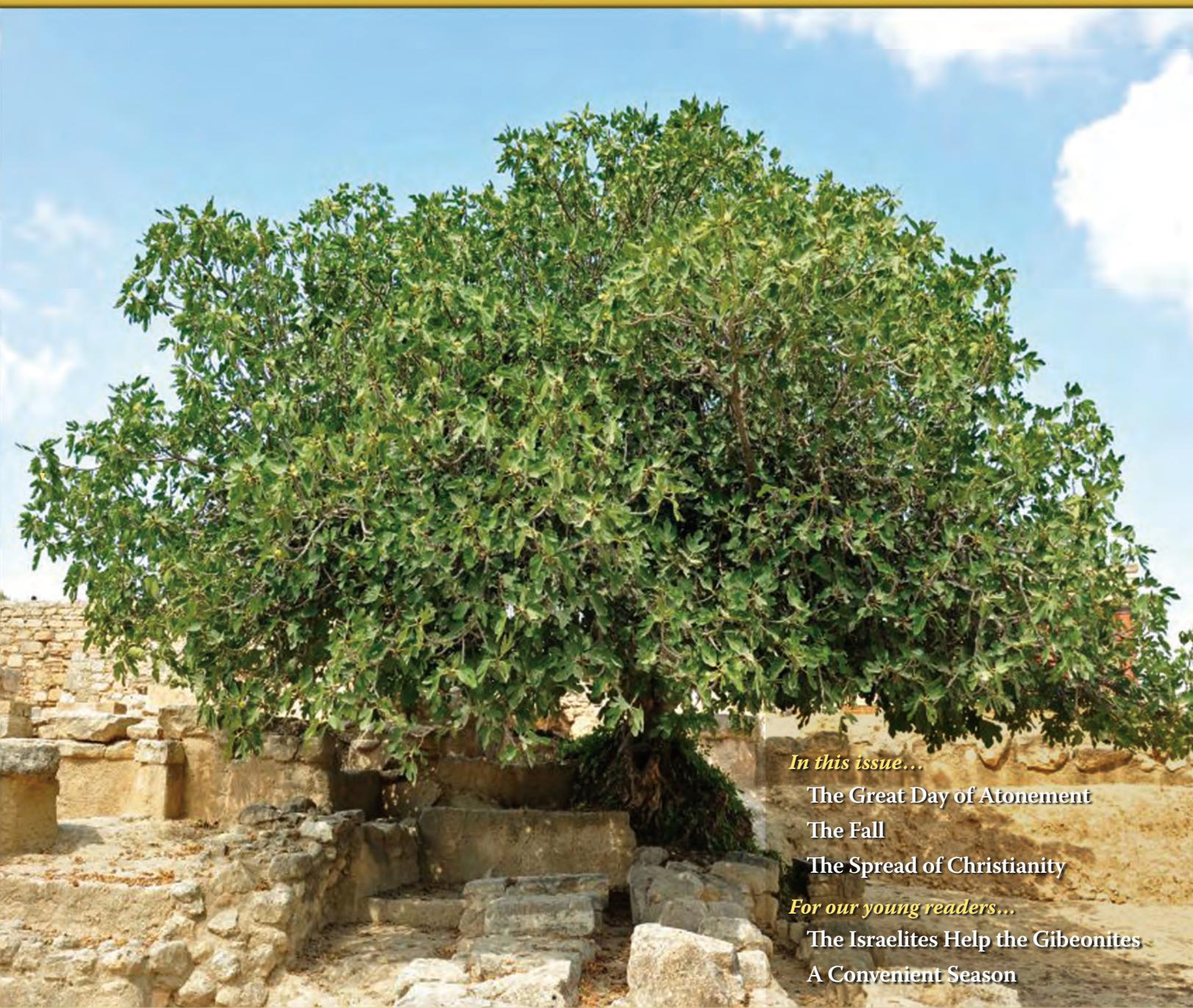


the **Banner** *of Truth*

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The Official Periodical
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*"And when He saw a fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it,
Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig tree withered away." MATTHEW 21:19*



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Meditation

The Great Day of Atonement

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

“And he shall take the two goats, and present them before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And Aaron shall cast lots upon the two goats; one lot for the LORD, and the other lot for the scapegoat” (Leviticus 16:7&8).

Each of the first four books of the Bible has a chapter wherein a special and striking way the suffering, death, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ is portrayed and foreshadowed. In Genesis 22:7b&8a we read, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt offering? And Abraham said, my son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.” In Exodus 12, Christ is typified as the Passover Lamb without blemish which must be slain and its blood applied to the door posts. We read expressly in Exodus 12:13b, “When I see the blood, I will pass over you.” In Numbers 19, the Lord has given instruction concerning a red heifer without spot, wherein is no blemish, which had to be slain and burnt, whose ashes had to be kept for purification.

The above words are taken out of the Book of Leviticus which speaks of the many different sacrifices that were to be offered to the Lord. Chapter 16 speaks of the Great Day of Atonement which was on the tenth day of the seventh month (end of our September or beginning of October). We find the word atonement fifteen times in this chapter. This word in the Hebrew means “to cover or blot over, to expiate, to ransom.” To make the significance and ending of this word easier to remember, we can divide the English word atonement into three words, “at-one-ment.” When the children of Israel came for the third feast to the tabernacle, it had been a long time since the last feast. The Passover was celebrated on the fourteenth day of the first month, and the Feast of Pentecost fifty days thereafter. In the meantime, all the crops had been harvested. This means there were more than five months of sinning since the last feast. I ask you reader, how is it with your sins? Are you “AT-ONE-MENT” with the Lord? Has that become your burden, the breach, the separation between a just and good doing God and your never dying soul? Are there souls that have learned that they cannot pay themselves, that with all their prayers and repentance they still remain black sinners? Then listen to the precious instruction concerning the Great Day of Atonement.

In the first place, we read of a humble priest. Aaron the high priest is a type of the Lord Jesus Christ, although not after His order (Hebrews 7). It is indeed amazing that the officiating high priest on this special day did not wear his official high priestly clothing. He wore four pieces of all

white clothing. This pointed not only to his necessary purity but also to his humiliation. Aaron still had clothing to wear. Christ has laid aside His glory when He assumed our human nature. When He was nailed on the cross, He had no clothing but was naked. Friends, has sin become exceedingly bitter to you? Have you learned to weep and mourn over your sins (Matthew 5:4)?

In the second place, Aaron had to be a spotless high priest when he officiated on the Great Day of Atonement. No, he was not sinless. To that end we read very specifically in verse 6 that Aaron was commanded to offer a sin offering and make atonement for himself and for his house. The great High Priest, the Lord Jesus Christ did not have to first offer for Himself, for we read in Hebrews 7:26&27a, “For such an High Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins.”

In the third place, Aaron was a solitary high priest when he went into the Holy of Holies (verse 17). So Christ, as High Priest, has labored alone as it is written in Isaiah 63:3a, “I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with Me.”

Fourthly, Aaron was a strenuously laboring high priest as we read in this chapter that no less than fifteen animals had to be slain and sacrificed. Aaron was given the help and the strength from above. We read in Psalm 89:19b, “I have laid help upon One that is mighty.”

On this day Israel stood in the presence of the Lord with their sins of the past season. It is also written in verse 29 that they were not allowed to do any work. They were to afflict their souls for the purpose of bringing their mind and heart into a more tender and receptive frame. May that be given for the first time and by renewal in this Passion Season. Are there such souls amongst us—those who have seen something of the preciousness of all the sacrifices that were daily brought but still with the burden of sin upon their back? Also, are there souls desiring and needing confirmation, instruction, and the strengthening of their faith?

Two goats were presented before the LORD at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. How silent it must have been. The lot was cast upon the goats, one to be sacrificed as a sin offering, and the other to be the scapegoat. Seven times it is mentioned in this chapter, “before the LORD.” Reader, is our religion also before the LORD?

Before an animal was killed, the person offering put both his hands upon the head of the animal. Although not written in this chapter concerning the sacrificial goat, it is clearly commanded in the first chapters of Leviticus.

It was indeed a solemn moment and serious preaching for the Israelites when Aaron placed his hands upon the goat that was ready to be slain. This was a symbolic act implying the transferral of the sins of Israel to this goat. We read in Isaiah 53:6b, "The LORD hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Profound words are written in 2 Corinthians 5:21, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." What great and many sins have been laid upon this goat. To that end this goat cannot and may not live (Ezekiel 18:20). The goat must die. This goat did not know that he had to die. The Son of God has so willingly and freely given Himself from eternity, knowing that the cursed death on the cross was awaiting Him.

Aaron has taken the blood of the slain goat into the holy place and sprinkled it upon the mercy seat. This is alluded to when the apostle speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ in Hebrew 10:20, "By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh."

How anxiously the children of Israel must have waited for Aaron to return. We must notice that on this day the people said and did nothing; they only beheld. They must have looked distinctly above the tabernacle to see if the incense which Aaron placed upon the golden altar would arise as a sweet-smelling savor to the heavens. Would the goat upon which their sins had been symbolically transferred be received and accepted by a holy and righteous God? If not, their sins would still be upon them. Then they would have to return to their dwellings with their transgressions and iniquities still upon them. How unbearable the thought. Are there readers that understand what it is, after another Lord's Day, or after another special season, to have to continue with that burden? Are there still waiting, begging, and anxious souls?

When Aaron the high priest did return to the people, they must have breathed a deep sigh of relief. Or so it should it have been, should it not readers? On this Great Day of Atonement, it was declared as we read in John 1:29b, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." Nevertheless, what has transpired inside the tabernacle was not seen by their eyes but had to be explained, received, and believed by faith (Romans 5:1). In His great condescending mercy, the Lord has given a help to that end.

We read that when Aaron had made an end of reconciling, he brought forth the live goat. Concerning this goat, we read in verse 21a, "And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat." Now there shall be many that are profoundly puzzled and do not understand this. Was the sin not laid upon the first goat, and was the goat not slain, and the blood sprinkled and accepted? Now, by renewal, the hands are laid upon this goat, implying a symbolic transferral of sin. We must understand that both goats are part of one sacrifice, implying two distinguished yet not separated aspects.

