

the **Banner** *of Truth*

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In this issue...

The Revealing of Christ
The Fruits of Holy Baptism
A Word to Graduates

For our young readers...

Gideon
Search

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." PROVERBS 22:6



Meditation The Revealing of Christ <i>Rev. J. den Hoed</i>	123
Bible Study The Life of Moses (7) <i>Rev. C. Vogelaar</i>	124
From Our Inheritance The Glory of the Redeemer in His Second Coming <i>Octavius Winslow</i>	126
Doctrinal Studies The Fruits of Holy Baptism (1) <i>Rev. G. Hoogerland</i>	128
Commentary The Man Born Blind (3) <i>Rev. H. de Leeuw</i>	129
Church History The Spread of Christianity (5) <i>J.N. Mouthaan</i>	130
Media Use What do I do when I have a loved one who admits that he or she struggles with pornography? <i>Lethbridge Modern Media Committee</i>	131
Questions & Answers Questions from Our Readers <i>Rev. H. Hofman</i>	133

For Young & Old A Word to Graduates <i>Rev. H. Hofman, Sr.</i>	134
Advice for Graduates, Advice for All <i>J.K. Popham</i>	134
Current Events	135
TIMOTHY – for the Young The Confession of Faith (30) Article XXIX: Of the Marks of the True Church, and Wherein She Differs from the False Church <i>Rev. A.M. den Boer</i>	136
Bible Stories for Little Ones Gideon (1) <i>Submitted</i>	137
Bible Quiz Search <i>Aunt LenaBeth</i>	139
Letters to My Young Readers	141
News & Announcements	142
Back Cover Hitherto the Lord Has Brought Us <i>Young People's Hymnal</i>	144

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Meditation

The Revealing of Christ

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

In the first place, I would like to show you that “the revealing of Christ” is an expression which is biblical. In Galatians 1:15&16, the Apostle Paul writes, “But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.”

In this text, Paul speaks of his conversion and apostleship, according to God’s good pleasure. From all eternity, the Lord had separated him, and at His appointed time He stopped Paul (then called Saul), called him out of darkness unto His marvelous light, and showed him that Christ is the true Messiah. By true saving faith He showed him that He is the only Saviour; in Him alone is deliverance.

All this was because of God’s grace, without any worthiness on the side of Paul. Luther writes of this in his well-known commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians, “He writes of the inestimable treasure freely bestowed upon us by the gospel preached. Wherefore it is a type of doctrine that is not learned or gotten by any study, diligence, or wisdom of man, nor yet by the law of God, but is revealed by God Himself. As Paul sayeth in this place, ‘First by the external Word, then by the working of God’s Spirit inwardly.’”

The gospel, therefore, is a divine Word that came down from heaven and is revealed by the Holy Ghost who was sent for the same purpose, yet in such a way, notwithstanding, that the outward Word must go before. Paul himself had no inward revelation until he had heard the outward Word from heaven which was, “Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?” (Acts 9:4b).

He heard the external Word first, and then in the second place there followed the revelations: the knowledge of the Word, faith, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Luther says here, “Paul has come to true conversion and calling by Word and Spirit.”

For Paul, his conversion and his true saving faith in Christ were tied to his calling unto apostleship. This is a special circumstance which we distinguish from the conversion of others. Yet, it is noteworthy what the English Puritan William Perkins writes of this, that is, of the benefits of the life of those who may be called of the Lord to bring His gospel—that they may come to know Christ.

Paul learned to know Christ. Continually, he sought to be led further into the knowledge of Christ. Those who may be used to speak to others of conversion and the way the Lord leads His people must of necessity know something of that conversion and those ways.

When we speak of the revealing of Christ, we must speak of this in both a wider and a narrower sense. In the wider sense, we comprehend the entire way of God in Christ with His people. The sinner who is stopped by the inward call comes to the knowledge of sin, conversion, and faith. He is cut off from Adam and engrafted into Christ and all that has been merited by Christ in His suffering and dying for His chosen people.

This is applied in their life in the measure which is according to God’s pleasure. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). As long as God’s children are upon earth, they live out of those benefits merited by Christ. Then they receive, in a measure established by the Lord Himself, knowledge of inward calling, conversion, faith, justification, sanctification, and comfort needed to live upon this earth.

