How did she return? Broken and crushed before God!

She was heartbroken because of sorrow over the loss of her child, but the Lord also showed her her guilt which reached to heaven so that she had to confess, “There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine anger; neither is there any rest in my bones because of my sin.”

The Lord had broken and humbled her heart by blows and deep ways; finally, yea, finally she learned to bow before Him to whom she had turned her back from her childhood days. As we read of King Manasseh while in prison, so also here, “Then Manasseh knew that the LORD He was God.” In this condition Mrs. Olthof came to her sister, and all her desires and longings to celebrate Christmas with a carefree heart were blotted out. In everything she became the guilty one before God. □

(To be continued)

True Strength

John Flavel (1627-1691)

“My grace is sufficient for thee: for My strength is made perfect in weakness” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

How mysterious are God’s dealings! That such a highly favored man as Paul should come down from the “third heaven” to the very gates of hell (that is not too strong an expression, for “the messenger of Satan” came from hell), that he should sink in soul feeling to the very gates of hell, there to be buffeted by the messenger of Satan—all to teach Paul a lesson that heaven did not teach him, namely, the strength of God made perfect in weakness!

Do you not think that if we are to learn our weakness we must learn it in the same way? How did Paul get his religion, and must we not get ours in feebler measure through the same channels, by the same means, and by the same inward teachings? If we are to learn the secret of Christ’s strength,

it is not by making daily advances in fleshly holiness, and getting stronger in self day by day. It is not by old nature being so mended and improved as by and by to be shaded off into grace, just as the colors in the rainbow are so harmoniously blended that you can scarcely tell where the one ends and the other begins. For this is what is really meant by “progressive sanctification,” that the old nature is so gradually softened and blended into grace that we can scarcely tell where the old man ceases and the new nature commences. Did the apostle learn Christ’s strength in that way? No, but by being buffeted by Satan’s messenger, and thus being beaten out of his own strength, he found Christ’s strength made perfect in his weakness.



Current Events

Afghan Christians Face Terrifying Future Under Taliban

Widespread chaos has consumed Afghanistan now that the Taliban have gained control of the country, and Christians are worried about an increase in persecution. In an interview, an anonymous church leader explained in broken English that the Taliban “has a great number of influences” against people in terms of obtaining information. “They want to be protected so if they come to my area, I will tell them everything that I know so that when the Taliban come, then they somehow spare my family. They don’t hurt me. Taliban come to houses. They ask for food. They ask for money. Some of them are known that they have been Christian.” The leader noted they will force many people to convert to Islam. Those who do not adhere to the militants demands risk the chance of being killed. He explained that many Christians are dealing with the crisis through prayer. “Definitely we trust in the Lord and pray that He is sparing His people,” he said. “We believe in God and we believe that as Christians we know there is persecution. Every Muslim background believer like myself that converted to Christianity knows the consequences of conversion. Islam is very clear, for the apostasy it is death. And there is no mercy on those people.”

—CBN.org

Teacher Fighting Against Gender Policy

In May, a Loudoun County, Virginia gym teacher was placed on leave days after he spoke out against a proposed school policy that says educators should refer to students by the pronouns that align with their gender identity. At a school board meeting he said, “I love all of my students but I will never lie to them regardless of the consequences. I’m a teacher but I serve God first, and I will not affirm that a biological boy can be a girl and vice versa because it’s against my religion, it’s lying to my child, it’s abuse to a child, and it’s sinning against our God.” Two days after the meeting he was informed via a letter from the school that he was on paid administrative leave.

—NBCNews.com

He sued the school district, and a few days later a county judge ordered Loudoun County Public Schools to “immediately reinstate” him. Now, two other teachers from the district have been approved to join a lawsuit he filed challenging the school’s policy. The policy allows students to use their chosen name and pronouns consistent with their gender identity. It also allows them to use school facilities, such as restrooms and locker rooms, according to their gender identity.