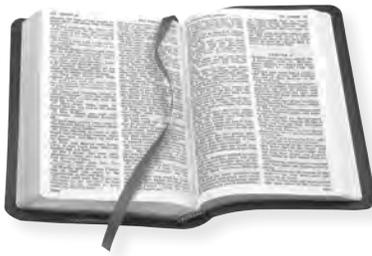
The first goat points to the meriting of salvation. The second goat refers to the application. The first goat points to Good Friday when Christ was offered as an offering for sin which was well pleasing in the sight of his Father. Already on Good Friday the veil was rent from the top to the bottom. On the day of the resurrection, Christ arose to declare that He is risen indeed, and to apply this salvation as implied in Romans 4:25, "Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

The scapegoat was sent away by a fit man. The goat was let go in a wilderness not inhabited. This must have been an astonishing sight for the Israelites. They must have followed the goat with their strained eyes focused on it until it was a speck, yea, until they could see it no more. We read in Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." It was on this day that also the trumpet would be blown to announce the Sabbatical year and the Year of Jubilee.

The Day of Atonement was soon followed by the Feast of Tabernacles which began on the fifteenth day of the seventh month and lasted for seven days. The people were to make themselves booths to dwell in with their families. It was a time to rejoice over what they had seen. It was a time for gladness and thanksgiving. Then it would have resounded out of the booth of an Israelite who has received a blessing, in the exercise of faith by the Holy Spirit, what we read in Psalm 32:1&2, "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the LORD imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile." Let us listen to another booth where a soul may have had it good, "Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases" (Psalm 103:2&3).

The Great Day of Atonement! Great multitudes yearly came up, some out of custom, others to meet friends, some in obedience, and others to be part of Israel. How is it with you when, by renewal, in the Passion weeks the church may in a special way reflect upon the suffering and death of Christ Jesus? The Israelites were called to fast and to cease from work, and with the Lord's blessing to get their mind and heart in the right frame. How necessary to ask for the work of the Holy Spirit. Are there guilty and burdened sinners in our midst that need the goat with laid upon hands? Are there are also souls which have a need for the scapegoat? At the Feast of Tabernacles the church may have a little foretaste of the thanksgiving above.

Reader, are you by the grace of God, AT-ONE-MENT with the Lord? How is it with your great and manifold sins? Are they still on your account? If they remain, how shall it be with you at the day of your death? These are questions that require an answer. These are questions that require an answer today, before an all-knowing God. May it please the Lord by His Holy Spirit to work lovingly and mightily in our heart and the hearts of our children, to learn the need for the passion but also the satisfaction thereof. Then God's name shall be glorified. □



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (3)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed” (Exodus 3:2).

It was not pleasant for Moses to dwell as a stranger in the wilderness. However, the wilderness became a place of necessary training where he learned three subjects: 1) humility, 2) patience, and 3) faith. He would need these in the position in which the Lord would place him. He had become a shepherd of his father-in-law’s flock. There in Midian he crossed the peninsula, knew all the places... however, his life seemed to be so useless, and we would say the best part of his life passed by. Though this seemed so, in reality, God’s hand was leading him toward His purpose. With one hand He prepared the people of Israel in their increasingly heavy oppression. “And it came to pass in process of time, that the king of Egypt died: and the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and they cried, and their cry came up unto God by reason of the bondage” (Exodus 2:23). With His other hand, He molded the deliverer, Moses.

Also in the life of God’s children, when educated at the school of grace, the Lord teaches them to cry out of their great need. He makes them cry for deliverance. The Deliverer becomes utterly necessary, and what a wonder it is if the Lord reveals unto them that there is a Redeemer. His name is Jesus.

A special place

Now at the end of the forty years of Moses traveling in the wilderness, he led his flock to Mount Horeb. An abundance of water and enough food for the large herds could be found in the valleys of the mountain range. One of the most northern mountaintops is Horeb. It was not only a good place for Moses’ flock, but there the Lord would appear unto him. The place is called “the mountain of God.” It was a wonder that the Lord would show that He had heard the cries of Israel; “And God heard their groaning, and God remembered His covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob” (Exodus 2:24).

The Lord often appears when all hope is gone and there is no expectation. Moses seemed to be a forgotten man, but also Israel, in bondage in Egypt, seemed to be a forgotten people. Here, however, at the mountain of God, there will be a solemn appearance of the Lord to an insignificant shepherd who had learned many lessons in the wilderness. He would have to put off his shoes from off his feet “for

the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.” God is there. His majesty is shown. “A fire goeth before Him, and burneth up His enemies round about” (Psalm 97:3). The Lord appeared with fire in His anger and righteous wrath over His enemies. “For, behold, the LORD will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire” (Isaiah 66:15). Sinners cannot dwell with God. His wrath would consume them. The prophet also speaks of it in Isaiah 33:14, “The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites. Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire? who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings?” The Apostle Paul also speaks of this in 2 Thessalonians 1:8, “In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.” How solemn is this truth, for we all will have to meet God, and how will we stand before a holy and righteous Judge? Would Moses flee? No, the Lord Himself has brought him there to meet with Him.

The burning bush

“And the angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.” Who is that Angel? He is the Son of God Himself. It is Christ. This Angel of the Lord appeared to Abraham; He appeared in human form in Judges 6 and 13, and here in the wilderness He is met with Moses.

He appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush. No, it was not a tall, lofty spreading oak or cedar, but a low, thorny bramble bush. The bush may be interpreted as signifying the people of Israel in the furnace of affliction in Egypt. It may be a symbol of the Church of God in all ages under affliction and in distress. They are like the thorn bush both for their small quantity, as it is but a little flock, and for their qualities, as in themselves they are but weak and without strength, mean and low, and they have about them the thorns of corruption and temptations. They are often afflicted and persecuted.

There was something very special about this bush. We read “And, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed.” The fire may then be a picture of the afflictions and trials in the life of God’s Church. That insignificant bush is worthy to be given up to be consumed but is preserved because the Church is the object of the eternal electing grace of God in Christ. He has cast Himself for her in the fire of God’s wrath. This fire may also be sometimes:

- A. A picture of God's wrath as was manifest upon Sodom, Egypt, Babel, and will be upon everyone outside of Christ. However, Christ, the green Tree, descended into the fire instead of His Church, who deserved it. Did it already become reality in your life? Have you become worthy to be consumed? Has it ever become a wonder to you what we read in Malachi 3:6, "For I am the LORD, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed"?
- B. A picture of God's love to salvation. This is a fire in which God's Church comes for refining and cleansing. This fire is often kindled by man, but God considers it to be useful to His Church for trial and for testing and proving. "For thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried" (Psalm 66:10).
- C. A picture of God's faithfulness and care. The bush was not consumed because the Angel of the Lord was in it. Christ was in the fire; He cried out, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" God's wrath is kindled by sin, but is also spent when the fire is extinguished. Blessed is he who may know this by faith. We read in Isaiah 54:9, "For this is as the waters of Noah unto Me: for as I have sworn that the waters of Noah should no more go over the earth; so have I sworn that I would not be wroth with thee, nor rebuke thee." Now there may be the kind and comforting light of God's countenance, now the fire only consumes sin and corruption of the Church of God. We do not have to ask for afflictions, but the heavenly Refiner uses them so that the gold of His own work may shine forth. The dross may be removed and then the gold revealed. God will only be glorified in His own work.

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It was also God's goodness to the people of Israel that He brought them into the furnace of oppression, in the fire, so that they would not feel too much at home in Egypt and assimilate with their idolatrous life.

Need of instruction

It was understandable that Moses did not know what this meant. He said, "I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt." It was a mystery to him. That insignificant bramble bush was burning and was not consumed. It was indeed a great sight for Moses. There will be instruction for him. "And when the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush" (Exodus 3:4a). The Lord knew what His servant needed. Moses needed to be enlightened; therefore, God called him and said, "Moses, Moses." It was a solemn, powerful calling. Moses was called by his name. There is the gospel: "I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." That also implied separation from the world. No unholy one will appear before the Lord. He can only receive cleansed, pure people.

The place was holy ground. Moses answered, "Here am I."

The Lord had a wonderful and blessed message for him. He would be God's servant, a shepherd for an oppressed people in the wilderness, one who will need patience, humility, and faith. The Lord would provide. Moses had only to follow. However, that is only possible by the grace of Him whose meat and drink it was to do the Father's will, and who said, "Follow Me," and His grace will be sufficient for Moses. He will, even in the fire, provide for Moses. This He will do for all His children and for all His servants. □

(To be continued)

The Lord's Preserving Eye in Affliction

God's children should not doubt His love when He afflicts. Christ loved Lazarus peculiarly, yet He afflicted him very sore. A surgeon never bends his eye so tenderly upon his patient as when he is putting in the lancet or probing the wound to the very bottom. And so with Christ—He bends His eye most tenderly over His own at the time He is afflicting them... A goldsmith when he casts gold into the furnace looks after it.

—Robert Murray M'Cheyne



From Our Inheritance

Good Friday

Augustus Toplady (1740-1778)

(Taken from the book *A course of prayer, for each day in the week, suitable to every Christian family*, 1832)

Take a momentary view of Christ in the garden, and on the cross, hear Him say, “The cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it.” “Not My will, but Thy will be done.” Look at Him when betrayed by one disciple, denied by another, and abandoned by all. See Him dragged before Caiaphas and loaded with every insult at the tribunal of unrighteousness. When presented to Pilate, or when mocked and contumaciously treated by Herod, and his soldiers, He spoke not a word. When scourged, when buffeted, when crowned with thorns and arrayed in a ludicrous robe, when spat upon, when hoodwinked, when addressed with the mock honors of royalty, or when struck by the very servants, with the palms of their hand; through the whole scene of horror we behold the Saviour resigned, patient, and benign.

History affords various examples of majesty and misery united; very many have been the instances of grandeur and virtue in distress, but all created splendor and all human sufferings vanish into nothing when compared with the majesty of Jesus Christ and with the sorrows He sustained. As in dignity of person, so in extremity of suffering, He has, and can have, no parallel among men. Read what suffering innocence underwent, ye gay ones of the earth, and learn to set light by all worldly glory. Meditate, therefore, ye sons and daughters of affliction, and learn to bear with patience your small, your diminutive portion of the cross, the whole weight which was borne by our agonizing Lord. Ponder upon these things, ye that believe through grace, and see with grateful wonder at what vast expense of love and

anguish the Friend of sinners redeemed you unto God. Reflect thereon, ye fearful and trembling seekers of His name; and doubt the sounding of His bowels and of His mercy toward you, if you can. You of His people, who are afraid to die, behold the grave softened and consecrated into a bed of safe and holy rest to all who expire, rejoicing in the sacrifice of His death.

