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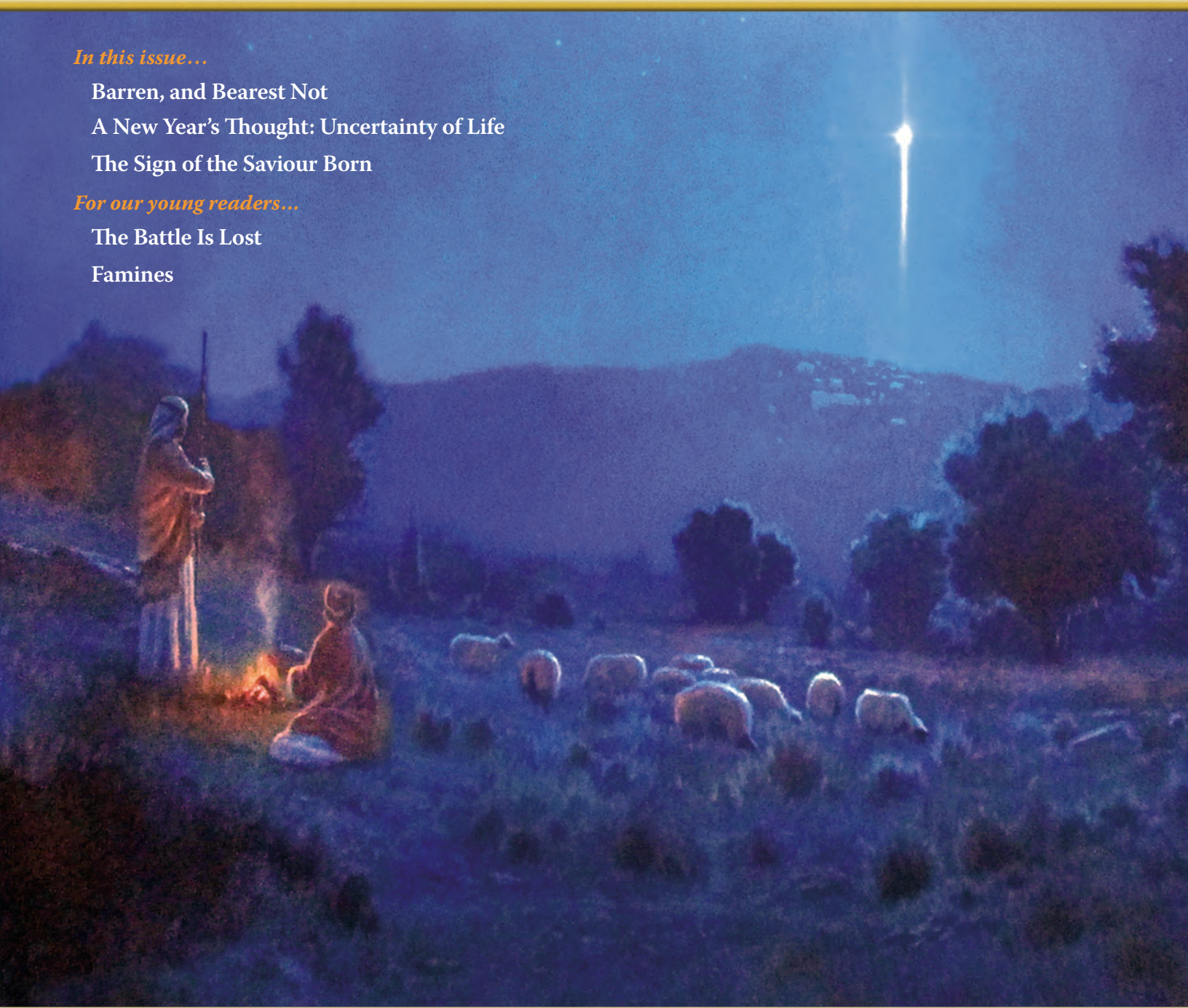
The Official Periodical
of the Netherlands Reformed
Congregations of the
United States and Canada

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The Sign of the Saviour Born

For our young readers...

The Battle Is Lost
Famines



"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be Ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." MICAH 5:2



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Meditation

Barren, and Bearest Not

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son”
(Judges 13:3).

Dear reader,

Our text words take us to the time of the judges which is described as “every man did that which was right in his own eyes.” During those days in Israel, there were a few who sighed under the burden of this condition. Those sighers are people who by the wonder of regeneration are taught by the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is a personal and a convincing work. Then the circumstances receive a cause, namely sin, and the origin is revealed as the deep fall in Adam. I read of those sighers and their life in our text, “barren, and bearest not.”

The message is very personal to “the woman.” Notice two things here. First, “barren” which is her state. Second, “bearest not” which is her condition. Her state brings forth the fruit of continual barrenness. When the Lord converts a person, then a change of state takes place. A state is something that is firm; a condition is very changeable. By the opening of their blind soul’s eyes, they see their state before God. Then the desire becomes that their state may be changed, that they may bear fruit. This desire is because of the one-sided work of the Lord. He pours love in their heart. Their condition brings more and more to light that fruit cannot come from them. Superficial religion will agree with “bearest not” but not with being barren. Oh, how narrow the way of true conversion is. God’s Church is led into their state before God, and, dear reader, by that wonder of regeneration, they learn that they must own their state due to the Holy Spirit leading them into the knowledge. Because of their willful disobedience they brought themselves in a state of being barren and that, over against having come out of God’s hand as the crown jewel, bearing fruit in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness.

Dear reader, Christmas is standing before us, but have we learned who we are? Have we learned to own our state? If not, another Christmas season will have no value. You may be amazed with the message and the circumstances of Christmas. You may even be moved to tears when you hear of the blessings, but if we have never learned to own our state, then the Child, the gift of the Father, has never received value and the honor which He is due. If He is not in the center, then everything else is idolatry.

Who appears in the text? The Angel of the LORD. In the Old Testament this is the pre-incarnate form of Jesus Christ.

See who comes to stand in the center? Not Manoah’s wife, but He who appears to her. Oh, this becomes a wonder to this barren one! Here is a woman who is personally confronted by her state and condition. Think about it reader; then it becomes hopeless! Her state and condition are declared to her from God Himself. It has become unalterable; nothing can change it anymore. No one can help her.

The Advent Church can point out in their lives where God convinced them of this. No, they do not need many words for that. It is so simple, so true, “Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not.” May the Lord give to open your eyes to see that after so many hopes, so many times of miscarrying with your own expectations, “Behold now, thou art barren and bearest not.” Then it is finished from man’s side. Oh, may the Advent time be blest in our denomination, that many may hear it declared from God. Only then will it have effect. Room is then made for a personal revelation, a revelation of the divine miracle of the eternal thoughts of God revealed in the blessed Person of the Mediator, how He has given His only beloved Son. Oh, dear reader, this receives value only if it is declared from heaven, “Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not.”

“But”... a little word that ushers in a change. Here the way is going to change. Before Manoah’s wife never came to “but”; it was always “maybe yet.” It kept a little hope alive in her. Now the declaration has been made wherein the “maybes” have forever been deemed hopeless. Her unalterable state must be owned. Such people learn to love the justice of God so much that every little word is heard, even the little word “but.” If a soul comes under God’s justice, then she is made a careful listener. The righteousness of God has been clearly declared to her soul as being “barren, and bearest not.” The little word “but” never had value, yet now it stands out.

Then, from God’s side the way is opened, “thou shalt conceive.” If you would have asked Manoah’s wife beforehand if she would conceive, then she always would have said, “I hope so.” Yet, when she has been declared from God’s side as barren, then she had to learn, “I never will!” Nevertheless, now from God’s side she hears that she shall conceive. Do you see the difference? Do we know the difference? Oh, dear reader, it is going to a never-ending eternity. Have we ever dwelt a few moments under that justice as a barren one? Have we ever learned to own our state before God with no light upon deliverance and where God was declared righteous by us because “Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not”?

It says, “but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son.” Here a way is declared; she shall bear. That means there is coming a way of receiving her fruit. It is by a way of bearing. Here you have the life of an Advent Church; they are bearing promised fruit which has been declared from God’s side. It shall come to the birth! A bearing mother feels the growth of her child, so this living Church more and more is drawn to the Person in whom their fruit shall be found. Ask a pregnant mother about what she sometimes lays awake at night thinking about. Shall I bear fruit to full term? Shall I be able hold my fruit? Oh, the way of fulfillment shall always go through the impossibility. Therefore, Advent Church, you who know of the moment that He declared unto you the wonder that a “barren, and bearest not” would

conceive and bear a son, are you now walking with the impossibility of the fulfillment? Follow this history. Compare your life of strife, questions, assaults, riddles, and impossibilities with all the histories of the how the Lord fulfills His promises. Not one ever was nor shall be left unfulfilled. The Advent Church is brought to the manger. Everything on earth and in the heart can be in chaos for that to be brought to fulfillment. That was the situation in Luke 2 due to the taxing. So, also it is with us today with all the mandates. How many families will again be separated because of all the mandates! Oh, may the fruit be that one Advent sinner is brought to the manger. Then God receives the honor, and the Church the salvation. □

A New Year’s Thought: Uncertainty of Life

Submitted

(Taken from the January 1949 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

We read in Proverbs 1:28, “Then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer; they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me,” saith the Lord. Who shall call upon and seek after God early? Sinners, they shall then call upon God, especially scorners who have delighted in scorning and in their wickedness. When will they call upon God? When calamities, fear, and the horrors of a guilty conscience come upon them. When fear of death and judgment come upon them as desolation and their certain destruction come upon them as a whirlwind. When deep distress of soul and anguish come upon their heart because of their folly and obstinate persisting in it, taking pleasure in their own deceitfulness. Harken and hear; but they speak not aright as Jeremiah writes, “No man repented him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? every one turned to his course, as the horse rusheth into the battle” (Jeremiah 8:6b). When God brings the day of visitation upon them, then they shall call upon Him and seek Him early, but He will not answer them, neither shall they then find Him. Why not? Because “they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord,” neither would they take heed to His counsel but despised all of His reproofs.