Each time, the Lord Himself makes place for these benefits. His children learn more and more that with them there is no place for these benefits. That place-making is accomplished by a cutting off. The Lord says, “That which I have built will I break down, and that which I have planted I will pluck up.” In this way God’s people come to know their spiritual poverty, their inward darkness, and the impossibility of redemption from their side. Then every new benefit of the Lord is received as an undeserved blessing.

When we speak of the revealing of Christ in the narrower sense, we speak of an eye of faith which may be opened for the person of Christ—to see in Him that which His people have never seen before. We must always make a clear distinction about what takes place from the side of God and what takes place from the side of man in the moment of regeneration. In that moment, from the side of God His people may have all that is needed. They are cut off from Adam and engrafted in Christ; therefore, from the side of the Lord it is a finished and complete work.

The Lord cannot have any communion with man, fallen dead in sin and trespasses, who is guilty and unclean by reason of sin, without the justifying righteousness of Christ. However—as Christ has now satisfied the righteous justice of God, on the side of God—in and through Christ there is a finished work for all those people chosen by the Father from all eternity.

On the side of man, it goes in exactly the opposite way. By the light of God’s Spirit, there comes knowledge of a righteous and a holy God who cannot have anything to do with sin or any communion with the sinner who by reason of sin is unclean from his head to his feet. Here, the sinner learns not only his own inward depravity and God’s perfect

holiness but also that he will have to meet God and that the sentence cannot be anything other than eternal damnation.

The law of God is as a mirror before him. It is a mirror which will not lie but which will honestly reveal all his sin and guilt. At the same time, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ breaks his heart. He learns the prayer of the publican, “God be merciful to me a sinner.” Sorrow after the Lord brings him upon his knees to plead as a poor, needy beggar at the throne of God’s mercy and grace. In such a born-again sinner there is not yet an accepting by faith or an eye upon Christ as the Saviour given of the Father.

He sees only guilt and judgment, sin, and divine justice. Yea, at times, he may taste something of God’s goodness and mercy. This causes the soul to bow deeper and call all the more fervently for His mercy. In this way the Lord continues with law and gospel to teach and lead the sinner more and more to knowledge of self and to show him that deliverance is only in Christ who has satisfied the justice of God. By His Word the Lord calls unto his heart that the poor and needy can find shelter only in Him. In all this the sinner may see what there is in Jesus Christ, but that does not mean that he dares to call Him his own by a true-saving faith.

There may be moments in his life that sin is covered. At such times, nothing is lacking. A fullness may be experienced in that which Christ has merited for him, but a covered guilt is not a forgiven guilt. As Rev. Lamain has written, “It is a blessing in the life of God’s people when it may become Christmas for the soul—when, for the first

time, he may see that God has opened a way by which he may be saved. If it is well with him, he cannot remain at that place. There must come a time that it becomes Good Friday for him. Standing at the foot of the cross, he may see that Christ has given His life and His blood—blood which cleanses him before a holy and righteous God.”

Something else, however, needs to take place to come to the knowledge of Christ in his life. A time is needed when it becomes Easter, meaning a time that a resurrected Saviour is applied to his heart. A Saviour who is presented unto him by the Father may be embraced by the arms of faith. Also, there is the God-given lesson that it will never become Easter for the soul unless there has been a time when it has become Good Friday—when Christ cried out, “It is finished,” and the work which the Father had ordained for Him and for which He gave Himself in the stillness of eternity was completed.

Here is a biblical truth. When it is well and right with God’s people, there can never be a resting place outside of the knowledge that He is mine and I am His. When we observe this, we are living in dark times because, in general, we can be so satisfied outside of this knowledge. When the sinner may come to a personal knowledge of Christ, it is as if the Lord turns over a page. Where all was sin and punishment, he now begins to speak of the love, mercy, richness, and sweetness of Christ. There comes a change in his life. His inmost desire is to seek in Christ alone all that is needed for soul and body for time and eternity. □



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (7)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And the LORD said unto Moses, See, I have made thee a god to Pharaoh: and Aaron thy brother shall be thy prophet. Thou shalt speak all that I command thee”
(Exodus 7:1&2a).

The Lord had encouraged Moses by speaking about His covenant. That covenant stands firm and sure whatever may come against God’s work and no matter how impossible it may seem from our side. The Lord will not alter what He has spoken; therefore, Moses may go in the strength of the LORD and declare His Righteousness, even His only. That is also the strength and comfort for God’s servants and children in our days. The Lord had promised that the people of Israel would inherit the land that He would give them. He also said He would harden Pharaoh’s

heart, and multiply His signs and His wonders in the land of Egypt.