Such reflections as these should engage not only the assent but the thankful, the believing approbation of lost sinful man. Is not food welcome to the famishing lips? Does not the proclamation of gratuitous liberty fill the heart of despairing captives with joy unknown before? Is not free and full pardon a matter of gladness and triumph to criminals under sentence of death, who wait with anxious dread the hour of execution? Yet, how coolly, how negligently, do the generality of mankind view the redemption of immortal sinners, accomplished by the Son of God. Blessed, thrice blessed, are they who believe the report and to whom is revealed the arm of the Lord.

He was oppressed of men and was afflicted of God, yet He opened not His mouth in the least complaint. He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter. He was content to be sacrificed as the true Passover, or paschal Lamb, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth. He submitted to be shorn of all His honors, of wealth, ease, reputation, and life itself, displaying all the while silent meekness and forgiving love. When He was reviled, He reviled not again; and when He suffered, threatened not but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously. □

A Good Tree Will Not Only Have Leaves But Also Fruit

(Excerpt taken from “Bible Stories for Little Ones” in February 2012 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

From Jerusalem Jesus went to Bethany. As He was returning, He was hungry. When He saw a fig tree, He went to look for figs, but there was no fruit on the tree. The tree looked good, for it was full of leaves, but not one fig was on it. Then Jesus spoke to the tree and said, “Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever.”

The next day, Jesus and His disciples passed that way again. When they looked at the fig tree, they saw that it was completely dried up, all the way from the root. Then Peter said, “Master, behold, the fig tree which Thou cursed is withered away.”

Why did Jesus curse the fig tree? Perhaps it was to teach a lesson to us. We are said to be like trees; if we profess to be God’s people, to be good and holy, then we are like trees full of leaves—looking good in the sight of men. However, a good tree will not only have leaves but also fruit. Even so, those who are truly God’s people not only say what is right but do what is right. This is bringing forth good fruit to the praise and glory of God. As the bad fig tree was cursed by Jesus and withered away, so all those who only pretend to be righteous, and are not really so, must at last perish forever.



Church History

The Spread of Christianity (1)

J.N. Mouthaan, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

Learning the church history of the first centuries following the birth of Christ is well worth our effort. The life's walk and practices of the early Christians are an encouraging example for us. In six articles we will look anew at some aspects of the early church. In the first four articles we will consider the growth and expansion of Christianity.

That Christianity grew so quickly in the early centuries has frequently drawn the attention of historians. How is it possible that such a small movement out of Galilee could expand to a world religion? In order to answer this question, it is first of all necessary to know something of the size and the rapidity of the growth of Christianity. The sociologist Rodney Stark has investigated this and has come up with the following numbers.

Year	# of Christians in the Roman Empire	Percentage of the population
40	1,000	0.0017
50	1,400	0.0023
100	7,530	0.0126
150	40,496	0.07
200	217,795	0.36
250	1,171,356	1.9
300	6,299,832	10.5
350	33,882,008	56.5

It would be well, on the basis of these numbers to consider for a moment longer the growth of Christianity.

A small beginning

When we consider the numbers for the first century, then the numbers for the years 40 and 50 are too low. The Book of Acts teaches us that the congregation at Jerusalem, quite soon after Pentecost, numbered five thousand souls (Acts 4:4). For a long time thereafter the congregation at Jerusalem was therefore the largest congregation in the Roman Empire. Up until the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., it was the mother congregation of the other Christian congregations. The other congregations spread throughout the Roman Empire have been much smaller. The congregation at Corinth, in the time of the Apostle Paul, is estimated to have consisted of forty to fifty people.

In a large city such as Corinth with a population of about seven-hundred thousand, the Christians formed a distinct minority. This was not only true of Corinth, also in other places Christians were a relatively small group. This has been a source of much concern for the early Christians for there were few living examples, few shoulders who were able to carry on the work, and they were also surrounded by a culture which was permeated with idolatry and immorality. Apostasy and heresy were great dangers for the future of the congregations. Especially in the later Epistles such as 2 Timothy, 2 Peter, Jude, and 1 John we can read much about it. The numbers, however, are not decisive. God reckons differently.

Peter comforts his readers by pointing to the ark. At the time of the flood the Church consisted of just eight souls, but they were kept (1 Peter 3:20). For the early Christians their hope was grounded upon the resurrection of Christ. Without this hope upon the resurrection there was little future for the early Christians. Is there not much here to learn, and unlearn, in our days?

Jerusalem

The leader of the congregation at Jerusalem was James, the brother of the Lord. Among the Jews he was called the "righteous" because of his strict walk of life according to the law of Moses. In the year 62 A.D., he was violently put to death. The Jewish historian, Flavius Josephus, writes that this was especially because of the high priest Ananus, the son of Annas, a Sadducee of whom we read about in the New Testament (*Antiquities of the Jews, Book 20, chapter 9, paragraph 1*). The Church Father Eusebius (±260-340) related that he was thrown down from the pinnacle of the temple, and was beaten to death with a piece of wood (*Church History, Book 2, chapter 23, paragraph 3*).

For the Jewish-Christian congregation it became more and more dangerous in Jerusalem. The Lord Jesus during His sojourn here upon earth had prophesied that Jerusalem would be destroyed and that His followers should flee when the armies came near (compare Mark 13:14 with Luke 21:22). Therefore, in the year 66 A.D., the congregation fled to Pella, a region of ancient Palestine east of the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. ◻

(To be continued)

Faith needs the Word as much as fruit needs the living root of a tree.

—John Calvin



Doctrinal Studies

The Fall (1)

Rev. G. H. Kersten (1882-1948)

(Taken from *Reformed Dogmatics, Volume 1, Chapter 16, The Fall*)

Doctrine of great importance

As almost every article of Scriptural doctrine, so also the doctrine of the Fall was first seen clearly because the dreadful heresies that arose about it demanded refutation. The furious raging of Pelagius who held that Adam's fall did not affect his posterity, and that sin is only committed by imitation, and that after the Fall man still has a free will to do both good and evil, yielded the fruit that the full light of Scripture was made to shine upon the Fall. God stirred up Augustine and girded him with courage and earnestness to learn from Scripture what man has become in Adam. The fall of Adam brought death over him and all his posterity, as Paul teaches very clearly in Romans 5:12-19. If sin is done only by imitation, as Pelagius stated, whom did Adam, and whom did the devils imitate? Does not Scripture clearly contradict the free will of fallen man when it states that the carnal mind is enmity against God (Romans 8:7)?

In 418 A.D. Pelagius was condemned by the Synod of Carthage. This Synod rightly pronounced an anathema upon the doctrine of Pelagius.

The doctrine that man in Adam is entirely corrupt and condemnable before God had to also be defended against the Socinians in the beginning of the 17th century. In later times this important doctrine had to be defended against the attacks of some Mennonites and others who rejected infant baptism because they denied the depraved state of nature in children. In the Netherlands the horrid quarrels with the Armenians served to the confirmation and triumph of the scriptural doctrine relating to the fall of Adam.

The wars waged through the ages against this doctrine show its great importance. In the light of the Word of God, and also enlightened by those who have left us their writings, and especially by the doctrinal standards of the Reformed churches, we will now deal with the fall of Adam.

Concerning that Fall the Word of God speaks about:

1. The temptation of Satan,
2. The willful disobedience, and
3. The relationship of all Adam's posterity to this Fall.

The temptation by Satan places us face to face with the problem of the origin of sin, a problem which men cannot solve. In the chapter on Creation, we noticed that God probably created the angels on the first day, and in a perfect state, as He also created man perfectly good.

There was no flaw in God's Creation, neither in heaven nor on earth. Now, sin revealed itself, even in heaven in the presence of the immaculately holy God, before His throne, and in His perfect angels. To the question how this was possible, and how later sin could enter man who bore

God's image, we can only say that although God is not the cause of sin, nor can He be, yet it pleased Him to allow the possibility of sin so that through the depths of sin God would be glorified in both His righteousness and His mercy.

Sin was not created

We would also remark here that sin has no material or substantial existence. Pantheism ascribes to sin a material existence, and the Manicheans speak of a substantial existence of sin. However, if sin has a substantial existence, whether material or substantial, it must have been created, and then God would have been the Creator of evil. Otherwise, sin would have to be uncreated and have its continuance in an evil God as Marcion and Manes taught already in the second century, about dualism, having a good and an evil God.

The one, however, as well as the other is in conflict with the truth. Sin does not have an independent existence; it is an abstraction and is therefore not created; sin exists only in the action of rational creatures, angels, and men. This is true also of concupiscence (sensuality). Rome errs when it teaches that concupiscence is characteristic of man since his creation and that it is not a sin if one does not yield to an act.

Many newer philosophers, following in the footsteps of Plato and the ascetics, see sin only in the material, not in the soul. All spiritual existence would be un-sinful, but by coming in contact with matter it causes sin.

The Lord Jesus, however, teaches us the opposite when He tells us that evil thoughts come out of the heart, not out of matter or flesh (Matthew 15:19). In Romans 7:7, Paul testifies that covetousness is sin even when we covet against our will, which is contrary to Rome's heresy of innocent concupiscence.

Fall of the angels

Sin was first committed by the angels. This probably took place a very short time after their creation. Cocceius had the opinion that the fall of the angels took place before the end of the sixth day of Creation, but this, as Voetius remarks, would be in conflict with Genesis 1:31: "And God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day."

Also, God rested on the seventh day and delighted Himself in His works, so the fall of angels could not have taken place before the seventh day. Scripture gives us no further indication about the time of the fall of angels and men. In their fall a part of the angels about the throne, the

reprobate angels, corrupted themselves, and became devils in hell. These devils have cast themselves upon man, the image-bearer of God on earth. Satan knew what state man was in, to the praise and glory of his Creator. Being an enemy of God, he was also an enemy of man who was created in the image of God. The purpose of Satan's temptation was to strike at God in His glorious creature and also to plunge man himself into the destruction of death.