Are not these words applicable to each one of us as we stand upon the threshold of another year? Since the former year has hastened so swiftly away, are we not guilty before God? As our life is passing so swiftly by, is it not a dying life or a kind of living death? Daily sins with our thoughts, words, and deeds—daily cares, toils, and pains—daily strife, bitterness, hatred, envy, and murders within us—daily hating God and loving sin by nature—these indeed prove that our prolonged breath from year to year makes our life but a living death. When we think upon the many friends or even our own beloved ones who began the past year

with us but now lie silent in their graves, let us pause to consider how soon, perhaps even this very year, a grave may be opened for us. We may be called by death to go alone into a world unknown and leave behind all we love. This proves our life is most uncertain and the truth of the psalmist in Psalm 89:47. May these words become our daily prayer, “Remember how short my time is” and verse 48, “What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death?”

Since our life, then, is so uncertain, let us hearken unto the voice of God while it is yet the day of grace. May He grant us to consider that death is common to all men. Rich or poor, none can ever be too busy, but death snatches him away like a thief in the night. Some people die in their wedding garments, either the bride or the groom, and it has even happened to both of them. Death is appointed unto all men. It is a fearful thing to all who see it approaching. It causes heavy sighing and cold chills to go through us. Indeed it might be so because death actually separates the soul from the body, from every friend and from all thy goods. “Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God” (Luke 12:20b&21). Death is, indeed, a fearful thing because of our sin and transgression of which we must render an account unto God our Judge. If we die in our sins as a sinner without the knowledge of God in our soul, then death for us means eternal death which is a true cause for us to dread and fear it. Ah, “then shall they call upon Me, but I will not answer,” saith God; and “they shall seek Me early, but they shall not find Me.”

Beloved, ought not these words be as a thunderbolt unto each and every one of us? Does not Jesus, who is the greater than Solomon, who indeed is the greater Son of

David, does not He again call loudly unto us to awaken out of our sleep of death, not to sin anymore but rather to repent and turn unto Him by faith? “How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorers delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at My reproof: behold, I will pour out My spirit unto you, I will make known My words unto you” (Proverbs 1:22&23).

Are we still among those who refuse God’s counsel and despise His reproof? How shall you be able to die and appear before God? Is it nothing to you that you have enjoyed the greater light of the New Testament? Are you postponing the day of your death or putting it far from you? What if our lot be as that of the rich man: thou fool, this night thou shalt die! Are you one of those who will neither call nor seek after God? Do you give one-half of thine heart to God and the other half to the world? Oh, that we might be granted to know and seek after the

things which belong to our peace while it is still the day of grace.

May we be favored to use the appointed means of grace unto our salvation, begging “Teach us, henceforth, how to live with eternity in view,” as a dear saint once wrote. Seek the Lord while He is to be found; call upon Him while He is near.

Children of God, how blessed you are, for, by the grace of God, you indeed are seekers and finders. Prayer has become a constant necessity to your soul, and your whole life is now one continual desire to meet God. In fact, is it not grievous for your soul to experience, “I sought him, but I found him not”? On the other hand, is it not the joy of your soul to experience, “It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found Him whom my soul loveth”? Seek and thou shalt find. The Lord will most assuredly fulfill every promise according to His faithful Word. ◻



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (1)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And Pharaoh’s daughter said unto her, Take this child away, and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages. And the woman took the child, and nursed it” (Exodus 2:9).

It was a very difficult time for the people of Israel when this Pharaoh came to the throne in Egypt. We read in Exodus 1:8 that he was a king “which knew not Joseph.” This Pharaoh was not so favorable to the children of Israel. He was afraid that the children of Israel would become more in number and mightier than his own people. Therefore, he said, “Come on, let us deal wisely with them” (Exodus 1:10a). Perhaps he feared that when enemies would attack Egypt, the Israelites would help the invaders.

The plan of Pharaoh

Pharaoh would make the lives of the Israelites bitter with hard bondage. He began to oppress Israel. The Israelites were forced to work hard on Pharaoh’s treasure cities on the east side of his country. He hoped that the Israelites would be weakened and decrease in number and power because of this. However, the opposite happened. “The more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew.” The Egyptians were grieved on account of this. The word “grieved” here means they loathed and despised the Israelites. The workloads were increased but without success. Then Pharaoh had another plan. The midwives attending

the birth of little Hebrew babies had to kill the boys. The midwives feared God and refused to do what Pharaoh had commanded them. When this cruel plan failed, Pharaoh “charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born ye shall cast into the river...”

Oh, how heavily did the hand of the Lord rest upon the descendants of Abraham! To him (Abraham) the Lord had once promised in Genesis 35:11, “a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee.” Out of his posterity according to the flesh the great Deliverer, Jesus Christ, shall be born. In Him all the families of the earth would be blessed. Therefore, throughout the Old Testament dispensation, the enemy assaulted Israel so often.

However, what the adversary meant for evil, the Lord used for the good of His people. Life in Egypt had become so easy, so pleasant for the flesh. The people lived in a fertile part of the land; there was plenty of grass for their cattle and plenty of food. The Lord used the oppression in Egypt to loose them from their ease in Egypt where they, as also appears later, were drawn into serving some of the gods of the Egyptians. There was a danger of a loss of identity, their own identity and existence as a nation.

How much similarity there is between the time of great need for Israel and our days? Even though here is no open persecution, there is certainly increasing pressure, we might even say oppression of those who want to live and speak

according to God's Word. How much danger there is also for us to lose our own identity as churches of the Reformation. The separation with the world is often hardly noticeable among those who have made a good confession of the truth. Will the Lord also use the pressure, the discrimination of the church, to purify and to draw them back unto a biblical and separate walk before Him? In Egypt it happened after the death of Joseph—the new king of Egypt had not known him. How many pillars in the church have been removed, and is there not a generation growing up that knows little or nothing of the tender walk of those dear children of God in the fear of His name? It was God's hand in the trials of the Israelites in Egypt. Will we be humbled under the heavy hand of the Lord also upon us in these days? We do not have to ask for persecution, but those have not been the worst times for the church.

A child of great beauty

What a stressful or fearful time it must have been for expecting mothers. Would it be a boy that would be brought into the world? In chapter 2 we read of a man of the house of Levi who was married to a daughter of Levi. These were Amram and Jochebed. The marriage union was blessed; Jochebed conceived and bare a son. She already had two children, Miriam, a daughter of about fifteen, and Aaron, a son of three years old. What were they to do with this son that was just born? Would it be thrown into the Nile? No, God had a purpose with him.

We read in Exodus 2:2, "When she saw him that he was a goodly child, she hid him three months." We read in Hebrews 11:23 of the parents "because they saw that he was a proper child." Also, Stephen spoke of him in Acts 7:20 that the child "was exceeding fair." Does this just mean that he was a good-looking child? It is remarkable that Stephen says, as we read in the Greek original text, that he was beautiful before God. No one can be beautiful before the Lord, you would say, also not Moses. However, this child is precious before God in Christ and will be an instrument in His hands; he will be called to great things. He will be a mediator on Sinai. In the New Testament we read of his appearance with Elijah on the mount of transfiguration. In heaven they sing his song (Revelation 15:3a), "And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb."

In a time of great oppression, this child was a sign of hope. God remembered His covenant with Abraham of old, and Moses will be used in His hand. We find great contrasts in Moses' life. A few examples:

- 1) He was a child of slaves but also the son of a queen.
- 2) He was born in a hut and lived in a palace.
- 3) He inherited poverty and enjoyed unlimited wealth.
- 4) He became a keeper of flocks but also a leader of armies.
- 5) He was educated in a court and dwelt in a desert.
- 6) He had the wisdom of Egypt but the faith of a child.
- 7) He became a fugitive of Pharaoh but also an ambassador of heaven.

8) He would have the rod of a shepherd but receive the power of the infinite, almighty God.

9) He was tempted with the pleasures of sin but endured the hardships in going the way of the Lord.

This child was hidden for three months, but when the parents could no longer hide him, he was brought to the Nile in a little basket and was laid in the flags by the river's brink. What a terrible moment when the loving mother and father left their child in a river where many crocodiles were found and so many dangers threatened him.

God's wonderful providence

No, this child would be kept safe by the Lord's hand. In Exodus 1 we read of human calculations of Pharaoh which failed, but in Exodus 2 of divine omnipotence which will be shown. The parents believed that God would not put them to shame. They made an ark (that is the original word) from papyrus, made it waterproof, and so the little box with its precious treasure rested on the river wherein so many Israelitish boys were drowned. However, this child was in a little ark, a picture of the hiding place for Noah and his family but also a shadow of the Ark, the place of Refuge in the storm, that is found in Christ. All who are hidden in Him will be kept by His almighty gracious power. God's ways are wonderful and mysterious but will always manifest His faithfulness and care. No, Amram and Jochebed would not lose their child but receive him back. God led the daughter of Pharaoh to take her bath in the river with her servant girls by the riverside. She heard the cry of the little baby. She saw that it was a child from the Israelites. However, she did not react in anger because the command of her father was disobeyed. Being childless herself, she agreed that Miriam would find a nurse for the baby, and in this miraculous way Moses was reunited with his own mother. Man proposes but God disposes.

The three years that Moses could stay with his own mother were a blessing and joy not only for the mother but also for Moses himself. Jochebed was not only a loving mother but also a praying mother. At a very young age, the seed was sown of which the fruit would be manifest in Moses' life. Yes indeed, a proper child was he, a child destined to be God's servant and deliverer of His people. More than Moses is Christ who would be sent in the fullness of time to come and to seek those who are lost. May we know the need for this Deliverer. Then we will see that the service of the devil is a hard bondage, that we cannot deliver ourselves, that we cannot find any rest or way of salvation outside of Him who came to do His Father's will. He will lead sinners by His Spirit out of the house of bondage, lead them safely through the wilderness, and bring them to the heavenly Canaan. There, redeemed sinners will praise Him for all His mysterious and wonderful ways. □

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

The Sign of the Born Saviour

Rev. J.C. Weststrate (1919-1998)

(Taken from the December 1998 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger”
(Luke 2:12).

This month of the year directs us to the time of the birth of Christ. This was the time determined by God as the fullness of time when He sent forth His Son, born of the virgin Mary. For this time the saints of the Old Testament dispensation had longed because the coming of the Saviour in the flesh had been foretold and promised.