Moses would be sent to the king of Egypt; however, he did not have to fear. Verse 1 says that the Lord had made Moses a god to Pharaoh and that Aaron his brother would be his prophet, that is, he would speak for Moses. That God would make Moses a god to Pharaoh, means that Moses would come with the authority of being sent by the Lord Himself. The Lord also would give him direction in what to say to Pharaoh.

Signs and wonders

God would specially speak through the ten plagues that came upon Pharaoh and his country. There was a progressive nature to those plagues:

Plagues 1-3 would touch the comforts of the Egyptians. Plagues 4-6 would involve the possessions of the Egyptians.

Plagues 7-10 would bring desolation and even death among those people.

The plagues would be:

- 1) A public manifestation of the power of the God of Israel.
- 2) A divine visitation of His wrath, His punishment for Pharaoh.
- 3) A judgment from God upon the gods of Egypt.
- 4) A demonstration that Jehovah is high above all gods.
- 5) A complete testing of the Egyptians' responsibilities.
- 6) A solemn warning to other nations. God will curse those who curse the Israelites.
- 7) A series of testing for Israel.

When the Lord speaks, then we should give heed to His voice and obey. By nature, however, we are not better than Pharaoh and the Egyptians. We maintain ourselves and refuse to bow before God. In His goodness and patience, the Lord still warns us also today to submit to His reign and to humble ourselves before Him, leave to the paths of sin, and return unto Him. As Pharaoh said, "Who is the LORD that I should obey His voice...?" So also, we by nature show that we do not want Him to rule over us. When serious callings come to us as has happened in the world these last years, we may for a moment promise to return to Him and change our walk, but when the judgments seem to be taken from us, we continue our old ways. How foolish this is, to prefer the idols, as the Egyptians did, instead of seeking the Lord and serving Him who alone is God and worthy to be served.

The plagues

Moses and Aaron were at the shore of the river Nile. This river was served by the Egyptians as a goddess. They were dependent on the Nile for bread, fish, and water. Pharaoh was also at the shore of the Nile. Then we read in Exodus 7:20&21, "And Moses and Aaron did so, as the LORD commanded; and he lifted up the rod, and smote the waters that were in the river, in the sight of Pharaoh, and in the sight of his servants; and all the waters that were in the river were turned to blood. And the fish that was in the river died; and the river stank, and the Egyptians could not drink of the water of the river; and there was blood throughout all the land of Egypt." What a testimony of the power of Israel's God and the vanity of the idols of Egypt.

The second plague we find in Exodus 8:2b: "Behold, I will smite all thy borders with frogs." Those frogs covered the whole land of Egypt, and although the magicians with their enchantments would also bring up frogs upon the land, they could not take them away. Only the Lord could. We read in verse 11 of Chapter 8, "And the frogs shall depart from thee, and from thy houses, and from thy servants,

and from thy people; they shall remain in the river only." Why did the Lord do this? In verse 10b we read "that thou mayest know that there is none like unto the LORD our God."

The third plague brought lice. Exodus 8:17b: "Aaron stretched out his hand with his rod, and smote the dust of the earth, and it became lice in man, and in beast." This made a deep impression upon the magicians who said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." However, here again we read, "And Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said."

Then, in verse 23 we read that the Lord would put a division between His people and the Egyptians. What a wonder it is in our life if we see that the Lord makes a difference where by nature there is no difference, and that will be evident in the following plagues.

The fourth plague was "a grievous swarm of flies." It came in everyone's house, including Pharaoh: "The land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies." Then it seemed that Pharaoh would bow. He called Moses and Aaron and said, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." This was no true bowing, however, for the people would be journeying into the wilderness outside of Egypt.

Then there is the fifth plague: "There shall be a very grievous murrain" upon the cattle and other livestock. What a serious calling this was for the Egyptians; it affected their livelihood. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon them, but still there was no bowing.

The sixth plague was "a boil breaking forth with blains upon man, and upon beast, throughout all the land of Egypt."

After this came the plague of hail (Exodus 9:22), the expression of the wrath of a holy God. Did Pharaoh finally listen to the Lord's voice? No!