Fall of man

In tempting man Satan was allowed to use the serpent who was more subtle than any beast of the field. The serpent was the instrument through which Satan spoke. He did not make sounds in the air but spoke through the serpent. What we are told about this is no allegory, as we noticed already in the previous chapter, or a myth or a vision but a reality, both the temptation of Satan and the speaking of the serpent. That Satan did not appear as a serpent but used an actual serpent is not only clear from Genesis 3:1 but also from the curse God pronounced upon him in Genesis 3:14. Throughout the Bible we are told about the temptation of

Satan (2 Corinthians 11:3). In John 8:44, Christ says that we are of our father the devil, and that he "was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." He is Satan, called "that old serpent" (Revelation 20:2). He spoke lies to Eve.

Satan turned to the woman, not because she was ignorant of the commandment, and of the threat of death, and of the promise of life. In her answer Eve shows that she knew about God's covenant with Adam. However, not Eve, but Adam is the head of the covenant; not to her, but to Adam God had spoken, and through Eve Satan would try to influence Adam. The woman also had the perfect ability to withstand the serpent, and when she lent her ear to Satan, she did it willfully. (*"...the perfect ability to withstand the serpent."* As chapter 15 of this volume teaches us "Adam, created in the image of God, able to satisfy the demand of the covenant and to resist all temptation." –Ed.) ◻

(To be continued)

Adam was Created Able to Fulfill the Covenant of Works

By making the Covenant of Works, God opened a way for man to develop the greatness of his creation above that of other creatures. In fulfilling the demand, man shall serve God not because he cannot do otherwise, but out of true and pure love he **would not** do otherwise.

—Rev. G.H. Kersten



For Young and Old

No Other Gods (8)

C.M. Van Der Sluis

Reunited *(continued)*

The heart of Mrs. Beekman's sister began to have a desire to meet those people (after the services) and a secret sigh ascended: "O Lord, might it be according to Thy good pleasure?"

Mrs. Beekman noticed that her sister's desire was to go, and she would not hinder her because during her life so many disappointments had come upon her already, so she said: "Well, do you know what we will do? Tonight we will go to Baker Henstra." They knew not what would be revealed there.

They arrived there first and were heartily welcomed. Soon the room was completely filled. Mr. Parlvliet, his wife, and Elsie also were there. The topic of discourse was respecting the preaching which they had listened to during the day as well as the leadings and paths which the Lord takes with His people in this difficult, troublous life. The pastor noticed this stranger, and upon his question she made herself known as Mrs. Olthof. The deep suffering of her past life made her appear older than she was. God had been too strong for her in the past years. She had thought to spend a quiet and calm life in Holland, but the

Lord gave her no rest and revealed to her her lost condition. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” Oh, she had gone astray so far from the Lord.

“Madam, were you, too, able to listen today?” the pastor asked. Momentarily it was quiet in the room. Then the Lord enabled Mrs. Olthof to open her mouth and reveal what was in her heart. She began telling of her pathway from the very beginning. From this was revealed clearly that the Lord seeks those who are lost and driven away. She withheld nothing, also not her self-chosen way and the warnings which the Lord gave her. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” She also came to the time in her life when she lost her husband and child.

Then the excitement reached its height. With whom? Naturally, with Mr. Parlvliet and his wife! It seemed as if all things reeled before their eyes. Could it...could it be possible that...? Mr. Parlvliet could scarcely think anymore.

“Madam,” he exclaimed, “did this happen long ago?”

“Exactly twelve years, Sir,” answered Mrs. Olthof.

“But was there never any investigation made respecting your child?”

“No, for was not the boat upside down in the sea, Sir?”

Then Mr. Parlvliet could no longer contain himself and said with emotion: “Oh, Madam, your child is alive; I myself rescued her and the initials on her clothing were E.O.”

“And here is your child,” said Mrs. Parlvliet, who, as she wept, brought Elsie to her mother.

This meeting between mother and child was very affecting; it cannot be expressed in words. All present were filled with admiration and emotion. Then Mr. Parlvliet told the entire circumstances of how Elsie was rescued.

The minister said, “We ought to sing together:”

*Thy deeds, O Lord, will I relate
And on Thy wonders meditate;
Thy way, O God, is just and right,
And none is like Thee in might.
Thy way, O God, was in the sea,
But, though Thy paths mysterious be,
Thy people Thou didst safely keep
As shepherds lead their helpless sheep.*

Many could sing this with only a stammering voice, but the Lord received the honor. The minister closed the evening’s gathering with an earnest prayer of thanks. Mrs. Olthof, with the consent of her sister, did not return

to her home but remained for the time being with the Parlvliets. Many things were still to be told and arranged. There was also sadness because bonds had to be broken. Elsie could no longer remain with her foster parents. This separation would be grievous for both Elsie and them, but it was somewhat softened and eased because of the wonderful evidences of God’s goodness and because Mrs. Olthof decided to now live in Graafstad. With this decision Elsie could visit her foster parents often. We can readily understand that in days to come much was spoken respecting the wonderful dealings of God. O Lord, unto Thy name give all the glory!

*Infinite grace! and can it be
That heaven’s Supreme should stoop so low!
A wretch to visit, vile like me;
One who has been His bitterest foe!*

*Can holiness and wisdom join,
With truth, with justice, and with grace,
To make eternal blessings mine,
And sin, with all its guilt erase?*

*O love! beyond conception great,
That formed the vast stupendous plan!
Where all divine perfections meet
To reconcile rebellious man!*

*There wisdom shines in fullest blaze,
And justice all her rights maintains!
Astonished angels stoop and gaze,
While mercy o’er guilty reigns.*

*Yes, mercy reigns, and justice too;
In Christ harmoniously they meet:
He paid to justice all her due,
And now He fills the mercy seat.*

*Such are the wonders of our God,
And such the amazing depths of grace:
To save, from wrath’s vindictive rod,
The chosen sons of Adam’s race.*

*With grateful songs, then let our souls
Surround our gracious Father’s throne;
And all between the distant poles
His truth and mercy ever own. □*

(This installment marks the end of this series.)

If any man ascribes anything of salvation, even the very least thing, to the free will of man, he knows nothing of grace, and he has not learned Jesus Christ rightly.

—Martin Luther



Reflections

Brought Home by the Angels (4)

Rev. C. Hogchem, Aalburg, the Netherlands

“The angels continuously pass by me.”

Matje Verbruggen lived in Vinkeveen and was nine years old. She was a student in the grade school, and her teacher was Mr. S. Bison. Meningitis was an illness which in those days quickly led to a person's death. Matje lived for four weeks with this serious illness.

Especially the last two weeks of her life were very painful. The Lord showed her great and special grace while she was upon her sickbed. Upon request her father has written a booklet about it. “Oh, people of the Lord, I have tried to sketch something, with many shortcomings, of the praises of the Lord from the mouth of a child. Because of the majesty of God's grace which radiated from her, we all—my wife, the children, and I—came under deep impressions....”

The majesty of God's grace is noticeable when reading this story; in and of itself it testifies of God's work of grace. A summary of it does not do justice; it is better if one reads the entire story (“Heeren lof uit een kindermond;” 1927 4e druk). [“The Lord's praises expressed out of the mouth of a child”].

The following portion consists for the most part of citations from the booklet.

Justice and grace

During her illness Matje was instructed about our lost state in Adam and our salvation in Christ. By God's Spirit she was uncovered to her condition, and she learned to know the pain and the sorrow of her sins in the depth of her soul so that she began to weep because she had never known her sins to such an extent. “Oh, father,” she said, “I have lived as a heathen. I have done nothing else but provoke the Lord Jesus and cause Him grief.”

The loveliness and the friendliness of Jesus as a complete Saviour caused her to call out, “Oh, Lord Jesus, Thou art my only riches; Thou art my greatest treasure. I desire naught else but Thee alone.” When she received a sight of her precious King, who showed her the crown of life, she said to her father, “Father, just put away all that I still have here—my toys, my money, just throw it all away—I no longer desire any of it.”

The majesty of God's grace filled her soul to such an extent that it seemed to radiate from her body in such a way that we sank away into nothingness. Among the many words which she quoted out of the Truth, which she might understand out of God's precious Word, and which were applied to her soul were also these, “I am the Lord's.” She

made her father promise that these words would be placed upon her casket.

Brought out with gladness and rejoicing

While on her deathbed, Matje received the special grace of visions, also about angels. During one vision she was led into the heavenly Jerusalem and called out time and again, “Streets of gold, streets of gold; the gate is always open and is never closed, for the angels ride in and out.” She was also at one time led into her departure where the Church sings, “Enthroned in royal state, all glorious thou shalt dwell, with garments fair, inwrought with gold ... the Church He loveth well. And they that honor Thee, shall in Thy train attend; and to the palace of the King ... shall joyfully ascend” (Psalter 125:4&5; Psalm 45). Matje saw a row of chariots and horses and called out with her eyes fixed on heaven, “Oh, Father, just look. Don't you see it?” In blessed wonderment and adoration, she sank away while calling out, “There is One seated upon the white horse, clothed with a long white robe and a golden crown upon His head. Oh, I see that it is the Lord Jesus, for His name is written upon His clothing.”

She now had a continuous longing that she made known to Him that the angels would also take her up to that glorious heaven. She prayed continually, “Oh, Lord Jesus, please come and get me. I desire to go along with the angels in their chariots. Oh, dear Lord Jesus, may your child now come along?” She continued to beg, but she said time and again, “I am not there yet, for the angels keep passing me by.”

A multitude of angels

“They are not to be counted,” she said, “thousands upon thousands. Oh, father, just look. They all have golden harps. Oh, how glorious that is. What heavenly music and what beautiful singing. How lovingly they played and sang along with the harps.” She wanted to sing along, but she said, “I am not able to sing yet,” She begged her King to come and get her, for she said, “Lord Jesus, I am so anxious to sing along.” The longing lived in her soul to glorify her King who had saved her out of such a great need and death. It is only when this corruptible one shall have put on incorruption and this mortal shall have put on immortality that the Lord will be worthily glorified.

Matje was buried on July 9, 1927 in Sliedrecht. Rev. J.A. Riekel (1869-1949) led the service, and used as his text Isaiah 44:5. Her teacher Mr. S. Bison also spoke at the open grave. □

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



Questions & Answers

The Time of Grace

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

John Bunyan writes that the day of grace ends for some people before the Lord takes them out of this life. Is that really so?