The shepherds in Ephratah’s fields keeping watch over their flock heard the joyful tidings of the fulfillment of this. The angel of the Lord descending from heaven spoke to the fearful shepherds as the glory of the Lord shone round about them saying, “Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” After their fear, what joy must have filled the hearts of the shepherds.

No matter how dark it may be in the heart, God fulfills the promise at His time, so that man, with all the expectations which he entertains on his side, is laid low. The work of God in the salvation of sinners goes through impossibilities on man’s side in order for God alone to receive the honor.

It will be great grace, and only grace, when we may look for and long for the coming of Him in our personal life. It is necessary for our salvation that God not only sent His Son but that we believe in Him. The giving of that faith is God’s work alone, for it is a gift of God.

For the shepherds the joyful tidings heard from the mouth of the heavenly messenger were accompanied by a sign which would point out the Saviour to them. A sign is visible and serves to mark out or indicate a certain thing. What would the shepherds see? It was a Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. What a striking contrast this is with what is made of the Christmas observance today. Much of the observance of Christmas today indicates that nothing is understood of the significance of the sign, the Child lying in the manger.

The shepherds could not make a mistake since this was an exceptional sign of especially poor circumstances. Such a lowly birth was of particular significance for those who lived a simple life because of their calling. The Saviour, a Child? This was something not to be comprehended by reason or understanding. It was only to be admired and adored by faith as the apostle exclaimed, “Great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh” (1 Timothy 3:16b).

May He, who is a Light to lighten the Gentiles, shine upon and enlighten us with His Spirit so that we with the shepherds might by His Word see and understand in this sign the significance of the Christmas gospel. Only then shall the Lord be magnified and praised, and then shall there be a taste of the rejoicing in God my Saviour (Luke 1:47). This sign proclaims to us the good pleasure of God in the salvation of sinners, to the glory of all God’s attributes in their perfections. This sign is the revelation of God’s counsel.

Adam, in whom the entire human race was comprehended and who was the father and covenant head of all people, was created after God’s image and has through the fall and disobedience separated himself from God and His communion. This becomes evident in the lives of all even though the outward evidences can be so different. Our lost condition reveals itself in our enmity and hatred against God. Because of sin God has become our Judge. He in whom is perfect righteousness which is maintained by Him, must punish sin with temporal and eternal punishment of body and soul. From man’s side there is no restoration conceivable to give satisfaction to the demand of righteousness.

When, by the light of the Spirit, this is impressed upon your soul and understanding, you will comprehend the prayer of those in the Old Testament: “Oh that Thou wouldst rend the heavens” (Isaiah 64:1a). By our guilt we have barred the access to God. This sign proclaims the incomprehensible wonder that God now has devised and opened this access to Himself in the Child Jesus in the manger.

Is this possible without satisfaction of His justice? The sign of the Child is precisely the revelation of God’s love and mercy in the glorification of divine righteousness and holiness. The love of God is never revealed in a world lying lost in guilt, other than in a way in which God’s justice in regard to sin is also proclaimed. It was for this that the Father out of eternal love has given His Son. It was for this that the Son has given Himself as Mediator to make satisfaction for the sins of His people. It was for this that the Holy Ghost overshadowed Mary in order that the Holy One born of her would be called the Son of God. The love of the Triune God is revealed in this sign.

Wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger of the animals, He has from eternity, in love to God and the divine attributes and in love to His people, given Himself as Surety, freely humbling Himself to come as a Man into this world. He came as a sinless One to suffer and to die in order that He, by His mediatorial merits, would make perfect satisfaction to the justice of God which has been violated by sin.

In this sign of humility and poverty, He was pointed out to the shepherds. The Mediator, although He was rich became poor, not out of compulsion but willingly so that by His poverty He might make others rich. Already centuries before, the prophet Isaiah had foretold, “He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him. He is despised and rejected of men” (Isaiah 53:2b-3a). The sign given to the shepherds by the angel was the sign by which they would recognize their Saviour.

“Great joy”—the Child wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Is that also your message in the Christmas season in the observance of this great event? Then, in this sign, you shall see in Him with eyes of faith that which the shepherds have seen in Him. Then, with the shepherds you will be driven to the manger by the Spirit as a poor and lost one in yourself, condemned by divine justice, to see the Lamb of God which takes away your sin.

May the proclamation of Christmas with this sign drive you out to see by faith this Child wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in the manger, and cause you to cry out, “We have seen that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world, who has given Himself for our sins.” This is the great joy of every one who has received this sign by faith. Then they see Him as the fairest among the children

of men, into whose lips grace is poured. He is the sign given of God, and in Him is refuge and place for the greatest of sinners.

Especially in the Christmas season, this sign given of God is made known and proclaimed everywhere. Has it been received by you, as with the shepherds, by faith with great joy so that in the poverty of the Child you have found riches, in His humiliation you have found exaltation, in His helplessness you have found your help, in His grief you have found gladness, in His revilement you have found preservation? Or do you, like Ahaz, refuse this sign? Shall this sign given of God be a sign which shall be spoken against by you?

This Child, proclaimed in the sign of His humiliation, shall one day come upon the clouds in the sign of His exaltation, surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand angels, to judge the quick and the dead. That will be a day when all contradiction will be silenced eternally.

How blessed are those who by grace may have found in the sign of this humiliated Surety and Saviour their preservation and salvation! They shall be discovered to the opposition in their heart, and, groaning because of it, shall as enemies be reconciled with God through Him who in His humiliation had to bear the gainsaying of sinners against Himself. □



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Kalamazoo, MI

How do we know the difference between tempting God's promise and pleading of God's promise?

To write about pleading the promise(s) is—next to it being often a serious question—also a matter which unfortunately in more recent church history has often led to fruitless debates, hot heads, and cold hearts. It would be neither edifying nor helpful to write about this. The person who asked this question, however, did not demonstrate the intention to add to this debate but rather asked the question from a personal soul's-struggle point of view. Then the matter becomes different and deserves a sincere answer which, hopefully, can give biblical direction for those who are not strangers of such struggles.

There are many examples in Scripture where the Lord gives a special, individual promise to His children even though the fulfilment of the promise covers a broader purpose than just the individual. Think of Abraham

(Genesis 12), Moses (Exodus 3-4), Jacob (Genesis 28:15), Joshua (Joshua 1:9), and many others. There are also promises recorded which have a larger audience in view, namely, the blessing for an entire family tribe (e.g., the sons of Jacob) or even an entire nation (Israel). In Acts 2 we read the well-known text at Pentecost: “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

To these observations we could add the clear biblical distinction there is between conditional and unconditional promises, meaning that the unconditional promises are sovereignly fulfilled in the life of God's children without any conditions laid upon them or for their account, such as “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him” (Hosea 14:4) and the conditional promises which are fulfilled only in the way of obedience, upon a turning, after a forsaking of sin, and a lamenting after the Lord: “Return, ye backsliding children,

and I will heal your backslidings” (Jeremiah 3:22a). Read in this regard, also, Isaiah 1:16-18: wash you, put away evil, cease to do evil, learn to do well, seek judgment etc., and then: “Come now, and let us reason together...”

We clearly see in the Bible that there are more general promises, which have a general address, like that of the gospel (Isaiah 45:22 “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else.”) and a more particular personal promise of God’s Covenant of Grace, of which the unbreakable oath between God the Father and God the Son is the foundation. Let it be noted that also the first-mentioned, the gospel promise is well-meant, sincere, and must be preached with the command to be obeyed unconditionally, but the fulfilment of this promise never depends on man’s work because it is God who works both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Philippians 2:12&13).

When we study the historical, personal, and spiritual circumstances of those to whom a promise was given, we notice how often the life of a child of God was and is a continual struggle regarding what God has promised—not in the sense that the promise itself is the cause of such struggles, or that the Lord purposely leaves His spoken word in darkness so His people have no choice but to struggle about it. No, the fault lies not with God but with God-dishonoring unbelief and a darkened understanding. Neither does struggle imply that there are never times of quiet resting upon what the Lord has spoken. On the contrary, unbelief is never to the honor and glory of God, and it is a blessing when this is learned. The fact of the matter is that the Lord always tries His own work, and this is what the question is about. Yes, then there can be tempting of the promise when Satan and unbelief pull the matter into doubt or when the fulfilment of that which is promised is taken in one’s own hand, like Jacob, David, and Abraham did.

Did we ever realize how the promises indirectly referred to in Hebrews 11 were in most, if not all cases, immediately under the pressure and trials of circumstances and temptations? “These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off...” (Hebrews 11:13a). It is striking to study how often the saints of the Old Testament were tossed to and fro between either a lack of trust and tempting the promise, on the one hand, and pleading the same on the other. When the Lord called Abraham out of darkness to light, He mentioned no less than six promises to him, all of which were immediately under the pressure of the impossibility to be fulfilled.

Again, this was not because the promise itself was shaky or lent itself to distrust or that the Lord spoke in a language that was unclear to Abraham. It pleased the Lord, from the beginning, to exercise faith in the heat of battles, impossibilities, and temptations.

Even of Abraham, the father of all the faithful we read that he said to the Lord: “O that Ishmael might live before Thee!” in a context where Abraham believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness, and the God of Abraham confirmed the promise many times. Why, then, does it still say in Romans 4:20 that “He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God?” Ah, what is more to God’s honor and glory? It is, as Thomas Manton writes somewhere: “Where the bent of the heart is right, the infirmities of God’s people are not mentioned.” Hebrews 11 speaks of Rahab’s faith, not of her lie, and Exodus points out the fear of God in the midwives, and doesn’t condemn them for what they said to Pharaoh. Think of a guilty Jacob by the Jabbok, who nevertheless is called with a new name and was told that as a prince he had power with God and with men, and prevailed (Genesis 32:28).