—MSN.com

Amendment Banning Taxpayer Funding of Abortions

In a huge victory for pro-life Americans, the Senate voted for a budget amendment to its multitrillion-dollar spending bill that bans taxpayer funding of abortions for any federal funds authorized under the bill. An Oklahoma senator introduced this amendment, and it was successfully adopted by a vote of 50-49. The amendment, if ultimately adopted by Congress in the final budget resolution, would ensure compliance with the long-standing Hyde amendment which bars the use of federal tax dollars to pay for abortion, and the Weldon amendment which protects health care providers from discrimination who refuse to participate in abortion. During the debate on the bill the senator said, “We should all be able to agree—no American should be forced to pay for an abortion through taxpayer dollars,” and “no American should be punished for refusing to participate in an abortion. That should not be controversial.”

—LifeNews.com

Expanded Access to Physician-assisted Suicide

Canadian evangelicals are decrying a new law that expands access to physician-assisted suicide. “Many of us are quite heartbroken over this,” said the executive director of Christian Legal Fellowship. “We’re now dealing with a legal system that is making more and more exceptions to the once exception-less principle that you cannot consent to the harm of having your life ended by another person, and that all lives are inherently and equally full of worth and value of dignity.” Medical Assistance in Dying (MAID) has been legal in Canada since 2016. The law was limited to people who were suffering and dying. In March, the government passed an amendment to the Criminal Code, Bill C-7, that removed the criteria that someone must be dying. Canada now allows sick people to have a physician-assisted suicide even if their death is not imminent. “The law is now presenting death as a medical response to suffering in a wide range of cases—not just when somebody is already dying, but at potentially any stage of their adult life,” the director said. “Instead of prioritizing supports to help people to live meaningful lives, we’ve prioritized ways to make death more accessible. This is a heartbreaking message.”

—ChristianToday.com

Prison Time for Christian Convert

In Karaj, Iran, a 31-year-old Christian convert recently began serving a ten-month prison sentence for “propaganda against the regime.” He was arrested on February 23, 2019, when Ministry of Intelligence agents raided his home and confiscated Bibles, Christian literature, and computer hard drives. He was held in solitary confinement for ten days. He was offered a bribe to inform on other Christians and was beaten when he refused. He was released on bail, but he and another family member were then forced to attend “re-education” classes with an Islamic cleric. After four sessions he refused to attend any more; court proceedings against him were initiated, and he received a sentence of ten months in prison. His appeal was rejected.

—ChurchInChains.ie

New Anti-conversion Laws Cause Violence to Christians

On August 15, eleven Christians were brutally attacked by an anti-Christian mob in Madhya Pradesh state, India. During the incident, a mob of nearly 250 people led by the village chief, physically assaulted the Christians for refusing to denounce Jesus. Of the eleven attacked, four sustained serious internal injuries and are being treated at a local hospital. According to a source, the village chief threatened them and told them to either leave Jesus or leave the village. When the Christians refused to leave Jesus, the mob immediately started to beat the Christians with both their hands and with stones. The authorities refused to file a complaint against the attackers. Anti-Christian attacks in this state have increased since the enactment of anti-conversion laws. Historically, whenever laws like this are introduced in any Indian state, violence against religious minorities follows.

—Persecution.org

For want of the bridle of family discipline,
youth runs wild.

—Thomas Watson



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (22) **Article XXVI: Of Christ's Intercession**

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

We have now come to the last article dealing with the doctrine of deliverance. This article emphasizes the great importance and perfectness of Christ's intercession, making any intercession of the saints superfluous. In Dutch the title of this article is, "Of the Only Intercession of Christ," giving emphasis to this immediately. Until the glory of Christ becomes known to its full extent, it is not possible to explain this article completely.

Our article first tells us that it is Christ who is the Mediator between God and man; He is the Person who must bring two parties together. Christ stands between God the Father, who maintains the divine justice, and the sinner worthy of condemnation, who has been elected by God from eternity. The exalted Mediator is the Intercessor for His Church, pleading upon His merits. Without Him no communion between God and man is possible.

Under the Old Testament this was typified by the High Priest who went into the Most Holy Place with blood in order to make reconciliation for the people's sin. It had to be repeated every year until that time when the veil of the temple was rent. When Christ was upon earth, He gave Himself as a ransom for His people, but now, being in heaven, He comes with His own blood as the Intercessor before the Father. Calvin says that He takes action for His people as Judah did for Benjamin and as Paul unto Philemon for Onesimus. It is not a mere request by Christ, such as we ought to make in humble prayer, but gloriously as the great High Priest representing His people, He requires it on the basis of His perfect satisfaction. Of this the high priests of Israel were only a type when they bore the names of the tribes on the breastplate and shoulders.