We must be careful with all types of comments and expressions about the time of grace. Sometimes one gets the impression that people speak much too easily about the precious time of grace. People are so busy with the here and now, and they concern themselves little about the things of eternity. In doing so they talk about possibly a long life or a future time when it will be a more suitable time to seek the Lord. Everyone knows the expression, “As long as there is life, there is hope.” Of course, there is a certain truth in this statement, but it can also be a wile of the devil to cause one to quietly live onward. Very emphatically Holy Scripture says, “Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart” (Psalm 95:7b&8a).

If something of the seriousness of life is felt, then there comes a longing to urge everyone to seek the Lord while they are young. “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them” (Ecclesiastes 12:1). When we see the room which there may be for our own heart and life, we would like to take everyone along with us. That is foremost because the Lord is so worthy to be served and loved, for He has a right upon each child of Adam. Let us therefore consider the time of life to be precious.

There are also people who are harassed by Satan with the thoughts that they have sinned too long and too greatly. It may be stated to such people that it is still the time of grace, and they may still approach the throne of grace. “Seek ye the LORD while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon” (Isaiah 55:6&7). The writer of the marginal notes adds “That is, while He offers His mercy to poor sinners, and invites them to penitence and conversion.”

The end of the time of grace

Preachers such as John Bunyan (1628-1688) use the stated expression pointing to the Holy Scriptures to encourage their hearers to seek the Lord, or to warn people with convictions not to place their rest or repose in the same. There lies therefore a kernel of truth in this expression. We will let Bunyan speak, “Convicted sinner, God had lit your candle and you extinguished it; God again lights your candle, and you extinguish it... In the end God decides that He will no more light your candle, and then you will walk, just like the Egyptians, all of your days in darkness, and you will never more see the light except the light shining from hell fire. Therefore, honor God when He awakens your conscience; do not extinguish your convictions. Do it, says the prophet, ‘before He cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and, while ye look for light, He turn it into the shadow of death, and make it gross darkness” (Jeremiah 13:16).

We also had to think of King Saul’s testimony when he eventually came to the woman with a familiar spirit who lived in Endor, “I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams” (1 Samuel 28:15b).

My dear reader, consider the seriousness and use the time of grace and the means of grace so that what the poet sings in Psalter 83:3, “So let the godly seek Thee in times when Thou art near; no whelming floods shall reach them, nor cause their heart to fear” may be fulfilled. □

(Note: Rev. Hofman was unable to provide an article this month. He hopes to resume next month, D.V.)

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

I have no objection to you calling God your Father if He has called you His child. It is by degrees that we come to this knowledge—first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear.

—William Tiptaft



Current Events

A Country Where Christmas Is Forbidden

Imagine growing up in a place where Christmas is forbidden. A North Korean refugee can tell us firsthand what it's like for the people of his homeland. He grew up never even hearing about Christmas. Now he says every Christmas he thinks of his persecuted brothers and sisters in North Korea. Instead of Christmas, on December 24, the country celebrates the birthday of the wife of the founder of North Korea. In North Korea Christmas is not celebrated publicly. Secret believers must keep most of their celebrations in their hearts or risk being killed. With the current food crisis in the country, it is "difficult to imagine believers having special food for Christmas this year. They might whisper hymns and pray in a hidden place, perhaps secretly reading the Bible if they have one." Despite the persecution they face, believers in North Korea have hope, "and do not just pray for themselves, but also for others—for their neighbors, friends, colleagues, even their oppressors."

—OpenDoorUSA.org

Attack on Baptist Church in Nigeria

Attackers on Emmanuel Baptist Church in southern Kaduna state, Nigeria, took sixty-six hostages. A week later on November 6, two hostages were shot dead and three others were injured. The three injured hostages were hospitalized in critical condition. Eventually they were all released. Suspected Fulani militants had raided the church during its Sunday service. Two of the gunmen reportedly mounted the pulpit, pointed rifles at the congregation and opened fire. A Christian was killed while another was seriously injured. The gunmen reportedly called some days later and said they needed money to feed their abductees. Members of the congregation got the money together and bought food, but the gunmen then called to say they would not collect it as they had heard that soldiers had come to the area. A local woman said there have been numerous kidnappings in recent years. A local man explained that the locals are mostly illiterate farmers, "So they have nowhere to go," he said. "When they are kidnapped and released, they return home. Some have been kidnapped twice or thrice." One of the injured abductees had been abducted earlier this year and only released two months before being abducted again.

—ChurchInChains.ie

Taliban Fighters Still Searching House to House

When the Taliban took over Afghanistan, they hunted the founder of an organization that employed fellow Christians in Afghanistan for twenty years and oversaw many humanitarian projects. Taliban fighters ransacked his organization's office and stole the money on hand. He and his family were kept safe in a safe house by the Shai Fund organization until it was able to evacuate them from Afghanistan. The fighters were going from house to house to search for specific people who worked with the previous Afghan government as well as religious minorities. As apostasy is a crime punishable by death, it is estimated five thousand to twelve thousand Afghan Christians are at extreme risk of being killed. Many of them have left or are trying to leave the country, some heading toward the mountains despite the approaching winter. The Shai Fund is assisting those still in the country in safe houses. Also, it estimates that one in three Afghans are currently at risk of starvation due to the economic collapse in the country.

—ChurchInChains.ie

New Jersey Further Solidifies Same-sex Marriage Law

The NJ Senate voted in December to approve legislation that would put into state statute support for same-sex marriage that was established by previous Supreme Court decisions. Bill S-3416 would codify into New Jersey law that same-sex couples can marry. A senator said "The courts have ruled that same-sex marriages are a fundamental right, but we want to put it into statute to protect against any backtracking by the U.S. Supreme Court." A state statute would bring New Jersey law in line with the 2013 State Supreme Court decision and also the 2015 U.S. Supreme Court decision which held that all states are required to allow same-sex couples to marry.

—EINNews.com

Record Number of Abortion Restrictions Passed in 2021

A pro-abortion think tank is decrying 2021 as "the worst year" for abortion rights in nearly fifty years as dozens of laws aimed at restricting access to abortion have passed at the state level in 2021. A report states that "106 abortion restrictions had been enacted in 19 states" during 2021, marking "the highest total in any year since abortion rights were affirmed by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1973.... The number of pro-life laws passed in 2021 exceeded the previous record of 89 abortion restrictions enacted in 2011." Many were laws limiting abortions after a certain point in pregnancy, ranging from "heartbeat bills" restricting abortions to the first six weeks of pregnancy, to the more traditional "pain-capable" bans on abortions after twenty or twenty-four weeks' gestation.

—ChristianPost.com

Attacks on Christians in Nigeria Never Stop

Five people in Nigeria were brutally attacked by Fulani militants on Friday, December 31, while on their way home from an annual prayer meeting held for the Christian communities of Irigwe. One was killed and burnt and four others sustained injuries. The deceased victim was thirty-eight years old. One of the survivors said that during the attack, a militant warned that it was "the first attack for the new year," and that more would be coming in 2022. He added, "It was God that saved my life; I don't know how I escaped; it was God that saved me." A leader of the Irigwe tribesmen reported that authorities ignored threats from the militants prior to the bloodshed. "This was the second time [the] Fulani promised an attack on one of the communities, and the government of Nigeria doesn't want to protect them because they are Christians," he said. These attacks have been happening for twenty years and the silence is deafening.

—Persecution.org

Concerning the Word Preached

Do we prize it in our judgments? Do we receive it into our hearts? Do we fear the loss of the Word preached more than the loss of peace and trade? Is it the removal of the ark that troubles us? Again, do we attend to the Word with reverential devotion? When the judge is giving the charge on the bench, all attend. When the Word is preached, the great God is giving us His charge. Do we listen to it as to a matter of life and death? This is a good sign that we love the Word.

—Thomas Watson



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (26) **Article XXVII: Of the Catholic Christian Church** *(continued)*

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

The confession speaks of one Church which the Lord gathers out of all generations. This is the true Church. Prior to the Reformation the essence of the Church was also found in the church of Rome, but after the Reformation it has become a false church, going farther and farther away from the Word of God. Our fathers called the pope the antichrist. When we think of the present pope, who is a very strong personality, then the danger whereof our fathers spoke is not imaginary. Especially when you read in the Bible how the antichrist is described, there is then remarkably much resemblance with the pope.

Since the Reformation many schisms have come into the church all over the world; nevertheless, the body of Christ, the Church, is still upon earth. The spiritual unity of this Church is experienced by the regenerated in whose hearts love is poured out, and so they are able to love the Lord and their neighbors, although it is in beginning.

This one Church consists of two parts—the Church militant and the Church triumphant. The first is on earth, the other in heaven. Rome speaks yet of a third part, namely, the suffering church in purgatory, which is the place of complete cleansing before sinners may enter into heaven. No place can be found in God's Word to defend the doctrine of purgatory or to give a good basis for it; therefore, we must condemn it. The Socinians have another error—they deny the existence of the Church triumphant at this time. They believe it will begin after the second coming of Christ. Also, many in our days say that dead is dead; therefore, they do not believe in a life after death. How foolish!

Having discussed that the Church is one, we must also say that it is holy. This holiness does not consist in beautiful church buildings and apparel as we find in the church of Rome. It is an inner holiness; men are washed in the blood and by the Spirit of Christ. There is no honor to us but all honor to the Lord. Under the leading of the Holy Spirit, that Church will

go in the way of sanctification. They are holy in Christ.

Our confession speaks of the catholic or universal Church; it is throughout all the world and through all ages. It has nothing to do with the name which Rome uses, for that name is for them a lie. We all know why it is called a Christian church. The name Christians was first used in Antioch where it was given mockingly to the followers of Christ. It has now become a most honorable name.

Of this Church our confession says, "This Church has been from the beginning of the world, and will be to the end thereof; which is evident from this, that Christ is an eternal King, which, without subjects, cannot be." We will not go so deeply into this part, for it is evident that the Lord has preserved His Church in wonderful ways, especially when we think of the history of Israel in the Old Testament and also of that which is related to us in the New Testament.

The Church militant has always had many enemies who have persecuted them both in secret and in public. There have been times when it was to be feared that nothing would be left of it, but the promise of the Lord is that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. "I am with you alway." This is also a comfort for the Church in our days. Although we do not have open persecution at the present time, it is still a time wherein the enmity against the Church is great. In God's Word the Church is compared to a woman that is forsaken, but the Lord has promised that her children cannot be numbered. "For thy Maker is thine Husband." In Him the Church will extend over all the world.