What Zacharias said to the angel: “Whereby shall I know this?” was more a tempting than a pleading of the promise! Mary the mother of Jesus said it differently: “How shall this ...be?” The one questioned the Lord; the other asked for more light upon and wisdom concerning the matter. Tempting the promise always suspects the veracity of God’s speaking or manner of bringing the thing to pass. It refuses to wait, to submit in quiet faith; it wants to help the Lord and questions His wisdom, timing, and manner of fulfilling what He has spoken. Pleading actually is already an act of faith, and though earnestly looking for the fulfilment does not do so with a haughty heart or lofty eyes, exercising oneself in things too high and matters too great to understand (Psalm 131). Pleading the promise takes place as a child that is weaned of his mother, hoping in the Lord.

In closing, dear friend, let it be a comfort that the giving, as well as the fulfilment, of all what God promises lies firm and sure in the hand of Him that promised. Not one word of what the Lord speaks shall fall to the ground. It is, as I once read somewhere, God’s promises are, in the first place, obligations to Himself, and that gives rest, hope, and trust. □

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

In the creation the Lord made man like Himself, but in the redemption He made Himself like man.

—John Boys



Doctrinal Studies

Godly Sorrow (6)

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

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

What is the end result of worldly sorrow? It ends in death. That is apparent in the examples of people such as Cain, Esau, Ahab, and Judas. They all fled farther and farther from God.

If your sorrow does not bring you closer to God, then it will drive you farther and farther from God. With every sorrow there is an emptiness; well, this sorrow ends up in an eternal emptiness, there to miss God’s favor and communion forever. Then this life is already a gradual and steady slide which ends in eternal death. The Lord still affords us a warning. It is still the day of grace. Do not say that God’s children experience only sorrow. Consider that godly sorrow gives more satisfaction and sweetness than anything the entire world can give you. Those godly sorrowing ones do not wish to trade their sorrow for the joy of the world. In the midst of their tears, they may experience that the service of the Lord is a service of love.

The joy of this world? It is so empty, and it vanishes like a soap bubble so that nothing of it remains. It only leads to eternal death. God’s Word still calls out to us, “Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6).

A sorrow leading to conversion

To what does godly sorrow lead? It worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of. What is conversion? We can say it with three words: conversion, aversion, returning. The prodigal son “came to himself” in that far away land and returned to his father with beseeching and weeping. That is the biblical picture of conversion. The Heidelberg Catechism says so strikingly that it is the dying of the old man and the rebirth of the new man.

Why does this sorrow lead to conversion? Because this sorrow leads to a change in mindset (the literal meaning of the Greek word which is used for conversion in 2 Corinthians 7:10) to a total inward break with sin, to turn away from treading the path of sin, and to return to the Lord. When a deep sorrow fills our heart because of sin, then we can no longer love sin. Certainly, in and of

themselves, God’s children remain sinners until their last breath, and they can also fall into sin. At the same time, if one does not earnestly resolve to strive against sin, godly sorrow over sin cannot be called a true repentance. True godly sorrow is a repentance not to be repented of, and which we will never regret.

How blessed it is to know this godly sorrow

How blessed are they who know this godly sorrow—blessed! Yet, they cry that they are without God in the world and that they are so miserable in themselves. How, then, can they be called blessed? Christ Himself has called them such in Matthew 5, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” Christ says they do not just become saved, they are already saved. Why? Because their tears fall into God’s bottle. Those tears are the fruits of the work of Christ and are known in the way to eternal joy. For this sorrow works an unrepentant sorrow unto salvation. Salvation with God Himself is the fulfillment of their emptiness.

Salvation, already in its beginning when God comes over, when the evidence of His love fills the soul, when He fills it with Himself and His friendly countenance, may be beheld in Christ. Here, however, it is only the beginning of that blessedness, the fullness of it is kept for later. To earn that salvation Christ had to suffer and die. Now His kindly face gives happiness and grace to all that are pure hearted.

You who seek God in all of your sorrow of soul, for whom God is your object, take courage! Soon you will sing eternally about the ways of the Lord. When the beginnings of the strife and the sorrow are already so blessed here below, what will the full deliverance be above? If the portals be already of gold, what will the mansions be!

Two ways

Also here it is noted so clearly that there are but two ways. Godly sorrow has its counterpart, namely, the sorrow after the world. It is either the one or the other. It is either the side of death or, on the other side, salvation. Would it then not be worth your effort to seek the Lord? His service is a service of love. □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)

The Son of God became the Son of man in order that sons of men might become sons of God.

—Irenaeus



Reflections

Brought Home by the Angels (2)

Rev. C. Hogchem, Aalburg, the Netherlands

Angels and God's Children in Their Dying Hour

The angels bring the souls of God's children to heaven. Sometimes a dying child of God speaks about this service performed by the angels. Occasionally this service by the angels is revealed in an exceptional manner. Several examples follow,

Rev. M. Hofman (1873-1945) writes about the liberal and roomy departure of a child of God: "Did you think that the angels stood ready only by the deathbed of poor Lazarus when he fell asleep and not by others who were bought with the same precious blood of Jesus? We may not only suppose but certainly believe that these godly servants also waited at the cross of the penitent thief when he gave up the ghost after his bones were broken by the executioners. Then he entered into eternal sleep; all of his suffering was behind him, and the angels carried his soul into the promised Paradise where Jesus was.

"I recall once standing at the deathbed of a child of God who had here upon earth a troublesome journey. The Lord gave her some relief upon her deathbed. As death drew near, she continually said, "I have a feeling as if I am waiting for something." No one else came to her home. Shortly thereafter she died with a smile on her face. A visible and clear token of joy and gladness at the removal of the soul from the body. The Lord then directed my thoughts to how the angels had waited for her last breath, and she had waited for that sweet company that would carry her on their wings to the eternal glory." Taken from *Lazarus, kom uit (Lazarus, come forth)*, page 56.

"Jenneke, the angels, the angels!"

Egbert de Goede (1773-1852) had a daughter with bodily deformities. He wrote that at the age of eleven she was brought under deep convictions about her sins and her lost condition. Shortly thereafter she received a lively insight of the Lord Jesus as Surety and Mediator. She had much light upon her way which was to the wonderment of all of God's people. Ten days before her death it was as if she were drawn up into heaven; continually it seemed as if she were dead, but then she again revived and she spoke heavenly language. One time she called our servant girl and said, "Jenneke, the angels, the angels!" One time she called me and said, "Father, there is no why, but an eternal therefore; eternal love." She died in 1831 at the age of thirteen years.

Witnesses of the service of angels

The God-fearing Leendert Potappel (1882-1953) from Stavenisse told of twice being a witness of the service of angels at a deathbed. The first time it was with the dying of his old friend Cornelis van Oeveren (1829-1908). He was forty-five years old when he was touched in his heart under a sermon by Rev. D. Bakker.

When this friend laid upon his deathbed, all was peace. He lay in quiet expectation, looking for that moment when he would leave this earthly tabernacle, for he was assured that his anchor held fast. Just before he died, he lifted up his arms and called out with wonderment in his voice, "Angels, angels, angels!" Potappel said that it was evidence of spiritual life that the blessed soul of this old friend was carried away by the spirits who stand before the throne.

The second time was with the dying of Kee van de Polder as she was called. Potappel had learned to know her in his years of service in the congregation. The fear and the right of the last enemy with which she had so much to do in her lifetime had been taken away. The friends who stood around her deathbed noted that the time of her departure was near. When no one expected it, she raised her eyes to heaven with blessed joy and she spoke with a clear voice, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:14). The friends could feel something of the fact that now her soul was carried by the angels into the bosom of Abraham.

"Don't you hear that singing?"

The Lord had become too strong for Albert Hofman (1909-1969)—a son of Rev. M. Hofman—already as a young boy. When he was twenty years old, the Lord continued His work in him. Albert was able and willing to die, but it was made known unto him that he must spend another forty years traveling through this wilderness. When he turned sixty, he knew that the end of the narrow way was near. Seriously ill, he became bedridden. Albert, who had remained unmarried, lived at the end of his life by his sister Marie Melis-Hofman in Krabbendijke. While lying on his deathbed, he heard the angels singing.

"I hear singing" he said to Marie, "Don't you hear it?" Marie answered him, "I do not hear anything." □

(To be continued)

Christ became what we are that He might make us what He is.

—Athanasius



For Young and Old

No Other Gods (6)

C.M. Van Der Sluis

With the Parlvliets (*continued*)

After a while Jennie also went with Elsie to church on Sunday. There Mr. Parlvliet would sometimes read a sermon. Jennie could not understand much but she sat still and listened attentively. Mr. Parlvliet and his wife had taken notice of this and then would say, “Jennie is so different from Elsie.”

One day Mrs. Parlvliet heard these two girls talking to each other. “Do you never ask the Lord for a new heart? You know you cannot die this way, and sometimes I am so afraid to die!” said Jennie.

Elsie answered, “We are still much too young to die.”

“Too young!” said Jennie, “What about John Bosman who was in the fifth grade; didn’t he die?”

“Yes, but he was sick so long,” Elsie continued.

When Mrs. Parlvliet told this to her husband, he said: “Let us be very careful, especially with children. Let us watch and wait to see what the Lord is pleased to do.”

Jennie especially liked to go to the catechism class. Elder Schuurman from the neighboring congregation came to catechize the children. With great seriousness he told them of the one thing needful for salvation. Tuesday afternoon came which would be the last catechetical lesson of the season. That afternoon Elder Schuurman was serious in his admonishing and could not leave the children go without a special word to them. “Children,” he said, “attempt to bend your knees before the Lord and ask Him to convert you as He converts all His people. What would it be if one of you were no longer alive after vacation season is past? If one of you were to die?” In this way this plain and humble man made himself free from these children who were entrusted to him. Could it be that they understood him? Only eternity will reveal this.

Jennie van het Hof could not rid herself of these words and went home under a deep impression of them. Elsie understood nothing of it. Jennie had no desire to play with her.

“Why not?” asked Elsie.

“Because my hand hurts me so,” was her answer. The day before she had fallen and received a small wound in her hand which seemed to pain her severely.

“Could I die from this?” asked Jennie.

“Are you so foolish, Jennie? Listen, you need not be afraid of that,” said Elsie lightly. Yet Jennie was concerned and afraid.

When Elsie came home, she related what had happened and also what Mr. Schuurman had said at the catechism class. “Well,” said Elsie, “I think Jennie is very silly to be afraid of dying from such a small cut.”