This article reads: "We believe that we have no access unto God, but alone through the only Mediator and Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, who therefore became man, having united in one person the divine and human natures, that we men might have

access to the divine Majesty, which access would otherwise be barred against us." When Christ had finished His Mediatorial and High Priestly labor here on earth, He continued it as Intercessor for His children at the right hand of the Father. Romans 8:34 reads, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Hebrews 7:25 ends, "He ever liveth to make intercession for them." In 1 John 2:1b there is written, "And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." His intercession is founded on justice, so that all accusers must be silent, and it contains everything which the Church needs for time and eternity.

The Confession has made it clear in Articles 18 and 19 that the Mediator is God and man. Our present article says that this magnitude should not affright us because it would then lead to the same error as that of Rome, namely, a seeking of intercession in the saints. Rome does make a difference between the worshipping of God and the calling upon the saints. They say that God only may be worshipped but that the saints may be called upon to pray for us. They, of course, appeal to God's Word for this error as there is always a text which can be twisted in such a way as to be used in defense of error. They point to the woman of Canaan who cried unto the Lord Jesus for help, but He did not answer. Then the disciples came and besought Him. Also, Paul asked the believers to pray for him. In the same way, they say, it is possible and advisable, but also necessary, to call upon the saints as "under-mediators" before Christ. Therefore, the Council of Trent in 1543 affirmed that the saints who reign with Christ pray to God for men, that it is good and necessary to call humbly unto them and always supplicate for their intercession, help and assistance, and that they are wicked who teach the opposite.

The basis upon which they defend themselves in this is briefly as follows:

1. On earth a person does not have immediate access to the king, but a courtier is needed for this. It is the same in heaven.
2. Meekness is pleasing to the Lord. When man feels himself a great sinner, he will also feel himself unworthy to go directly to the Lord in prayer; therefore, our prayers should be directed to the saints who are loved by the Lord, in whom there is no sin, and who will be heard by Him.
3. Christ said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends." Therefore, the calling upon the saints cannot be displeasing to the Lord.
4. The devout persons of the Old Testament have always used the names of the patriarchs in their prayers. (Genesis 32:9, Exodus 32:13, Psalm 132:1).
5. As the angel (Acts 10) knew about the gifts of Cornelius, they are likewise known by the saints.

These are the main reasons given by Rome for their doctrine regarding the invocation of saints. The virgin Mary also has a very special place with

them since she received this honor already in the mother of promises (Genesis 3:15). They say that Mary, as the second Eve, represents the whole human race and has become the queen of heaven and the mediatrix of all gifts of grace. The above points and beliefs are rejected by our Reformed fathers as being contrary to God's Word.

Luther expected this doctrine of honoring the saints would collapse of itself rather quickly, and for this reason he did not immediately assail this enemy so severely. He was of the opinion that the weak should be subjected gradually and not immediately disarranged. His desire was to first give the reasons why this honoring of the saints as it had been previously taught was no longer necessary, and at the same time he wanted to maintain a reverence for the saints. Herein Luther was mistaken because it remains one of the many sins of Rome. Next time, D.V., we hope to write something against this terrible, wicked error which has misled so many people. The saints have become idols for these people.

How necessary it is in our personal lives that we come to image-breaking. Outwardly, we can change, but it is necessary that this happens inwardly under the leading of the Holy Spirit.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Crossing the Jordan River

(Based on Joshua 3, 4 & 5a)

The spies were back and had given their report of the new land. Now the children of Israel could enter the land of Canaan, but wait, that was not going to be easy. There was a big river to cross, the river Jordan. How could they ever do that? They couldn't walk through it; they didn't have any boats. Now what? God was going to work a miracle. He was going to do something special to help them get through the water. The Lord gave Joshua very clear instructions as to what they had to do, and Joshua in turn told the children of Israel what to do.

The people began walking toward the river. First came the priests carrying the ark of God. Then came some soldiers. There followed a big space with no people, for God had told the Israelites to leave a space behind the ark. Then came the children of Israel. When the priests had reached the bank of the river,

did they stop? No, they kept going—right into the water, but look what happened. The Jordan opened up so the people could go through. All the water moved to the side, and the priests and people "passed over on dry ground," the Bible tells us.