The question, of course, is—Will I belong to that multitude who will stand on the other side of the sea of glass as victors? How necessary it is to examine ourselves in this respect. Membership of a church is good, but we must become a member of THE Church, and this takes place in regeneration.

Christ, who is the head of the Church, will continue to gather His Church, but also protect them when

they become weak and few in number. The warfare against the Church began in Paradise after the Fall, and will continue until the end of time. When Satan lost the battle with Christ, he began to persecute the Church. Having now six thousand years of experience, he knows the weaknesses in the defense of the Church. Probably the greatest danger in our days is world conformity; there is no difference between the church and the world, even though many affirm that they are Christians. Yet, at the end of the world there will be a multitude that cannot be counted.

There were times in the history of the church that the number of living members was very low. I am afraid that this must also be said of our times. However, there will be found a remnant who cannot miss the Lord in their lives and who cry unto Him for grace.

The Church is not always in the same place. The Lord may give His Word to a certain country for a period of time, but later take it away when there are reasons for doing so. Think of the congregations of Asia Minor; nothing other than ruins is left of those seven churches. In the beginning of our era the church of Rome was a flourishing church, but not any longer. When the Lord leaves one country, it is possible that other countries will receive His Word. For example, a country such as Japan, where today the Word of God is spreading very fast, receives the truth while the western nations are left to them-

selves. Oh, may we feel the danger that it drives us out unto the Lord, begging that He may remember us in mercy. "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure."

Our confession speaks of this, saying, "Furthermore, this holy Church is not confined, bound, or limited to a certain place or to certain persons, but is spread and dispersed over the whole world; and yet is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit." All people who are quickened by the Spirit and receive a true faith belong to that Church, which is spoken of here. The country where we live is not important. His Church are all members of one and the same body, and Christ cares for them, although Satan tries to destroy them. He is as a roaring lion, especially trying to gain the young people who are the future of the church. He also tries to overcome the living members so that they might forsake the truth. That which the Lord has planted in them, that true saving faith, cannot be uprooted by the devil. They may fall into sin, but it is impossible that they will live in sin.

May the Lord give to His children an increase in the knowledge of Him who is the head of the Church so that they may receive the assurance of being living members of the Church, living members of the body of Christ. That one Church is joined and united with heart and will, by the power of faith, in one and the same spirit.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

The Israelites Help the Gibeonites

(Based on Joshua 10)

Do you remember what we had said in our last story, that some of the people of Canaan were so afraid of the Israelites that they decided to band together to fight them? Remember that the Gibeonites did not join that group but, instead, became servants to the Israelites?

Well, soon those cities that had joined together heard that the Gibeonites had not joined them. They heard how the Gibeonites had become friends with the children of Israel, and they were angry.

"We cannot let this happen" the five kings cried. "Let us join together and fight the Gibeonites. They are traitors! They would not help us." They began

to gather all their soldiers to make war against the Gibeonites.

Of course, the Gibeonites were frightened. How could they ever win against so many cities and so many soldiers? Then they remembered the children of Israel. Maybe they would help them.

"Please help us," they begged the Israelites. "The kings are all preparing to fight a war with us. Please send your armies to help us."

Though we do not read it, we may believe that this time Joshua prayed to God and asked Him what to do. For we read in the Bible that God told Joshua to help the Gibeonites fight their enemies because He

would certainly help him. So, the Israelites gathered their soldiers together and went to fight the five kings.

You can imagine that the five kings and their men were very astonished to see the children of Israel. They had not expected that the Israelites would help the Gibeonites. When the army of the Israelites arrived early in the morning, they came upon the army of the five kings before they were ready to fight. The Israelites killed many of their enemies, but even more were killed by a special miracle that God worked. Do you know what that was? God sent a hailstorm and destroyed more people with hailstones than Israel had killed with their swords!

Remember that the next time you see hailstones pelting down. We often forget that lightning, hailstones, tornadoes, and other storms are really sent from God. We think they are just a part of the weather, part of nature. However, many, many times God uses the weather for reasons that we do not even realize. The weather could be God's way to take someone's life, or it could be to show someone how little he is before a great and powerful God, or it could be for other reasons. Now God used these hailstones to help Israel win their battle.

The five kings were frightened when they saw that their army was losing the battle. They fled and hid themselves in a cave. "Joshua will never find us here," they probably thought.

Even if Joshua did not know where they were, God had seen them hide, and somehow their hiding place was discovered. Joshua knew how to take care of the kings—he told his soldiers to roll a huge rock in

front of the entrance of the cave. Now the kings could not get out. They were caught!

The battle kept raging on, but soon it would be dark and it would be hard to fight. The Israelites would not be able to see those whom they were fighting, and the enemies would be able to get away easily. Whatever could be done?

Suddenly Joshua called out something. "Sun, stand still where you are. Moon, don't go any farther."

What did Joshua say? Did he really tell the sun and moon to stay right where they were and not to move across the sky? Of course, that would not work. No one except God can do such a miracle. The sun always moves, does it not? We know we can plan on it. Yet, the sun did stop, and the moon did stop. There was daylight for a long, long time, until the Israelites defeated their enemies. Yes, the sun and moon listened to Joshua. It really was God; He heard Joshua and made the sun and moon obey. The Bible tells us that this was the only day, before this time or after this time, that the Lord listened to the voice of a man. And now, because God had let the day be so long, the Israelites finished fighting and won the battle! The five kings were brought from the cave, were killed, and then were hung.

God continued to help the Israelites defeat the Canaanites. The Canaanites all worshiped idols. For seven years Israel fought one king after another, until many of the people of the land were killed. God made Joshua very strong. By that time Joshua was getting quite old. Most of the Canaanites had been killed, and God then gave the Israelites rest from battle.



Bible Quiz

A Convenient Season

Dear Boys and Girls,

Are you busy every day? Perhaps you like to make lists, or you have a calendar in your room on which you write all your important events. Your list might include chores, school, homework, piano practice, finishing a craft, making a gift for someone, cleaning your cat's litterbox or taking your dog for a walk, and the things you do to prepare for going to bed. Your calendar might include birthdays, events,

homework, lessons, playdates, and more. How busy you are! Look at your list again...page through your calendar...is there any time left over? Or is every day packed full? Perhaps you run out of time. Maybe, you do not have time to read your Bible, and there is no time to think of seeking the Lord. Hopefully, you bow your knees in the morning when you begin a new day as well as at night, but is that just a quick custom? What is your mind busy thinking about all day long?

The seasons come and go. They seem to fly by. Summer has turned to fall, and before you know it, snowflakes begin to fall. While you are disappointed for a moment that Thanksgiving is over, you are already looking forward to Christmas and the New Year, and when that is past, you will look forward to Spring Break. After Spring Break, you are excited about class trips and school picnics, and after that, about summer vacation. There is always something new for which to wait and reasons to look forward, and so the past is soon forgotten. The seasons fly by. How many of your thoughts are wasted by always looking for the next enjoyment. We so often live for exciting things. Many seasons of winter fun and summer sunshine will pass, but then? What then? While the seasons will go on, at some point, you will not. Not one of us knows how MANY seasons we will enjoy or have; not one of us knows how long it will be before time will go on without us. The seasons come and go, but when will our own end come?

There are four seasons, and I am sure you all know them. Spring turns to summer and summer to fall. After fall comes winter, and then it begins all over again. However, in the Bible, we hear of another season. It is not spring, summer, fall, or winter; no, it is called a convenient season. What is a convenient season? In the time when Paul was taken prisoner and had to testify of what he believed, Felix the governor spoke of this season.

Felix was a thoughtful man who did not do things rashly and without consideration. Until he knew all about a matter, he asked for more time or made excuses. This he did also when Paul's words impressed him. He did not want to be convicted by those words of Paul. He heard of a judgment to come, and it made him afraid. He wanted to push it away. He would rather not think of these serious things now. Later, he would call for Paul again, he thought. Later, he would think about his words. Not now, no, not now. He had too many other things to do. Paul's words made him tremble. Yet, rather than take them to heart and bow his knees, he told Paul, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

Felix planned to call for Paul again when it was convenient for him. When the time would come that he was not so busy and it seemed a better time to listen to these serious things, then he would ask Paul to come again. We do not read in the Bible that that time ever came. Perhaps Felix never heard Paul speak about the one thing needful again.

We also like to think we will spend more time seeking the Lord later—next week, or next year,

or simply when we are older. What is our excuse? Maybe we ran out of time that day, and we think, "Tomorrow. Tomorrow I will read the Bible." Perhaps we forget, we are distracted by other things, or we push it away. We promise ourselves, "I will pray like I heard in church, later, when I'm older, for sure," or we think, "I don't want to be sad, so I'm not so sure; I'd rather enjoy myself without any worries for a while. It is really not convenient right now."

Maybe that convenient season will never come. I think of Covid. Some people feel so foggy in their heads that they cannot think. Yes, now they have stopped being so busy; now they are just lying around trying to recuperate; now they have nothing better to do, BUT, it still has not become a convenient season. Why not? They have time now, don't they? Isn't that convenient? Well, their bodies ache so much, they are feverish, and their heads are hurting and spinning. They really cannot think about anything. They are much too tired and sick, too sick to think or to read a good book. What if they have to die this way, what then? Waiting for a better time to seek the Lord is so dangerous, boys and girls. The best time is right now!

* * * * *

1. Ecclesiastes 3:2-3 tells us about different seasons. "There is a time to be born, and a time to _____; a time to plant, and a time to _____ up that which is planted; a time to kill, and a time to _____; a time to break down, and a time to _____ up."

2. In Psalm 31:15, where does the psalmist place all his times? _____

3. In Psalm 32:6, what kind of a time do the godly pray in? _____

4. In Matthew 6:33, what do we read is the best time to seek the Lord? _____

5. In the story of the wise and foolish virgins (Matthew 25), when did the foolish virgins arrive at the wedding feast? _____

6. How many times does it say in Genesis 5, "and he died?" _____

Fill the blanks with the words listed in the box below. Then find and circle them in the wordsearch at the top of next page.

PLEASURES • FEET • WHOLE • GOSPEL EARTH • DESTROYED • BURIED • TIME BROKEN • CHICKENS • MESSENGERS
--

7. "And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the _____."