“No, Elsie,” said Mr. Parlvliet, “that is not silly of Jennie. We all, during our entire life, should be more concerned with the brevity of life; then we would not jump about so jolly and unconcerned.” The following morning Elsie was greatly shocked when she heard that Jennie was seriously ill and had fever. The doctor diagnosed it as a severe infection. As for Jennie herself, she was greatly distressed. Neither her father nor her mother understood her.

Mr. van het Hof said, “I cannot understand anything of it; the child never did so much evil that she should cry so much about her sins.”

As for Jennie, she knew better. “Must I ask Mr. Parlvliet to come and visit you, Jennie?” asked her mother.

“Oh, no, Mother, no!”

“Why not? Otherwise, you are so anxious to be in the company of those people.”

“Yes, but not now!” said Jennie, “I cannot meet the Parlvliets and... Oh, Mother, neither can I meet the Lord.” Jennie was fighting a conflict which flesh and blood can never grasp; neither could her father and mother understand it.

In the home of Mr. Parlvliet, a man lay wrestling for the cure of a child, yea, what is more, whether it would please the Lord to give grace to the sick child. It was midnight and Jennie did not improve. “Ma, Ma,” she called, “listen.”

Mrs. van het Hof stood immediately at her bedside. “Do you want a drink, Jennie?”

“No, Mother, I know not whether I dare to ask it.”

“Oh, my dear child, you may say it without fear; Mother will do anything for you.

“Would you be willing to call Mr. Parlvliet and Elsie, too?”

“But child, don’t you know that it is night; wouldn’t it be better to wait until the morning?”

“Oh, no, Mother, now; Mr. Parlvliet must come now!”

Although Mr. van het Hof never went to visit Mr. Parlvliet, the reason you can easily surmise—still he put on his coat and went to call him. Jennie was such an unusual child; she had always been so. If he wanted to take her somewhere—anyplace where another child would be happy to go—then she refused. Shortly afterward Mr. Parlvliet stood before the bed of Jennie.

“Jennie, why did you call me?” he asked.

Jennie grasped his hand and said, “I still wanted to thank you because you have always warned me so faithfully, and will you also thank Mr. Schuurman for me? I am going to die and I was so afraid to die because of my many sins which were as high as a mountain; yes, they reached to the heavens. So many times, I had asked the Lord for a new

heart, whether He would take away my guilt and sin, but... this did not happen. Oh, Mr. Parvljet, I then thought the Lord would never give me my desire, but now He has spoken these words to my heart: 'Come now, and let us reason together; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' Then a quiet peace came into my heart. Before I never understood, but now I can grasp something of why the Lord Jesus had to be born in a stable, why He had to suffer and die...it was for me, yea, for my sins..."

Then she was quiet; she could say no more. Also, for Mr. Parvljet this was so much. Was the Lord still pleased to hear and answer his supplication, and to be privileged to hear it from the mouth of this child? Yes, the Lord is a wonder-working God, and where grace is given, there it is given freely. Jennie bid farewell to Elsie in a very childlike

way and also showed her the necessity of seeking the Lord. This was also too much for Elsie; she stood there weeping and realized that Jennie possessed something which she did not have. This was an hour which would never, no never, be forgotten. Would it have any beneficial results for Elsie? Ah, if the Lord comes not with the admonishments, then a person will go on in spite of everything.

Still, it was a great loss that she must lose her friend so suddenly. Because...Jennie died! Jennie lived only one more day in which she lay unconscious and then she was no more. When she was buried a few days later, the children stood there at her grave. Elder Schuurman spoke of the brevity of life but also of the necessity of true conversion. A special calling went out from this grave but also this message, that the Lord lives and still works with His Spirit. □

(To be continued)

The True Christmas Gift

Rev. A.W. Verhoef (1917-1996)

"Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift" (2 Corinthians 9:15).

The text is very short, yet it says more to us about the birth of Jesus Christ than a rapid reading would at first indicate. It gives us a picture of Christmas that is well worth remembering. It says, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

God in His good pleasure presents us on this day with a beautiful gift, namely, His dear Son. A great many years ago a man from Nazareth, Joseph by name, took his espoused wife Mary to the home of their ancestors in the little village of Bethlehem in Judea. It was a rather long and difficult journey for them, especially for Mary at this time because she was awaiting the birth of the Child Jesus. Due to her condition, the trip was made even slower than otherwise.

No doubt it was well toward evening when they arrived in ancient Bethlehem. To their dismay the little village was overcrowded, so much so that every available place of lodging was filled. Naturally, the officials of the Roman government, who were to conduct a census for the emperor, were given the best accommodations. Also, the keeper of the inn took the opportunity to reserve the rest of his rooms for the wealthier and more prominent citizens, making it almost impossible for anyone else to secure lodging.

Very likely, Joseph searched the entire village to try to find shelter for his wife and himself, and above all for Him who was and is the great gift of God for lost people. At every place he was met with a refusal. There was no room for them. No room for Mary, no room for Joseph, above all no room for God's precious gift, Jesus Christ.

Is there a place for Him in our heart and life? A most important question!

At last, the innkeeper relented enough, possibly because of Mary's situation, to allow them the use of his stable. Here, in these poor and lowly surroundings, in the quiet of the night, Mary's Child was born. She wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and laid Him in the manger, a makeshift crib but one which served its purpose because there lay the Saviour, the gift of heaven, God's unspeakable gift!

God wanted this Child to be born in just these surroundings and under exactly these circumstances in order to make certain that men would never forget this event. God's purpose was to show that poor people may receive the real gift, namely, the Christ who came from heaven to do the will of His Father for the welfare of His children, but also as a warning to them who have no need for Christ as the most precious gift ever given to men. Oh, that there might come a need for Him as a propitiation for our sins, and that we might learn more and more to understand, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, something of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty, might be rich."

If the Lord will teach you this truth, then you will truly know that Jesus Christ is God's unspeakable gift! In wishing you all a blessed Christmas, let me say that I wish nothing more for you than this: that you can say, by grace, with all your heart, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."



Current Events

Eritrean Authorities Rearrested Christians

In Eritrea, 15 Christians have been rearrested and many others detained in the past months. Reports show that the Christians are men and women aged from their late 20s to their 60s, members of different churches, and that all have previously been imprisoned for their faith—some for up to 16 years. These Christians were released from prison last summer but were rearrested following the discovery of a list of Christian contacts. The wave of releases of Christian prisoners in the last year has not turned out to be the start of an ongoing change in policy, as had been hoped. The Eritrean authorities banned all churches in 2002 except the Eritrean Orthodox, Lutheran, and Catholic churches.

—*ChurchInChains.ie*

Taliban Searching Phones for the Bible

Taliban are going door-to-door in Afghanistan searching for Christians and inspecting phones for Bible apps. In a statement, the leader of the underground church ministering to Christians in Afghanistan said, “The Taliban has a hit list of known Christians they are targeting to pursue and kill. People are fleeing into the mountains looking for asylum. They are fully reliant on God, who is the only One who can and will protect them.” The statement noted that, among many other horrible atrocities, “The Taliban are going door-to-door taking women and children.” Another reliable source reported that “The Taliban demand people’s phones, and if they find a downloaded Bible on your device they will kill you immediately.”

—*ChristianPost.com*

Charitable Pro-Life Groups Potentially Threatened by Trudeau’s Government

Campaign Life Coalition is asking all Canadians to demand that Justin Trudeau’s government not remove charitable status from pregnancy centers. His election platform specifically targeted pro-life groups because they “provide dishonest counseling to women about their rights and about the options available.” It claims this puts “the health and safety of young people and vulnerable women at risk.” CLC’s “Voter Voice Campaign” says if this is enforced, many Crisis Pregnancy Centres and Pro-Life Educational Organizations will be at risk of closure. They will be taxed out of existence. This would be an enormous blow to the thousands of women supported before and after childbirth. Canadians can take action using the CLC action tool. “It seems that the Trudeau government is determined to impose pro-abortion belief all across our country’s charitable sector,” reads a portion of the tool’s pre-written message. “He must not be allowed to force his beliefs onto this nation’s charities.”

—*LifeSiteNews.com*

Gender Restroom Policies Causing Problems

A 9th-grade girl was allegedly sexually assaulted in a Loudoun County, Virginia high school bathroom. Parents are looking for answers after a male student wearing a skirt allegedly sexually assaulted the victim in the girl’s bathroom. Furthermore, during a heated exchange at a school board meeting, this student’s father was arrested for obstruction of justice and disorderly conduct. Loudoun County Public Schools had formalized a policy regarding restroom use that was easily exploitable by a potential sexual assailant. Furthermore, after the county completed an investigation of the matter compliant with its obligations under Title IX, the assailant was allowed to attend a different school. But this was not enough. Because of this indifference and negligence, it has happened to another girl at another school at the hands of the very same assailant.

—*WJLA.com*

Bulgaria Has Conflict over Gender

The Bulgarian court has ruled that in their constitution, the word “gender” can only refer to biological sex. Therefore, the ratification of the human rights treaty (known as the Istanbul Convention) would be anti-constitutional. Controversy arose around the Istanbul Convention, a treaty against domestic violence, and its use of the term “gender” as a social construct as opposed to the biological “sex.” Socially conservative voices said they feared that ratification of the treaty would be an adoption of this “gender ideology.” The court also ruled that the legal status of transgender people should be further resolved through changes in legislation. Institutions cannot be obliged to accept the self-determination of citizens to sex that is different from their biological one.

—*CNE.news*

New School Gender Inclusion Policies Cause Large Concern Across the U.S.

A speaker at a Florida county school board meeting was removed for using vulgar language as he was reading aloud from a highly sexualized book available at the high school’s own library. (The author of this vulgar book claims it is intended to help families with youths who question their gender.) He was interrupted by the chair, “Sir,” she said as members of the audience urged him to continue, “You’re out of order... I understand that book is in the classroom, and the language he just read is inappropriate for this forum... I understand the contradiction here. This is the first time I’ve heard of this, and the board has heard of this. We will look into it, and I do hope the book is removed.” Following the meeting, school officials acted. Four copies of the book were in three of the county’s 22 high schools. The book is no longer on library shelves and is under review.