There came locusts "over all the land of Egypt, and rested in all the coasts of Egypt: very grievous were they" (Exodus 10:14b). The people had never seen such locusts as these. The land was darkened, and the locusts did eat every herb of the land and fruit of the trees that remained after the hail. Finally, Pharaoh seemed to surrender. He called Moses and Aaron in haste and said, "I have sinned against the LORD your God, and against you." He asked for forgiveness and that they would intreat the LORD "that He may take away from me this death only." However, also this was but a morning cloud that quickly passed. The LORD hardened Pharaoh's heart, and he would not let the children of Israel go.

An even more severe warning came. Exodus 10:21a: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Stretch out thine hand toward heaven, that there may be darkness over the land of Egypt." So it happened. The people of Egypt could not even see each other or rise from their place for three days. Here also we see how the Lord made a distinction. We read in verse 23b, "But all the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." One more plague would come, and it would not only affect the land, their cattle, or their vision, but it would concern the oldest male son in each family.

A great privilege

Israel had light in their dwellings. This was the light of the favor of the Lord upon the Israelites. After three days the darkness was lifted from the Egyptians, but they did not receive the light of God's favor and grace. It was the Lord's hand that would lead His people out of the house of bondage, out of the land of Egypt. When that happens in a sinner's life, his eyes will be opened to see the deadly danger in which he is—the awful rebellion of his heart and his God-dishonoring unbelief—and he will abhor and loathe himself before God. It is only by free and sovereign grace that Israel was spared and at God's time delivered and that the Lord left the Egyptians over to their foolishness.

God is speaking loudly not only through His Word but also in the fearful events that are happening in this world. He comes to judge the nations, but we also must stand before Him. Ask the Lord for His grace. Harden not your heart against all the warnings that come to you, and let the example of Pharaoh's disobedience and refusal to listen to the Lord cause you to humble yourselves before Him. For this, you will need His special grace. Seek it, young and old, while it is the time of grace. Is there light in your dwelling? Has the Lord sent His light of discovering and revelation in your heart? Give Him the honor, for there is no reason in you. He only will be glorified for His grace. □

(To be continued)



From Our Inheritance

The Glory of the Redeemer in His Second Coming

Octavius Winslow (1808-1878)

(Taken from *The Glory of the Redeemer*, Eighth Edition, Soli Deo Gloria Publications, ISBN 1-877611-90-5)

Ye enemies of God! Ye despisers of Christ! Ye lovers of the world, dazzled with its pomp and fascinated with its pleasures, pause for a moment and contemplate this tremendous scene.

Look at that point far away in the ethereal regions where the gradually lessening form of our Saviour disappeared from the gaze of His disciples when He ascended to heaven. In that point see an uncommon but faint and undefined brightness just beginning to appear. It has caught the roving eye of yon careless gazer and excited his curiosity. He points it out to a second and a third. A little circle now collects, and various are the conjectures which they form respecting it. Similar circles are formed and similar conjectures made in a thousand different parts of the world, but conjecture is soon to give place to certainty—awful, appalling, overwhelming certainty. While they gaze, the appearance which has excited their curiosity rapidly approaches and still more rapidly brightens. Some begin to suspect what it may prove, but no one dares to give utterance to his suspicions. Meanwhile, the light of the sun begins to fade before a brightness superior to its own. Thousands see their shadows cast into a new direction, and thousands of hitherto careless eyes look up at once to discover the cause. Fully, clearly, they see it, and now new hopes and fears begin to agitate their breasts.

The afflicted and persecuted servants of Christ begin to hope that the predicted, long expected day of their deliverance has arrived. The wicked, the careless, the unbelieving, begin to fear that the Bible is about to prove no idle tale. Fiery shapes moving like streams of lightning begin to

appear indistinctly amidst the bright, dazzling cloud which comes rushing down as on the wings of a whirlwind. At length it reaches its destined place. It pauses; then suddenly unfolding, it discloses at once a great white throne where sits, starry resplendent in all the glories of the Godhead, the Man Christ Jesus. Every eye sees Him. Too well do the wretched, unprepared inhabitants of the earth now know what to expect; and one universal shriek of anguish and despair rises to heaven and is echoed back to earth. Louder, far louder than the universal cry, now sounds the last trumpet, and far above is heard the voice of the Omnipotent summoning the dead to arise and come to judgment. New terrors now assail the living. On every side, nay, under their very feet the earth heaves as in convulsions. The graves open and the dead come forth, while at the same moment a change equivalent to that occasioned by death is effected by Almighty power on the bodies of the living. Their mortal bodies put on immortality and are thus prepared to sustain a weight of glory, or of wretchedness which flesh and blood cannot endure. Meanwhile, legions of angels are seen darting from pole to pole, gathering together the faithful servants of Christ from the four winds of heaven, bearing them aloft to meet the Lord in the air where He causes them to be placed at His own right hand, preparatory to the sentence which is to award them everlasting life.