C D Q C D W T P B U R I E D B
H L N E O E W S L E P S O G N
I S E A L M G F E E T U O P N
C L A R E I D E S T R O Y E D
K E E C E T L F A O G Y R D E
E E P L E A S U R E S T D E E
N E F T U B P E W H O L E A O
S U E G O H T R A E M G U E U
W Y O O B R O K E N M L D I Y
M E S S E N G E R S E S H S S

8. "For an angel went down at a certain season into the pool, and troubled the water: whosoever then first after the troubling of the water stepped in was made _____ of whatsoever disease he had."

9. "And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this _____; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee."

10. "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the _____ of sin for a season."

11. "And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was _____."

12. "Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at His _____, saying unto Him, Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

13. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her _____ under her wings, and ye would not!"

14. "But they mocked the _____ of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy."

15. "Therefore shall his calamity come suddenly; suddenly shall he be _____ without remedy."

16. "He, that being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be _____, and that without remedy."

17. "The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the _____."

The vowels are missing in the wordsearch below. Fill in the missing vowels and circle the words found in the list at the bottom of the wordsearch.

H	H	H	B	P	T	B	S	D	B
L	□	R	R	P	□	□	C	□	T
□	□	W	□	V	G	R	D	S	□
B	□	H	K	□	O	□	□	T	M
F	R	□	□	H	S	□	M	R	□
□	T	L	N	□	P	D	S	□	T
□	H	□	N	□	E	P	S	Y	F
T	S	□	L	L	L	□	□	□	□
C	H	□	C	K	□	N	S	D	D
P	L	□	□	S	□	R	□	S	N

GOSPEL • CHICKENS • WHOLE • DESTROYED
TIME • BROKEN • BURIED • EARTH
FEET • PLEASURES

For the Older Children

18. Psalm 37 mentions those that will be "cut off," at least three times. Who are they that will be cut off? Name three words or phrases with which they are described.

For the Younger Children

19. In Psalm 90:10, we read: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away."

This means that our lives fly away quickly and we become old before we know it. If we do become old, our lives are soon cut off, and we die. Two different ages are mentioned in this text: "threescore and ten," and, "fourscore." A score means 20, so what are these ages?

- Three × score + ten = _____
- Four × score = _____

Do these ages seem old to you? Yet, these ages too are cut off eventually are they not? Do you know anyone who is close to these ages? Perhaps you could draw him or her a picture and send it in the mail. They like to hear from children!

* * * * *

Answers to January's "Compassion" quiz:

1. Clean
2. Our
3. Multitude
4. People
5. Anything
6. Samaritan
7. Slow
8. Iniquities
9. Opened
10. Need
11. Compassion
12. Fellow servant
13. Eyes
14. Friends
15. Weep
16. Mercy
17. Infirmity
18. Goods
19. Pitiful
20. Captivity
21. Destroy
22. Anger
23. Gracious
24. Works
25. light
26. Verse 20
27. Sheep having no shepherd, healed
28. I have compassion on the multitude

Answers to previous quizzes were received in November from:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Ashlynn Bakker 1 | Teddy Mol 22 | Ian Vanden Broek 12 |
| Benson Bakker (3) 20 | Colin Overbeek (7) 14 | AaneKors Versteeg 7 |
| Clay Bakker 8 | Jayden Overbeek (8) 23 | Tena Versteeg 7 |
| Kalli Bakker 1 | Max Rayburn 2 | Brandon Vrieselaar (5) 31 |
| Britni Blom 27 | Collin Rozeboom (2) 11 | Brianna Vrieselaar (5) 31 |
| Jenina Blom 26 | Rueben Rozeboom 3 | Katelyn Vrieselaar (5) 5 |
| Lawrence Blom 20 | Jordan Rus 1 | Kyra Vrieselaar (5) 31 |
| Riley Blom 10 | Kenzi Rus 1 | Noah Vrieselaar (5) 31 |
| Tiffany Blom 1 | Teighton Rus 1 | Jonathan Wesdyk (3) 21 |
| Kylie DeVisser (2) 6 | Aaliyah Timmer 20 | Nathan Wesdyk (4) 20 |
| Cody Driesen 26 | Drake Timmer 22 | Rebekah Wesdyk (3) 20 |
| Kacie Driesen 22 | Jaxten Van Beek 1 | Alisha Wessels 26 |
| Toby Driesen 26 | Austin Van Den Top 11 | Anthony Wessels (6) 27 |
| Lindsey Driesse 12 | Caleb Van Den Top 11 | Johanna Wessels (4) 28 |
| Kaylynn Ekema 29 | Collin Van Den Top 11 | Heidi Ymker 25 |
| Geralyn Engelen 16 | Maurice Van Garderen 24 | Paxton Ymker 17 |
| Trevor Engelen 17 | Emmalyn Van Garderen 25 | Quentin Ymker 15 |
| Maddie Fluit 1 | Jasmine Van Liere 1 | Ryan Ymker 1 |
| Kari Groen 19 | Kason Van Velthuisen 9 | Whitney Ymker 3 |
| Kurtis Groen 20 | Jace Van Voorst (2) 10 | |
| Kate Hoogendoorn 16 | Taya Van Voorst (3) 9 | |
| Weston Hoogendoorn 10 | Alivia Vande Hoef 30 | |
| Charity Hup (3) 7 | Micah Vande Hoef 25 | |
| Derek Hup (3) 16 | Wyatt Vande Waerd 14 | |
| Justin Hup (3) 12 | Aubrey Vanden Berg 8 | |
| Alia Kelderman 12 | Heidi Vandenberg 23 | |
| Lydia Koenen (2) 3 | Kristen Vandenberg 10 | |
| Lydia Mol 22 | Esther Vanden Broek 13 | |

16 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 490—thank you, boys and girls!

Key to numbers following names:

- Numbers in parentheses represent how many quizzes person answered in the month being reported.
- Numbers without parentheses indicate how many quizzes person has completed toward earning Bibles for Bolivia.
- Solid box indicates person has earned a Bible in the month being reported. Each time six quizzes are completed, another Bible is sent to Bolivia.

Please send your answers to the address shown below:

Aunt LenaBeth

180 Jacobs Road, Newfoundland, NJ 07435

E-mail: auntlenabeth@gmail.com



Letters to My Young Readers

Benson Bakker

How are the piglets doing, Benson? They are probably very big already. Do you still feed the calves? Those are very good "Bakker Trucking" tractors you drew. Are your chickens staying warm this winter? My ducks and sheep don't mind the cold, and the dogs love the snow, but the chickens hide in their coop quite a bit. Can you find some verses in the Bible about the cold and the snow?

Welcome to our new members:
Tiffany Blom, Jasmine van Liere,
Ryan Ymker, Kalli Bakker, Jordan
Rus, Kenzi Rus, Ashlyn Bakker,
Teighton Rus, and Jaxten Van Beek.



Love,
Aunt LenaBeth

News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Extended:

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

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregation of Brant County, Ontario.

Declined:

By Rev. A.T. Huijser of Sliedrecht, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta.

By Rev. C. Sonneveld of Alblasserdam, the Netherlands, to the congregations of Covell Ave., Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Sioux Center, Iowa.

By Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, to the congregations of Brant County, Ontario, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

Obituaries

DEER, Lori (nee Peters) – Age 36, December 19, 2021; Bloomingdale, NJ; Husband – Jason; Son – Connor James; Parents – Robert & Janet (nee Den Herder); Siblings – Denise & Patrick Lynch, Lisa & Matthew Guidotti, Heather & Wesley Mecimore, Jodi & Jeffrey Lee, Robert Wesley & Victoria. (Rev. C. Vogelaar, Psalm 61:1-2.)

DEKORNE, Jacob Cornelius – Age 85, December 9, 2021; Echo Township, Michigan; Wife – Phyllis (nee Fryling) (deceased); Children – Jacob Jr. & Kathie, Susan & Randy Neuman, Timothy & Mary, Mark & Mandy, Daniel & Julie; 18 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Bud & Judy, Ruth Densel, Jean Stevens, Robert & Betty; predeceased by siblings Marie, Jim, and Annie, and great-granddaughter Kenzi. (Rev. H. Hofman, Luke 7:11-16.)

DEN BOER, Gertrude (nee Vande Hoef) – Age 99, January 4, 2022; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Andrew (deceased); Children – Willis; 1 grandson, 1 foster grandson and great-

grandson; Sister – Judy Groeneweg; brother-in-law – John; predeceased by daughter-in-law Jennieva and brother Gerrit Vande Hoef. (Rev. H. Hofman, Psalm 90:12.)

DEN BOER, Skylar Grace – Age 8 days, December 14, 2021; Chilliwack, British Columbia; Parents – Sheldon & Rachael (nee Hoefakker); Grandparents – Leonard & Cathy, Ken & Evelyn Hoefakker; Great-grandparents – Hilly, Chris & Marie Neels, Henry & Arlene Hoefakker, Magdalena Mosselmen. (Rev. P. Van Ruitenburch, Psalm 139:13-15.)

MARPLES, Lois (Hamler) (nee Rose) – Age 78, December 24, 2021; Franklin, New Jersey; Husband – Ellis; Children – Edwin & Ellen Hamler, Kenneth & Lisa Hamler, Jeffrey & Dallas Hamler; 10 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren; Siblings – Marion & Matt Remijn, Doris & Dale Den Herder, Debbie & Bob Hults, Nancy & Ed Slingland, Edgar & Doris Rose, James & Carol Rose; predeceased by brothers-in-law Abe Kersten and Jack Van Houten. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Psalm 68:20.)

MOL, Douglas J. – Age 52, December 16, 2021; Lincoln Park, New Jersey; Wife – Donna (nee Kievit); Children – Amanda & fiancé Daniel DePaul, Alyssa; predeceased by parents Henry and Wilma Mol. (Rev. H. de Leeuw, Job 2:13.)

ROZENDAAL, Madelyn (nee Boon) – Age 57, December 9, 2021; Hays, Alberta; Husband – Jake; Children – Evaline (deceased) & Henry Vandenberg, Rence, Anna & Edward Decker, Jorgen, Jake & Henriette, Nicole & Noel Beusekom, Stacie & Gerrit Beekman, Chelsey & Donovan Banman, Kari-Jo & Zack Beusekom; 14 grandchildren; Siblings – Glenda & Marty Vlietstra, Albert & Rita Boon, Wilfred & Wilma Boon, Tom & Stella Boon; Mother-in-law – Aartje Rozendaal; 15 brothers and sisters in-law; predeceased by daughter Evaline Vandenberg, parents George and Eva Boon, father-in-law Lauwrens Rozendaal. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Psalm 50:1&2.)