There were twelve men who did something in the middle of the river. They each picked up one large stone and carried it to the far side of the river. There they put them down in a pile. Joshua also made a pile of twelve stones in the middle of the dry river. For what reason? Why did they put a pile of stones on the riverbank and in the middle of the river? Read on, and you will understand.

The children of Israel were all the family of Jacob many years ago, but some were descendants of his son Levi, some were descendants of his son Reuben, and so on. Well, each of these groups of descendants

was called a tribe. So, there was a tribe of Levi, a tribe of Reuben, and so on. There were twelve tribes of Israelites. God had told Joshua to choose one man out of each of the twelve tribes. Each one of those men was to put one stone on the bank of the river. You can see that there were twelve stones put down. Why would God tell them to do that? It would be a memorial for the people. It was to remind them of what God had done for them by opening up the Jordan. Whenever their children would ask, just as we did, "Why are those piles of twelve stones there?" then the fathers and mothers could tell the story of what had happened.

Two very important things happened because of what God had done for the people that day. The first thing was that they began to trust Joshua as much

as they had trusted Moses. They now feared and loved him as their new leader. The other thing that happened was that the people of Canaan heard what God had done, and they became afraid of the Israelites. They knew Israel had God on their side.

The Israelites were now in a land of much food, so they didn't need any more manna to fall from heaven. God didn't send it anymore. This tells us that the manna hadn't been falling by itself; God had sent it. If it had not been a miracle, it wouldn't have stopped falling at the perfect time.

Now the people were in Canaan. What was ahead of them? The first city they would meet was Jericho, the city where Rahab had lived. What would happen there?



Bible Quiz

Blind

Dear Boys and Girls,

In the first months of 2021, outside my windows everything looked beautiful and sparkling white. Several inches of fresh snow were added almost daily to the twenty-six inches the big storm had previously showered on us, and with each snowfall the world turned beautiful again. Every small twig and leaf had a small layer of white. All I had to do is look out of the window to see it. However, what if I were blind? Have you ever realized that there are people who are not able to see snow falling or how beautiful it looks? They can go outdoors and feel the wet snowflakes on their faces or touch the cold snow with their hands, but they can never see it. If the person is also deaf, he cannot hear the stillness of a gentle snow or the howling of a blowing blizzard. He cannot hear a plow truck coming down the road, and you might need to pull him out of the way, out of danger.

The Lord is not obligated to give us sight, and sometimes, He deems it best for someone to be blind. This is very difficult for them. However, the Lord sometimes gives them a gift or a different ability. There have been blind musicians who were able to

play the piano beautifully and blind men and women who became authors, politicians, teachers, etc. A blind boy or girl can be just as much a friend to you as anyone else. The Lord Jesus, when He was on this earth, healed many blind people, but more importantly, He pointed out that the blind hearts of the people needed to be healed.

The Bible tells us that although we may be able to see with our eyes and hear with our ears, our hearts are blind and deaf. The Bible even calls our hearts dead. What does this mean? What can we not see or hear? Well, we do not see our danger. We do not see that at any moment we might have to appear before God. We do not see our sin. We do not think of ourselves as evil through and through. We do not see how good, longsuffering, and kind the Lord is and how sad it is that we sin against Him.

We do not hear the warnings. We hear them with our ears, yes, but our hearts remain closed. Our hearts do not understand or take heed to the callings that come to our ears. If someone dies, we are sad, but our hearts do not begin to seek the Lord. If the minister or teacher tells us we must be converted, we think it will happen on its own some other time,

later; we forget it instantly or do not feel the need. A dead person cannot feel, and so our dead hearts cannot feel either—not our burden, our sin, our guilt, or our need. A dead person cannot love, so our hearts do not love the Lord above all and our neighbor as ourselves.

“Yet,” you say, “if our hearts are dead, and deaf, and blind, then it is not our fault that we do not love the Lord as we should and do not seek Him for forgiveness, is it?” Maybe it even seems strange that ministers preach to people who cannot hear with their heart and who cannot see what he is telling them. Why do they call to the people to be converted if they are not able to do anything about it? A dead person can't see. A blind person can't see. Yet, do you know why the preaching of God's Word is so important? Do you know why it is so important for you to listen with your ears, all the while asking God to open your blind, deaf heart?