Yet another and a different scene presents itself. Consternation now seizes the myriads whom this event has surprised amidst their worldliness, their gaiety, their voluptuousness, their barter, their marrying, and their being given in marriage.

As a thief in the night, the Bridegroom has startled them from their sleep! Now the graceless professor seizes his lamp and finds it destitute of oil. The Pharisee hastens to wrap his righteousness around him but discovers that it is too narrow to conceal his deformity. The scoffer, the skeptic, the careless, the procrastinator, are seen fleeing from fastness to fastness, from mountain to mountain, from rock to rock, but none afford a shelter from the darkening storm. The great day of His wrath is come, and who is able to stand? The judgment is set! The books are opened; the wicked are arraigned; the trial proceeds; the verdict is given; the sentence is pronounced! The doom is fixed, and the undying worm and the quenchless flame are their portion forever! "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "Upon the wicked He will rain snares, fire and brimstone, and a horrible tempest: this shall be the portion of their cup."

Reader, are you prepared for the coming of the Lord? Are you ready to enter in with Him to the marriage supper? Are you a professor? Have you grace-renewing, humbling, sanctifying, Christ-exalting grace in your heart? Is your preparation one of principle, one of habit? Will it abide the searching scrutiny of that day? Examine and see. Take

Reader, are you prepared for the coming of the Lord?

nothing for granted in deciding a matter so solemn and involving interests so momentous. Christ must be all in all

to you—the entire groundwork and fabric of your salvation. Mere notions of truth, external membership with the Church, sacraments, regular attendance upon the means, punctilious observance of days, and forms, and ceremonies, in themselves, are no fit preparation for this awful event. As the fruit of a living faith in Jesus, they are valuable, but standing alone without repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ they are the wood, the hay, the stubble which the last fire shall consume.

Believer in Jesus, the day of your redemption draweth nigh! The Lord is at hand. Behold, the Judge standeth at the door. The days we live in are eventful. The times are perilous. The signs, thickening and darkening around us, are deeply and fearfully significant. We are standing on the eve of events perhaps more awful than the world has ever seen. A period of glory for the Church brighter than has yet shone upon her, and a period of woe to the world darker than has yet cast its shadows upon it, seems rapidly approaching. Then, "let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober." "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand." "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping." Oh, to blend the steady thought of our Redeemer's coming with every present duty, privilege, and effort; how would it hallow,

cheer, and dignify us, consecrating by one of the most solemn motives, the lowliest work of faith and the feeblest labor of love!

Thus, too, would there be a growing preparedness of mind for the judgments which are yet to come upon the earth. "For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh."

*A child of God! Can this earth's vain pleasures
Be ought to thee for whom the Saviour died?
Rise, rise above them all! Its worthless treasures,
Its soul-destroying joys, its pomp and pride.
Be His in all, thy soul and eye be single,
Fixed as the glory that surrounds the throne;
Seek not Christ's services with the world to mingle,
Remember, God has sealed thee for His own.
O child of God! Be not this earth thy dwelling
But stand in spirit on that glassy sea,
Where the rich harmonies for ever swelling,
Sound forth the slain Lamb's love, so full, so free.
Stand forth in peace, far above all the madness
Of sinful man, weighing with even scale
The worth of all things—feeling the deep gladness
Of one who follows Christ within the veil.
Child of the living God! What boundless blessing!
His Spirit thine, to comfort and refine;
The heir of God! Joint heir with Christ, possessing
All things in Him, and He Himself too thine,
Hold fast thy crown, go forth with joy to meet Him:
Soon will He come, and take thee for His own.
With girded loins and burning lamps then greet Him,
The Bridegroom's triumph thine—thine too His throne!*

Precious Jesus! We have been contemplating Thy glory as through a glass darkly. Yet we thank Thee and adore Thee even for this glimpse. Dim and imperfect though it is, it has endeared Thee, unutterably endeared Thee to our hearts. Oh! if this is Thy glory beheld through a clouded medium what will it be when face to face! Soon, soon shall we gaze upon it. Then, Thou glorious King, we will exclaim, "It was a true report that I heard...of Thy acts and of Thy wisdom... and, behold, the half was not told me."