—*FoxNews.com*

We affirm Christ’s divinity so joined and united with His humanity that each retains its distinctive nature unimpaired, yet those two natures constitute one Christ.

—*John Calvin (Institutes)*



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (24) **Article XXVI: Of Christ's Intercession** *(continued)*

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

Last month we wrote something about the unbelief which is so often a hindrance in the life of God's people, when they do not dare to believe that the Lord will look upon them in mercy. Unbelief is often stronger than faith; as a result, men then enter into darkness. Again and again, we find examples of this in God's Word. Think only of David who could not believe that the Lord would fulfill the promise that he would be king over Israel. Many others could be added, also those taken from the practice of daily life. It is the experience of God's children that they cannot always believe but that every time the Lord has to be the first.

We must be careful that we do not glorify unbelief and make it a ground of our belief. In God's people there is a struggle between the old and the new man, but the catechism teaches us that the old man has to go the way of mortification and the resurrection or increase must be found in the new man. Unbelief is sin because it makes the Lord a liar.

Help against unbelief has to come from on high, from the Lord, who is able to drive it out. We must then also be careful that we do not blame the Lord for our unbelief, and that we do not sit down in false passivity because the Lord has to do it. The weakness of faith causes a heavy conscience and takes away the gladness of heart so that men go sighing over the world. Although they fear that the Lord will no longer come to such a sinner as they are, yet, it is so true as our fathers have written of it: "Therefore the apostle, to remove this foolish fear, or rather mistrust from us, justly saith, that Jesus Christ was made like unto His brethren in all things, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able to succor them that are tempted."

When we see that way in which the Lord had to go, then we must say that nothing was withheld from Him. It is inexpressible what He suffered in soul and

body. He knows all the circumstances into which His Church comes here upon earth. This is a great comfort because not only does He know their strife but He also helps in that strife. Peter had denied the Lord and therefore was unworthy that the Lord would look upon Him again; however, on the evening of Christ's resurrection, we hear that He was seen by Peter. Thomas could not believe unless he could see and feel, and the Lord has given this unto him. When He was to ascend on high and the disciples would miss His corporal presence, He had already promised to be with them to the end of the world.

"Seeing then that we have a great High Priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession." Although He is now in glory, we may draw nigh unto Him. "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." As the high priest of the Old Testament sacrificed, prayed and blessed, so it is with the only High Priest, Jesus Christ. On the Day of Atonement, the sacrifice was brought outside of the camp, but the high priest came with the blood into the Most Holy Place to make satisfaction for the people. Christ likewise brought His sacrifice upon earth, where He was crucified in order to purchase His Church. By His passive and active obedience, the Church is delivered from condemnation and receives a right to eternal life. Now Christ is on the right hand of God the Father; He prays not for the world, but for His people.

In this intercession of Christ lies the salvation of the Church, but it is also the protection for them against all the enemies who surround them by day and night. This intercession of Christ is a continual pointing to His satisfaction. As High Priest, He brings the incense of our prayer before God and reconciles all the uncleanness. For every Simon who is sifted as wheat, He prays that his faith will not fail. He will never hear as did Moses, who was not to speak of a certain thing (Deuteronomy 3:25&26). Therefore,

we may freely draw nigh unto the Lord with all temporal and spiritual needs. “The same apostle saith, having boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, etc. Likewise, Christ hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”

In the prayer of Christ, all the needs of the Church are remembered. In the prayer of Christ, their life’s strength is renewed. By the prayer of Christ, the deliverance of the Church is guaranteed. What a wonder to learn that in Christ we may have everything for time and eternity. Our victory is the fruit of His strife, our rest is the fruit of His labor, our sleeping is a fruit of His staying awake.

We may not deny that the prayer of the God-fearing has great value, and it is a blessing when we are remembered in the prayer of God’s children. How

much more value should we attach to the intercession of the Mediator! The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much, but the prayer of Christ availeth everything pleasing unto Him. He is the only begotten Son of God, who saves His people who draw nigh to Him. The clouds make a separation between Christ and His Church, but in heaven He labors to the welfare of His children. Once that curtain will be taken away and then will be fulfilled the words, “Where I am, there shall also My servant be.” There the summit of happiness will be given to the Church, and they will comprehend the fullness of Christ’s work on earth and in heaven.

This article adds in conclusion, “What more can be required since Christ Himself saith, I am the Way and the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me.” May we also learn this way which is the only way to be saved. All the paths in which we go or try to go will make us ashamed but not the way in Christ.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Battle Is Lost

(Based on Joshua 7&8)

The Israelites had conquered the city of Jericho. The next city in their path was a small city named Ai.

The children of Israel were sure that they would conquer Ai. Why, it was so small! In fact, several men who went to spy out the city told Joshua, “This city is so small that we don’t even need to send all our soldiers. Send only about two or three thousand people there. We will have no trouble conquering them.”

The children of Israel were so sure they would win this battle. We do not read anything about them asking for the Lord’s help. The Bible tells us very plainly that we need God’s help in all that we do. God was not with the Israelites in this battle. God was not on their side. What do you think happened? Do you think the children of Israel still won the battle without God’s help?

No, they didn’t. They lost this battle. They were beaten by the small army of this tiny city. Why wasn’t God with the Israelites? Didn’t He promise to be their God and to help them? That is what Joshua wondered. After their defeat, he fell to the earth, bowing his face to the ground, and prayed, “O God,

why didst Thou bring us over the Jordan River and into this country if Thou wilt not help us? Why then did we ever come into this country? We should have stayed on the other side of the river and been happy there!”

Joshua kept on begging God for the reason, saying, “What will all the people of Canaan say when they hear that we lost this battle? They will laugh at us, and they will think that our God can’t help us.” Then God told Joshua why He had not helped them in the battle against the people of Ai. This is what had happened, one of the children of Israel had sinned.

“What?” you ask. “Surely it is wrong to sin, but everyone sins all the time, and God does not destroy us.” No, God does not punish us immediately for our sins, but all sin must be punished. He does not overlook sin. God is such a patient God, but this story shows how terrible sin really is in His eyes.

One man in the camp of Israel had stolen some things. Remember that when the Israelites conquered Jericho, God had told them not to take anything from the city. If they saw beautiful clothes, or gold,

or expensive things, they could not take anything; they must leave it there, for the city was cursed. However, one man in Israel had seen some things that he really wanted, and he had taken them. He knew he was doing something wrong, so he hid the things under the ground inside his tent.

God did not tell Joshua the man's name, but He told Joshua to cast lots which would fall on the right person, and that person was to be burned to death. Do you think the man was frightened? Maybe he was hoping that the lot would make a mistake and point to some other man. However, God was directing the lot, and God makes no mistakes. The man watched. We don't know exactly how lots were cast in Bible times. It has been suggested that today it would be something like picking a paper and seeing which one had a mark on it, or drawing a straw and seeing who had the short straw. No matter how it was done, we must remember that God always controlled the outcome. God would point out the guilty person.

So, the lot was cast. First the tribe of Judah was picked, so everyone knew that the guilty person was in that tribe. Next the lot pointed to a family of Judah, which probably included the man's grandfather. Now the grandfather's children had to stand up—the man's uncles and his father—and the lot pointed to the man's father! Yes, God knows everything that we do.

Now all the children in the father's family had to stand up. There stood the guilty man and his brothers, and the lot pointed out the guilty man. God makes no mistakes. The man, whose name was Achan, did not dare to lie. He told Joshua that he had stolen some things. He told Joshua where he had hidden them, and when Joshua sent some men to check, the items were indeed right where Achan had said.

"Why did you ever do this?" Joshua asked Achan. "Because of that one sin which you have done, you have made much trouble for the whole camp. Now God will make trouble for you." Then, just as God had commanded, the people of Israel took Achan, his family, and all his possessions, and brought them to a valley. There the Israelites threw stones at them until they died, and then they burned them. What a terrible death! Now you can see how terrible it is in God's sight when we sin and ignore His laws.

After this God was with the people of Israel. He told them to go to battle again with the city of Ai, and this time the children of Israel won. The city was burned, and the king was hanged.

Oh, pray that you may be given a new heart. Then you would truly be able to say that God was on your side and not against you.



Bible Quiz

Famines

Dear Boys and Girls,

What happens at your house when the pantry or refrigerator is looking a bit empty? Why, you go to the store, right? Sometimes you might say, "Mom, we ran out of cookies last week already. When do you think you might be going to the store?" It is so easy to have what we like. We do not know what it means to be hungry. Yes, we might work up an appetite or our stomachs growl to remind us it is almost time to eat, but we never have a gnawing feeling that cannot be fulfilled because there just IS NOT anything to eat...

Farmers know how worrisome it can be when it does not rain and the crops do not grow. It is so important how much the weather is in their favor and how tall the corn is. However, can ANYONE really imagine what it would be like not only if the ground were parched and the crops withered but the entire pantry was empty and there was not one item left in any food store in the area? When some of us have been in quarantine and could not go to the store, we could dig to the bottom of the freezer or collect eggs, tomatoes, and cucumbers from our own backyard, but now imagine... The gardens have

died, the canned goods have long been eaten...even the barns and silos which usually hold the hay and grain for the animals stand empty. That is what a true famine is. We cannot imagine it, can we?

When there is no rain and the crops do not grow, it is not because the weather “happens” to be dry. No, that is the Lord’s hand. We already read of a famine as early as the time of Abraham. When we *do* have rain, and when we are able to bring home a load of groceries every week, that is *also* the Lord’s hand. That is His goodness, and they are blessings from His hand.

There is also a spiritual famine. What is a spiritual famine? It means a person’s heart becomes dry and parched. God’s children need the Lord to speak to them. They need the Lord’s presence. This is what feeds their souls and keeps them feeling alive. Just as in a famine, food is scarce, so there are no more words from the Lord for the soul. Perhaps sin has come in the way; perhaps the Lord wants to teach His child. Whatever the case, the Lord will never let the work of His own hands completely perish. He will not let it die.

When Joseph was ruler in Egypt during seven years of famine, the people were in great need. They came to him and asked him for food. Joseph did not make the famine disappear. He did not give as much as they wanted, at no cost. No, he carefully measured out as much as each family needed, even while the famine was still raging and the people were slowly giving up their land and possessions. Joseph did not let them perish in the time of famine.