It is because through this preaching—these warnings, calls, and invitations—the Lord speaks to dead hearts, and the Lord makes these hearts to hear and see His voice calling through His Word. Jesus called to a dead Lazarus. Lazarus was in the grave. How could he hear Jesus? You see, Christ's voice was accompanied by His almighty power, and while He was calling Lazarus, He also made him able to hear and made him live again. In the same way, what the Lord calls out to everyone outwardly in the preaching, He is able to bring with power into the hearts of the listeners so that they will hear it with their heart. Then that heart awakens as a Lazarus; that heart will see his danger, his guilt—he will see what a good God he has sinned against. He will mourn that he has always turned away from, resisted, and neglected God's calling to him.

Whose fault is it that our hearts are blind, deaf, and unable to change ourselves? It is our own fault. A person who is drunk and cannot do his work because of it can blame no one but himself for his inability, and in the same way, we can never say that God is unfair to tell us to repent, believe, and turn from our wicked ways. We have made ourselves unable by our sins, and we do not want to change our condition either. Who feels guilty when he cannot serve God as he should? We cannot blame anyone but ourselves, can we? We also may never say that since we cannot do anything about it, we will do nothing—we will not pray, listen to and read the Bible, or pay attention in church. Just as the Lord makes the seed grow which a farmer sowed first, so the Lord uses the hearing and reading of His Word to convert sinners. God calls unto everyone to turn to Him; ask the Lord to make His outward calling to

go inward into your heart so that your heart will truly hear and see. Only His voice is able to do so when it speaks through His Word.

* * * * *

For each group of three hints, find the right word from the box.

1. Genesis 19; looking for a door; smitten with blindness _____
2. slow of tongue; encouraged by the Lord; God who makes dumb, deaf, seeing, and blind can give him a mouth to speak _____
3. Syrians; enemies struck with blindness and sent to Samaria; an invisible host of chariots of fire protected him from these Syrians _____
4. Matthew 9; cry after Him; Jesus touches their eyes _____
5. Mark 8; taken out of the town; eyes anointed with clay _____
6. Blind and dumb; healed; he both spake and saw _____
7. Jericho; blind, sat by the wayside begging; Jesus asked, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” _____
8. Sad; thinks of times past; he helped others and was as feet to the blind _____

Bartimaeus	Two blind men
Moses	Men of Sodom
Blind man	One possessed
Job	Elisha

Unscramble the words in parentheses.

9. Psalm 146—“The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD _____ (tvoehl) the righteous.”
10. Isaiah 29—“And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity, and out of _____ (ndskares).”
11. Isaiah 35—“Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be _____ (suontpepd).”
12. Isaiah 42—“To open the blind eyes, to bring out the _____ (ssioprner) from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.”
13. Isaiah 42—“And I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not _____ (earofsk) them.”

Answers to previous quizzes were received in July from:

Britni Blom 23
Marissa Blom 22
Carly Brouwer 5
Derek Brouwer 23
Thomas Brouwer 23
Felicia DeVisser (2) 9
Kylie DeVisser 5
Lindsey Driesse 7
Kari Groen 17
Kurtis Groen 13
Jason Groenendyk (4) 5
Linda groenendyk (4) 8

Ruben Groenendyk (4) 21
Jacob Kooyman 1
Lydia Mol 19
Madeline Mol 13
Olivia Mol 17
Teddy Mol 19
John Murphy (2) 13
Marielle Neels 16
Blake Pannekoek 6
Lauren Pannekoek 17
Renee Taylor (4) 11
Colin Ten Hove 13