VAN BEEK, Albert Marvin, – Age 81, January 10, 2022; Inwood, Iowa; Wife – Gloria (nee Van Veldhuizen); Children – Sharlene & Carlin Groeneweg, Marvin, Paul & Dawn, Randy & Karen, Carolyn & Jamie, David & Melissa, Jeffrey & Jolene; 26 grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren; survived by seven siblings and four in-laws; predeceased by grandson Kyle Dreke, brothers Cornelius and Gerald, and brothers-in-law Gerrit Van Veldhuizen and Junior. (Rev. H. Hofman, Numbers 20:28.)

In Memoriam

Mr. Albert M. Van Beek

On Monday, January 10, the Lord took Mr. Albert Van Beek from his wife, family and the congregation of Sioux Center. He was eighty-one years of age. He was a former office bearer who served as elder and deacon for over forty years. Mr. Van Beek was granted much love with which to serve and endorsed the plea, "O my God, be not far from me" (Psalm 38:21b). May the Lord provide strength and courage for the future.

— The Sioux Center NRC Consistory

VANDERHART, Laura Margaret – Age 24, December 8, 2021; Lethbridge, Alberta; Parents – Mark and Barbara; Siblings – Philip & Doreen, Eric & Michelle, Jonathan & Gerda, Thomas & special friend Hannah, Chad & Rochelle Rupert; Grandparents – Adrian & Corrie; predeceased by grandparents Herb & Margaret Debat. (Reverend E.C. Adams, Psalm 89:47-49.)

VELDJESGRAAF, Dwayne Hendrik – Age 23, December 21, 2021; Norwich, Ontario; Parents – Don and Arlene (nee Butyn); Siblings – Cerrisa & Joel Van Maren, Rachel & Calvin VandenBrink, Derek, Cheyenne, Kaylea; uncle of Arielle and Clayton Van Maren; Grandmother – Wintje Butyn; predeceased by grandparents Hendrik Butyn and Hendrik & Wilma. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, Psalm 90:12.)

Manager of Eventide Home

Eventide Home of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta, hopes to open its doors in the fall of 2022, D.V. We are looking to hire a manager to help with the setup and day-to-day operations of Eventide Home.

The manager will report to the Board of Eventide Home to ensure the provision of high-quality and safe resident care. Duties of the manager include but are not limited to the following: coordinating the overall program for the home, scheduling staff, identifying and attempting to resolve resident, family, and staff concerns. The manager is also responsible for efficient use of fiscal, human, and material resources and providing leadership to staff. The manager will have a positive attitude, demonstrating skills in leadership, working independently, interpersonal relationships,

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.

and team building while reflecting on God's Word and the shared traditions and doctrinal beliefs of the NRC.

Education/Training:

- RN (preferred)—current RN Registration
- LPN—current LPN Registration

Certifications:

- CPR-HCP
- First Aid
- Criminal Record Check

Desirable Experience:

- Working with the elderly, preferably in a LTC or assisted living facility for a minimum of one year
- Working independently and in an organized manner
- Working as part of a multidisciplinary team

For more information or to submit a resumé, contact Chris Heikoop, the chair of the Operations Committee, at chrish@eventidehome.ca or 403-332-3097.

■■■ Employment Opportunities at Sunset Manor, Chilliwack, BC ADMINISTRATOR

The Sunset Manor Board is seeking applicants (male or female) for the position of *Care Home Administrator*. The administrator is responsible for the day-to-day operations of Sunset Manor including staff, residents, and operations. This candidate must exercise the ability to lead a multi-disciplinary team to ensure consistent quality and care. Health care experience is an asset (but not a requirement). This position is full-time, but we are flexible depending on the applicant.

If you are interested in more information and would like to join the Sunset Manor team, we welcome you to contact either Neil Stam at 604-316-4182, email castam71@outlook.com or Jake Klaassen at 604-819-3949, email jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca

RN / LPN / CARE AIDE

Being part of a team that cares for our family of seniors can be very rewarding. The Sunset Manor Board is seeking applications from keen, warm-hearted individuals to join our excellent team for the following positions:

Nursing: All LPNs and RNs who hold a valid practicing licence/registration are encouraged to apply. Your professional expertise, knowledge, and insight will be a welcome addition.

Care Aides: If you always wanted to be a nurse but the doors were not opened, this may be the perfect opportunity for you. We encourage you not to be intimidated by the training; it is doable, and we will support you in your learning. Younger persons interested in making this their career are also welcome. Training and education can be provided, or applicants may wish to consider a college-level Health Care Aide training course. We need your help to fill our regular full-time and

part-time positions to support consistency and quality of care as well as to provide a predictable schedule for our employees. Your applications are most welcome.

For more information and to apply, please contact either Dr. Neil Hilliard at 604-703-9371, email neilh@sunsetmanor.ca or Jake Klaassen at 604-819-3949, email jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca.

■■■ Education

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, continues to invite applications from teachers of any grade or subject specialty to fill anticipated vacancies beginning September 2022, D.V. 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 2022-23 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.

EBEN-EZER CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, is inviting applicants to fill a full-time educational assistant position, beginning September 2022, D.V., to work with a special needs student. We would be gladdened by an inquiry and application of someone who is versatile and dedicated, who also loves the doctrines according to godliness. For more information on this position, please contact the principal, Mr. A. Vrugteveen at principal@ecschool.ca or 905-563-3077. Please send applications to the secretary of the school board, Mr. G. Brouwer at gerry@ecschool.ca or mail to 138 Third Ave., St. Catharines, Ontario, L2R 6P9.

LYNDEN NRC, WASHINGTON—The Lynden congregation is seeking an administrator/teacher to come and help us with our small, multi-grade school. Applicants must be a member of the NRC. The ability to become a Washington State certified elementary teacher is preferred. For more information on this position as well as our newly formed school,

please contact the committee president, Jeremy Neels, at 360-988-1884 / jeremyneels@gmail.com or the clerk, Jerry DeBruin, at 360-224-0901.

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

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, is inviting inquiries from qualified teachers interested in teaching in our small Christian school. We presently have openings at the elementary level. For more information, please contact our principal, Tom Kwekel, at tkwekel@psckzoo.com or 616-644-2661.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, a K-12 NRC school, is accepting applications for teaching positions, including Pre-K, for the 2022-2023 school year. Interested applicants should contact the principal, Mr. Nathan Bleeker, by emailing nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us or by calling 616-454-9481 to request an application or to ask questions about the potential positions.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY.

TEACHERS NEEDED

We have openings in both elementary and junior high grades for the 2022-23 school year. Qualified applicants require a teaching degree and an earnest interest in teaching in a Christian school and are a member in good standing of one of Netherlands Reformed congregations or a denomination with similar teachings.

ADMINISTRATOR NEEDED

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

Relocation expenses and financial incentives will be discussed upon inquiry. For more

information or to apply, please contact Tim Mol (education chairman) at 973-204-5677 or email timjmol@yahoo.com, or John Van Der Brink (administrator) at 973-628-7400 email nrcs_office@nrcsnj.org.

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, ROCK VALLEY/SIOUX CENTER, IOWA, 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@nrcsia.org for further information. Visit www.nrcsia.org to learn more about our school. Log in to the main site by registering as a new user and wait for approval.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, is welcoming applications for both elementary and secondary teaching positions for the 2022-23 school year. One particular area of need is a French teacher at the elementary and, potentially, high-school, grade levels. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. Please visit our website at www.rcsnorwich.com for more detailed information about available positions, or contact the interim director, Mr. Andy Stubbe, at director@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403, ext. 223. Submit cover letters and resumes to hr@rcsnorwich.com.

TIMOTHY CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, is looking for teachers who are excited about teaching and have a particular love for the hearts of young people. We have an urgent need for primary teachers but would also consider/encourage secondary and intermediate grade-level applicants. If you are such a teacher, please apply to join our team. Applicants need to be certifiable to teach in British Columbia. For certification requirements and more information regarding the above positions and/or an application form, please do not hesitate to contact either the principal, Mr. Doug Stam, at 604-794-7114 or dstam@timothychristian.ca, or the school board president, Mr. Wim Neels, at 604-858-8834 or wimneels@timothychristian.ca.

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

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 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.

To Our Readers

This month's section of obituaries again shows us how frail we are, how uncertain our life is, and the certainty of death, and that at ALL ages. May we learn to hasten for our life's sake while we are still in the time of grace. Moses says in his prayer in Psalm 90:12, "So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." May the Lord by His Spirit teach us this true wisdom. Then we will first seek the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all the things we can be so busy with shall be added unto us (Matthew 6:31-34). —Ed.

The Barren Fig Tree

Within the vineyard's sunny bound
An ample fig-tree shelter found,
Enjoying sun and showers.
The boughs were graceful to the view,
With spreading leaves of deep green hue
And gaily blushing flowers.

When round the vintage season came,
The blooming fig was still the same,
As promising and fair;
But though the leaves were broad and green
No precious fruit was to be seen
Because no fruit was there.

"For three long years," the master cried,
"Fruit on this tree to find I've tried,
But all in vain my toil;
Ungrateful tree! The axe's blow
Shall lay thy leafy honors low;
Why cumberers it the soil?"

"Ah! Let it stand just one year more,"
The dresser said, "till all my store
Of rural arts I've shown;
About the massy roots I'll dig;
And if it bear, we've gained the fig;
If not, then cut it down."

How many years hast thou, my heart,
Acted the barren fig tree's part,
Leafy, and fresh, and fair,
Enjoying heavenly dews of grace,
And many smiles of God's own face!
But where the fruit? Ah! Where?

How often must the Lord have prayed
That still my day might be delayed,
Till all due means were tried!
Afflictions, mercies, health, and pain,
How long shall these be all in vain
To teach this heart of pride!

Learn, O my soul, what God demands
Is not a faith like barren sands
But fruit of heavenly hue.
By this we prove that Christ we know
If in His holy steps we go;
Faith works by love, if true.

—Robert Murray M'Cheyne