In the same way, sometimes God’s children lose many things. They lose how happy they once felt and they feel more sinful. It becomes dry in their heart. Has the Lord forgotten about them then? No. While they are in this spiritual famine, the Lord continues to care for them. He wants them to come to Him. Just like the people had to go to Joseph for food, the Lord loves to hear His children come to Him for all their needs. The famine is used to make His people go to Him. If they have forgotten Him, they will need Him again. If they have tried to find their own way, they will ask for His way again. The Greater Joseph measures out to them a little food for their souls to keep them alive while they are seeking all that they miss.

* * * * *

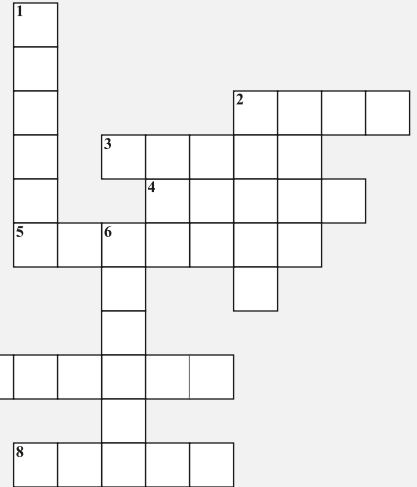
Across

- 2. The people in Samaria were so hungry that they sold dove’s _____. (2 Kings 6)
- 3. In the famine that prevailed, there was no _____ for the people. (2 Kings 25)

- 4. Elisha said a famine would come upon the land _____ years. (2 Kings 8)
- 5. When Ahab reigned there was a sore famine in _____. (1 Kings 18).
- 7. The first famine recorded was in the days of _____. (Genesis 26)
- 8. The famine waxed sore in the land of _____. (Genesis 41)

Down

- 1. There was a famine in the land in the days of the _____. (Ruth 1)
- 2. There was a famine that lasted three years in the days of _____. (2 Samuel 21)
- 6. The prodigal son began to be in want when there arose a _____ famine. (Luke 15)



For the Older Children

- 9. How does the Lord show His care in Psalm 33:19 and Psalm 37:19? _____
- 10. How can we relate Psalm 37:19 to Joseph and the storehouses? _____
- 11. In Psalm 33:19, God promises deliverance from death. Does this mean they will never die? What death are they spared from? _____

For the Younger Children

Choose the right word from the box.

strong sword signs bread

- 12. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or _____ (a weapon)?
- 13. Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for _____ (powerful) is the Lord God who judgeth her.

14. Moreover he called for a famine upon the land: he brake the whole staff of _____ (a baked food).

15. And great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences; and fearful sights and great _____ (tokens) shall there be from heaven.

* * * * *

Answers to November's "Grace" quiz:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. Moses | John 1:17 |
| 2. Death | Romans 5:21 |
| 3. Faith | Ephesians 2:8 |
| 4. Salvation | Titus 2:11 |
| 5. Heirs | Titus 3:7 |
| 6. The God of all Grace | 1 Peter 5:10 |
| 7. Christ | |
| 8. Exhorted | Acts 11:23 |
| 9. Saved | Acts 15:11 |
| 10. Inheritance | Acts 20:32 |
| 11. that it might be by grace | Romans 4:16 |
| 12. into this grace wherein we stand. | Romans 5:2 |
| 13. grace did much more abound | Romans 5:20 |
| 14. but under grace | Romans 6:14 |
| 15. Man | |
| 16. Life | |
| 17. Law | |
| 18. Election | |
| 19. Works | |
| 20. Given | |
| 21. Praise | |
| 22. Riches | |
| 23. Kindness | |

Answers to previous quizzes were received in September from:

- Clay Bakker (2) **7**
- Alaina Baum (3) 17
- Andrew Baum (2) **7**
- Julie Baum (2) 9
- Amber Bisschop 7
- Eryn Bisschop 14
- Sara Bisschop 13
- Britni Blom (2) **25**
- Jenina Blom (3) **25**
- Lawrence Blom (3) **19**
- Marissa Blom (2) **24**
- Martena Blom (3) **30**
- Willem Blom 16
- Carly Brouwer (3) **8**
- Derek Brouwer (3) **26**
- Thomas Brouwer (3) **26**
- Jaxon DeKorne 1
- Juliette DeKorne 1
- Nathaniel DeKorne 2
- Cody Driesen (2) **25**
- Kacie Driesen (2) 21
- Toby Driesen (2) **25**
- Lindsey Driesse (5) **12**
- Kaylynn Ekema (3) **28**
- Weston Ekema (2) 15
- Gerilyn Engelen 15
- Trevor Engelen 16
- Kyal Grisnich 14
- Logan Grisnich 15
- Taryn Grisnich 11
- Kari Groen **18**
- Kurtis Groen 19
- Jason Groenendyk (2) **7**
- Linda Groenendyk (2) 9
- Ruben Groenendyk (2) **23**
- Kate Hoogendoorn (3) 15
- Weston Hoogendoorn (2) 9
- Evan Kaat (4) 8
- Caylea Knibbe (3) 35
- Donovan Knibbe 16
- Jarynne Knibbe (2) **22**
- Meredy Knibbe (2) 5
- Sheri Knibbe 5
- Sienna Knibbe (3) 17

- Jacob Kooyman 2
- Abby Maassen 4
- Kari Mans (2) 10
- Lydia Mol 20
- Teddy Mol 20
- John Murphy (2) 20
- Lindsey Muis 8
- Marielle Neels (2) **18**
- Blake Pannekoek (2) 8
- Lauren Pannekoek (2) **19**
- Andrew Remijn (2) **19**
- Lauren Remijn (2) 15
- Collin Rozeboom 9
- Logan Rozeboom (3) **22**
- Mindy Rozeboom (3) **23**
- Ale Rus 15
- Jessa Rus **18**
- Kaela Rus 3
- Lakia Rus 7
- Colin Ten Hove (2) 20
- Hannah-Jo Ten Hove (2) 7
- Aaliyah Timmer **18**
- Almonzo Timmer 1
- Drake Timmer 20
- Hunter Timmer 20
- Kadin Timmer 20
- Laurencia Timmer 13
- Sierra Timmer **18**
- Wyatt Timmer 19
- Austin Van Den Top 10
- Caleb Van Den Top 10
- Collin Van Den Top 10
- Maurice Van Garderen (3) **24**
- Emmalyn Van Garderen (3) **24**
- Adriena Van Liere (3) 4
- Rena Van Liere (3) 4
- Lydia Van Manen (2) 27
- Rosalee Van Manen **24**
- Kaiven Van Middendorp 26
- Konner Van Middendorp 26
- Brett Van Velthuizen 7
- Kason Van Velthuizen (2) **7**
- Trent Van Velthuizen (2) **6**
- Taylina Van Wingerden (3) 10

- Ellie Van't Zelfde 10
- Alivia Vande Hoef (2) 28
- Micah Vande Hoef (2) 23
- Raelene Vande Stroet 8
- Wyatt Vande Waerd (2) **18**
- Aubrey Vanden Berg (2) **6**
- Heidi Vandenberg 21
- Kristen Vandenberg (2) 8
- Kohen Vandenberg 3
- Rena Vanden Berg 9
- Matthew Vander Wiele 2
- Caleb Vogelaar 9
- Matthew Vogelaar 9
- Jayden Weeda (3) **14**
- Jonathan Wesdyk **18**
- Nathan Wesdyk 16
- Rebekah Wesdyk 17
- Allysa Ymker (2) 2
- Cameron Ymker 20
- Heidi Ymker 23
- Lane Ymker 4
- Lauren Ymker 8
- No Name (2) 2

30 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 465—thank you, boys and girls!



Letters to My Young Readers

Jacob Kooyman

Do you do chores on the farm, Jacob? What are the names of your dogs? I'm sure you have many dozens of eggs from so many chickens. Can you find a verse in the Bible which speaks of a hen and her chickens?

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth



Please send your answers to the address shown below:

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

News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, by the congregation of Sunnyside, Washington.

Declined:

By Rev. M.T. Al-Chalabi of Brakel, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Beckwith, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

By Rev. H. Hofman of Kalamazoo, Michigan, to the congregation of Sunnyside, Washington.

By Rev. J.B. Zippo of Terneuzen, the Netherlands, to the congregation Markham, Ontario.

Obituaries

BAUMANN, LeRoy (Butch) – Age 92, September 27, 2021; Sheboygan, Wisconsin; Wife – Mary (nee Munnik) (deceased); First Wife – Audrey (nee Gruber) (deceased); Children – Don, Barb & Jim Trautman, Laurie Fox & Craig Steffen; 4 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren; Sisters – Joyce Van Der Puy, Carol & Jack Schroeder; predeceased by parents, siblings Alfred, Art, William, Don, Lorraine, Viola Koran, daughter-in-law Lynsey, and brother-in-law Wilbert Van Der Puy.

BLOM, Jennie “Jean” (nee Zomer) – Age 88, October 14, 2021; Corsica, South Dakota; Husband – Cornie (deceased); Children – Mel & Dena, John & Cheryl, Case & Audra, Bob, Marion & Joy, Leroy & Jodi, Connie & Randy Baan Hofman, Mary & Dale Delange, Terry & Melissa, Lorraine & Andy Samuelson; 32 grandchildren, 55 great-grandchildren; Brothers – John & Sophie Zomer, Alvin & Lois Zomer; Sisters – Hermina Van Roekel (deceased), Hattie Van Dyke, Nina Koedam, Lene Walma, Fran Overweg; Sisters-in-law – Tillie Blom, Sylvia Zomer; predeceased by parents Herman & Jennie Zomer, brother Chet, infant brother, and granddaughter Abbie Blom. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, 2 Kings 4:26.)

DEN BOER, Gerrit – Age 85, October 13, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Anneke; Children – Bill & Jeanette, Joanne, Elsa, Anita & Steve; 12 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren; Sisters – Nell Visscher, Mary Sterkenburg, Elsa & Frank Torfs; Sisters-in-law – Hillie, Elizabeth, Connie MacDonald, Corrie Van Mersbergen; Brother-in-law – Theo Sterkenburg; predeceased by brothers John and Leonard, brothers-in-law Adrian Sterkenburg and Pete Visscher. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg, Psalm 90:17.)