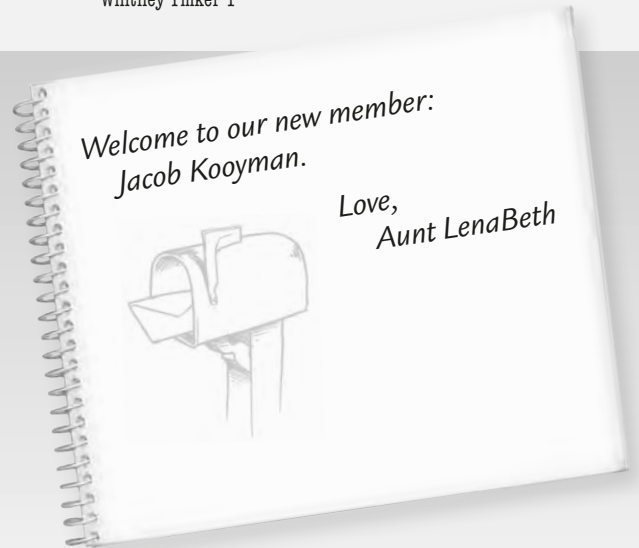
Hannah-Jo Ten Hove 5
Maurice Van Garderen 21
Emmalyn Van Garderen 21
Kaiven Van Middendorp (2) 25
Konner Van Middendorp (2) 25
Brett Van Velthuisen 5
Kason Van Velthuisen 5
Trent Van Velthuisen 4
Alyssa VandeBruinhorst 13
Aubrey Vanden Berg 4
Heidi Vandenberg 20
Kristen Vandenberg 6

Caleb Vogelaar 8
Matthew Vogelaar 8
Arthur Wisse 13
Joanna Wisse 21
Lane Wisse 13
Tonia Wisse 21
Julia Ymker (2) 8
Lane Ymker 3
Lauren Ymker 7
Paxton Ymker (2) 15
Quentin Ymker (2) 13
Whitney Ymker 1

**11 Bibles were sent to
Bolivia this month.
The total is 422!**



Letters to My Young Readers



Conscience

Author Unknown

He who tries to quiet an awakened conscience is like the man who one night was unable to sleep because a faithful dog kept howling under his window. He called out to it and bade it lie down. He went back to bed and tried to sleep, but still the howling continued. When the creature would not be quiet, he took a gun and shot the dog in his anger. He ought to have known that the dog wanted to tell him that burglars were trying to enter his house. The faithful dog was trying to save his master's life. After the dog was dead, and the man fell asleep, the burglars entered the house, stole everything of value, and ended killing the man himself.

The devil is trying to destroy many a sinner's soul, and his conscience, like the faithful dog, gives the alarm, but he cries to it, "Lie down." The quieting of an awakened conscience can only be rightly done by getting rid of sin. To get rid of sin there is only one way, to be washed in the blood of the Lamb.

News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. J.B. Zippo of Terneuzen, the Netherlands, by the congregation of Sioux Center, Iowa.

Declined:

By Rev. A. Schot of Nunspeet, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Covell Ave., Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Obituaries

DE KOK, Andy – Age 92, August 31, 2021; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Nellie (deceased); Children – Nelleke & James Kreft, Janet & Gerrit Van Hierden, Andrea & Peter Feyter; 17 grandchildren, 62 great-grandchildren, and 3 great-great-grandchildren; Brother – Kees; Sisters – Kaatje Neels, Neeltje Neels; Sisters-in-law – Jannie de Kok, Mina de Kok, Janny Indenbosch, Matty Vane; predeceased by son Andrew, grandson Adrian Kreft, and numerous brothers and sisters. (Rev. H.D. den Hollander, Jeremiah 12:5d.)

DEN BOER, Elsie – Age 91, September 2, 2021; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Husband – Rev. Adrianus M. (deceased); Children – Nelleke & Richard (deceased) Greendyk, Lenny & Jaap den Boer, Adrian & Leona den Boer; 12 grandchildren, 6 great-grandchildren; Sister – Dini Kaspers; predeceased by sister Nellie Koeman. (Rev. H. Hofman, Proverbs 8:32.)

VAN KOEVERINGE, Dirkje Wilhelmina (Van Manen) – Age 86, August 31, 2021; St. Catharines, Ontario; Husband – Hendrik (deceased); Children – John & Joyce Van Koeveringe, Carolyn & John De Jongh, Jake & Willy Van Koeveringe, Marianne & Ron Brouwer; 23 grandchildren, 49 great-grandchildren; 5 sisters-in-law in the Netherlands; predeceased by great-grandson Jacob Brouwer. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Isaiah 33:24.)

VAN LAGEN, Arend – Age 86, September 1, 2021; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Dorothy (nee Jansen); Children – Harry & Riena, Reny & Petra, Joanne & Paul Ackert, Janet & Rick Keatings, Dave & Pia, Marlene & Edward Van Wyk, Andrea & Hugo Monster; 28 grandchildren, 38 great-grandchildren; predeceased by a granddaughter, sister Ada, and brother Arjan. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Job 13:9a.)

VAN WINGERDEN, Teuntje – Age 96, August 11, 2021; Sunnyside, Washington; Husband – John (deceased); Children – Arie & Agnes Van Wingerden, Maaike Van

Wingerden, Sjaane & Chris Heikoop, John & Deanna Van Wingerden, Bill & Anne-Marie Van Wingerden, Janny & Art Visser; 22 grandchildren, 54 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Maria Van Tol, John Van Belle, Maye Penas, Arina & Roy Vierck; Brothers-and sisters-in-law – Marilyn Van Belle, Tini Van Wingerden, Cornelia Plaisier, Janny & Arie Van Drunen, Leen Belder, Lydia & Willem Uittenbogaard; predeceased by brother Arch Van Belle, and brothers- and sisters-in-law John van Tol, Esther Van Belle, John Penas, Leen & Jantje Van Wingerden, Cornelis & Dicky Van Wingerden, Willem Van Wingerden, Gerrit Plaiser, and Maria Belder. (Rev. J. den Hoed, Psalm 107:7.)

65th Wedding Anniversary

On October 1, 2021,
our dear parents, grandparents,
and great-grandparents,

Anthony & Florence Van Beek

commemorated their
65th wedding anniversary.

*“But Thou, O LORD, art a God full
of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering,
and plenteous in mercy and truth”
(Psalm 86:15).*

1623 Southern Hills 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 class-

room school. Certification is not required for this position although it would be helpful. Currently, the school board acts as principal with further oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be bound upon someone's heart to come over and help us. Any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail, rdteunissen@yahoo.com.

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

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY.

TEACHERS NEEDED

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

ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED

The school administrator will strive to direct the school according to the Word of God, the Three Forms of Unity, the Constitution of the Netherlands Reformed Christian School, the policies of the NRC School Board, and the regulations of the New Jersey Department of Education. The primary duty of the administrator is to maintain productive relations with the school board, students, faculty and staff, parents and community.

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

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is looking to fill openings for the 2022-2023 school year. We anticipate teaching needs in elementary and certain 7-12 subjects. Full or part time inquiries are encouraged. We are also seeking a music teacher to begin at any time. The focus of this position would be instrumental (grades 5-12 band/orchestra) along with other opportunities in K-12 music. Please contact the principal, Mr. Daniel Breuer, at 712-476-2821 or danbreuer@nrcea.org for further information. Visit www.nrcea.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.

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We are welcoming teacher applications for the 2021/22 school year to cover an upcoming elementary and secondary maternity leave, both beginning in March 2022. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those with 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.

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!**

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

||| The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

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

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

Ebenezer

The Lord, our salvation and light,
The guide of our strength and our days,
Has brought us together tonight,
A new Ebenezer to raise:
The year we have now passed through,
His goodness with blessings has crown'd,
Each morning His mercies were new;
Then let our thanksgivings abound.

Encompass'd with dangers and snares,
Temptations, and fears, and complaints,
His ear He inclin'd to our pray'rs,
His hand open'd wide to our wants.
We never besought Him in vain;
When burden'd with sorrow or sin,
He help'd us again and again,
Or where before now had we been?

His gospel, throughout the long year,
From Sabbath to Sabbath He gave;
How oft has He met with us here,
And shown Himself mighty to save?
His candlestick has been remov'd
From churches once privileg'd thus;
But though we unworthy have prov'd,
It still is continu'd to us.

For so many mercies receiv'd,
Alas! what returns have we made?
His Spirit we often have griev'd,
And evil for good have repaid,
How well it becomes us to cry,
"Oh! who is a God like to Thee?
Who passest iniquities by,
And plungest them deep in the sea!"

To Jesus, who sits on the throne,
Our best hallelujahs we bring;
To Thee it is owing alone
That we are permitted to sing;
Assist us, we pray, to lament
The sins of the year that is past
And grant that the next may be spent
Far more to Thy praise than the last.

—*John Newton*