In Memoriam

With sadness we have witnessed
the passing away of

Mrs. Elsie den Boer
(nee Polman)

Beloved wife of our former minister, Rev. A.M den Boer, who served us from 2002-2004. May the Lord comfort the mourning family, and may He sanctify this calling to all of our hearts. May He also bless the words of her dear husband, left on record in the midst of the denomination.

The Covell Avenue NRC Consistory
September 2, 2021

ENGELSMAN, Laurina – Age 101, October 9, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Husband – Jake (deceased); Children – Margaret & Ken Both, Ed, Joanne & Al Ware, Jane & Ron Grisnich; 13 grandchildren, 44 great-grandchildren, 8 great-great-grandchildren; predeceased by great-great-granddaughter Kelsy Dekok. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburg, Psalm 90:12.)

FLUIT, John A. Sr. – Age 84, October 12, 2021; Rock Valley, Iowa; Wife – Evelyn (nee Hoogendoorn); Children – Harold & Betty, Craig & Tammy, Judy & Gerald Van Tilburg, John & Anita, Sherry & Norman Van Ravenswaay, Shirley & Greg Koenen, Daryl & Brenda; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; Brother – Clarence & Joyce; Sisters – Anna Marie Kaster, Joyce & Greg Hetrick; In-laws – Sylvia Fluit, Gilbert & Angeline Hoogendoorn, Gert Kelderman, Pete & Connie Hoogendoorn; predeceased by parents Henry & Anna, in-laws Pete & Kate Hoogendoorn, grandsons Jesse Van Tilburg, Brady Van Tilburg, Evan Fluit, 3 brothers, 2 sisters-in-law, and 3 brothers-in-law. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, James 4:14.)

HOOGENDOORN, Gilbert Cornelius – Age 91, October 14, 2021; Sioux Falls, South Dakota; Wife – Hermina (nee Koedam) (deceased); Children – Daniel Lee & fiancée Debra Smith; Brothers – Alvin & Dolly, Marvin & Ella, Jim & Marge; Sisters – Sylvia Fluit, Arlene & Henry Hoefakker, Margie Van Tilburg, Bernice Van Veldhuizen; predeceased by parents James & Hattie, sister Henrietta Vande Waerdt & husband Bill, brothers-in-law Wilmer Fluit, Tom Van Tilburg, Leonard Klarenbeek, and Cornie Van Veldhuizen. (Rev. H. Hofman, Psalm 90:12.)

KERSTEN, Clasina (Clazien, nee Heerschap) – Age 80, October 14, 2021; West Milford, New Jersey; Husband – Garret Henry “Hank” (deceased); Children – Karen Moore, Garry & Lois Kersten, Matthew & fiancée Missy Maresco; 8 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren; Brothers – Walter Heerschap, Cornelius Heerschap; Sisters – Geer Grisnich, Jan Dolan; predeceased by granddaughter Holly, brothers Bill and Matt, and sister Johanna Vander Knijf. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Psalm 87:6.)

MALJAARS, Adriaan (Archie) – Age 74, October 19, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Wife – Joann (nee VanderSpek); Children – Doug & Leanne, Judy & Brent Royal, Rev. Ed & Laura, Rick, Wendy & Richard Timmers, Tom & Katrina, Nancy & Jack Klaassen, Ron & Willemijn, Steve, Sharon & John Erkelens, Fran & Kevin Romeyn, Dennis & Tabitha, Emily & Jon Van Huigenbos; 48 grandchildren, 7 great-grandchildren; predeceased by parents and daughter Laura. (Rev. E. Maljaars, Psalm 45:2.)

OVEREEM, Jan (John) – Age 89, October 9, 2021; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Judith (nee Slingerland); Children – Kathy & Matt Jakober, Casey, Jenny & Anthony Vanden Hoek, Joanne & Roy Van Driesten, Corrie Davidson, Cor & special friend Marie, Judy & Art Arends, John & Juanita, Jake & Margaret, Joyce & Andre Van Weverwyk, Marilyn & Jan VanderMeer, Brenda & Wout van Luik; 61 grandchildren, 41 great-grandchildren; In-laws – Jannie de Kok, Fygje Van Herk, Coby Slingerland, Anneke Slingerland, Wim & Teuni Slingerland, Tony & Margaret Slingerland, Andy & Nita Slingerland; predeceased by his parents Cornelis & Kaatje, in-laws Cornelis & Jannigje Slingerland, son-in-law Martin Davidson, sister Johanna Thomassen, brothers-in-law Kees Slingerland, Teun Van Herk, Jake Slingerland, Allen Thomassen, and Huib de Kok. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Isaiah 55:5&6.)

PROL, Elbertus (Bert) – Age 77, October 28, 2021; formerly of Ringwood, New Jersey; Wife – Ann C. (nee Gurnee); Children – Timothy & fiancée Teresa Cintron; Brother – Dr. Paul & Jean; survived by many cousins. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Psalm 121:1.)

VAN DEN TOORN, Charles (Chuck) – Age 58, October 16, 2021; Grand Rapids, Michigan; Siblings – Ben & Wanda, Andy & Cindy, Marlene & Bob Bibby, Bill & Laurie; survived by special friend Sherri Clark and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins; predeceased by parents William & Joanne. (Rev. H. Hofman, Psalm 90:12.)

VANDER WAAL, Pamela (nee Booth) – Age 77, October 10, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Husband – John (deceased); Children – Stan & Wilma, Virginia & Henk Mulder, Tonia & Bert Van Hierden, Sharon & Sam Klaassen, Julia & Blaine Meissner, John & Cathy, Mary Hofstede, Gary & Sue, Henk & Julia, Louise; 41 grandchildren, 61 great-grandchildren; predeceased by parents, 2 grandchildren, and 2 great-granddaughters. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburch, Psalm 90:12.)

VAN ROEKEL, Hermina (nee Zomer) – Age 90, November 2, 2021, Sioux Center, Iowa; Husband – Cornie (deceased); Children – Jerrold & Elaine, Harlan & Gert, Patti, John & Sheryl, Jan & Randy De Kruyf, Dennis & Glenda, Cindy & Brent Van Beek; 26 grandchildren, 84 great-grandchildren, 9 great-great-grandchildren; Brothers – John & Sophie Zomer, Alvin & Lois Zomer; Sisters – Hattie Van Dyke, Nina Koedam, Lene Walma, Fran Overweg; Sister-in-law – Sylvia Zomer; predeceased by son Jake, parents Herman & Jennie Zomer, brothers Chet Zomer, Herman (infant) and sister Jennie (Jean) Blom. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Mark 5:25-27.)

WILBRINK, Gerrigje (Gerda) – Age 77, October 22, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Husband – Herman (deceased); Children – Herman & Wenna, Wilma & Errett, Marcel & Deb, Gerald & Danielle; 27 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren; predeceased by parents, sisters-in-laws Ali and Hermien, and brother-in-law Gerrit. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburch, Psalm 90:1-11.)

50th Wedding Anniversary

On December 3, 2021,
our dear parents, and grandparents,
Ron & Wanda Hulshof
commemorated their
50th wedding anniversary.

“It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).

4916 Dove Avenue, Ireton, Iowa 51027

65th Wedding Anniversary

On November 3, 2021,
our dear parents, grandparents,
and great-grandparents,
John & Barbara Van Wingerden
commemorated their
65th wedding anniversary.

*“The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion:
and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem
all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy
children’s children, and peace upon Israel”*

(Psalm 128:5&6).

9175 Benson Road, Lynden, WA 98264

Education

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

EBENEZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SHEBOYGAN, WISCONSIN, is in urgent need of a teacher for the 2021-2022 school year. We have a very small, multigrade classroom school. Certification is not required for this position although it would be helpful. Currently, the school board acts as principal with further oversight by the consistory. May this position and our need be bound upon someone’s heart to come over and help us. Any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail, rdteunissen@yahoo.com.

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.

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

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, is looking to fill openings for the 2022-2023 school year. We anticipate needs in special education and other ages/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@nrce.org for further information. Visit www.nrce.org to learn more about our school. Log in to the main site by registering as a new user and wait for approval.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is welcoming applications to fill one full-time grade 6 opening, and one part-time and one full-time high school opening, beginning in March 2022. We are also welcoming applications from those who are willing and able to teach French at the elementary, and potentially high-school, grade levels. 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 Maaikie Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email trinityrcs@embarqmail.com.

To All Candidates for Teacher Positions

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

User Name:

advertising@nrcea.education

Password: **SchoolJobs!**



The Banner of Truth

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

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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.

The Old and the New Year

Come, ye who know and love the blessed Lord,
Sing unto Him a song of sweet accord,
And praise Him for His goodness and His care
Vouchsafed to us throughout another year.

How oft when we have tempted been, and tried,
With not a friend in whom we could confide,
Have we found comfort in that Friend of friends,
Who to His children's every need attends.

O Thou great God, our Comforter divine,
Accept our thanks for every gift of Thine;
And for the wrong we in Thy sight have done,
Forgive us for the sake of Thy dear Son.

'Tis through Thy mercy we are spared to see
Another year: O grant that it may be
A year all free from bloodshed, hate, and strife,
And all that tends to mar our daily life.

We pray that Thou this land of ours will bless,
And comfort those who suffer sore distress;
Protect the weak, the deaf, and dumb, and blind,
And grant that each in Thee may mercy find.

Our soldiers and our sailors on the sea—
Yea, Lord, all classes we commend to Thee,
The rich and poor, the weary and the sad;
May contrite sinners in Thy name be glad.

Bless those we love who dwell in distant lands;
Unite our hearts with love's most powerful bands.
And those who with us still remain at home,
Bless and protect until the end shall come.

Teach us to live so that the world may see
In us the very likeness, Lord, of Thee;
Each day afresh our hearts with grace prepare,
And thus, enable us Thy cross to bear.

When we are called from earth to pass away,
Prepare us, Lord, the summons to obey;
Then shall we know and see Thee as Thou art,
There from Thy presence never to depart.

—*J.P. Riches*