Seeing that we look for such things, grant us grace that being diligent we may be found of Thee in peace, without spot, and blameless. Send us what Thou wilt, withhold from us what Thou wilt; only vouchsafe to us a 'part in the first resurrection,' and a seat at Thy right hand when Thou comest to Thy kingdom. Low at Thy feet we fall! Here may Thy Spirit reveal to us more of Thy glory! Oh irradiate, sanctify, and cheer us with its beams. Behold we cling to

Thee! Thou art our Immanuel, our portion and our all. In darkness we repair to the fountain of Thy light. In sorrow we flee to the asylum of Thy bosom. Oppressed, we come to the shelter of Thy cross. Oh, take Thou our hearts, and bind them closer and still closer to Thyself! Won by Thy beauty, and drawn by Thy love, let there be a renewed surrender of our whole spirit, and soul, and body. Claim

and take Thou a fresh possession. “Thy statutes have been my songs in the house of my pilgrimage.” “Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterwards receive me to glory.” Then, oh, then, shall we unite with the HALLELUJAH CHORUS, and sing in strains of surpassing sweetness, gratitude, and love—“THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT.” □



Doctrinal Studies

The Fruits of Holy Baptism (1)

Rev. G. Hoogerland, Kruiningen, the Netherlands

Abasement (Humility)

In congregations blessed with many children, Holy Baptism is celebrated regularly. Baptism is a sacrament with a multipurpose meaning.

It is not heard so often from God's children that the administration of baptism is used for the strengthening of their faith; that is much more often heard with the administration of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. What would be the reason for this? Do we have insufficient light on the rich meaning of this sacrament? Or has the instruction regarding this sacrament been placed in the background? With the use of the Form for Baptism we will try to look somewhat further at some of the fruits of this godly instituted form.

Visible sign

The form begins by pointing out our impure conception and birth. We use water to wash away the filthiness of our bodies. In this, baptism is a token or visible sign that makes an invisible matter clear. The token of water makes it visible that our souls and the souls of our children are impure. This serves as a preaching to the parents. Why are the children impure? Because the parents are impure. Our children are impure because of our guilt which we inherited from our parents. This brings us back to Paradise. Before the Fall, baptism was not necessary because there was no impurity.

How blind we are by nature for our impurity. We neither see it nor do we feel it, but, now, just look at the water in baptism. The water has also been sprinkled upon your forehead. If we do not believe it out of the Word, then let the water of baptism convince us that we are loathsome from the hour of our conception.

When this is learned, it works abasement. What a precious fruit of grace this abasement is. There is no greater wonder

than when a proud and haughty person is abased. Then we learn to accept, acknowledge, and bewail our impurity. Oh, that sorrow! It is not only this evil (my daily sins) which calls for punishment; no, “I was shapen in iniquity.”

Because of my impurity I also lie under God's wrath. A holy God cannot have any communion with sin and unrighteousness. He must remove us from before His countenance. He hates all unrighteousness. That leads to a deeper humbling, for this means that I have been placed outside of the fellowship with God. Whoever is taught this experimentally will cry out to God for mercy.

Outside of ourselves

How busy a person can be in seeking purification within himself, but he will never find it there; at least it is hoped one does not. The Pharisee will find it in himself, but that will lead to an eternal disappointment. The truly convinced soul, however, will find only greater impurity within. The water of baptism teaches one to seek his or her purification and cleansing outside of himself or herself.

Then all of my piety is put aside. All of my tears are insufficient to wash away my impurity. Then all of my work activities do not remove even a one-hundredth portion of my impurities. Seeking souls, look towards the water of baptism. Reflect on the water which was sprinkled upon your forehead when you were babes. It preaches to you that you must seek your salvation outside of yourself.

To the more exercised children of the Lord—with this you must daily learn to be exercised—to daily seek your purification and salvation outside of yourself; to daily take refuge in the basin of Jesus' blood. We have once heard from one of God's exercised children that she with all her depravity could daily take refuge in the blood of her Saviour. Is that not a precious fruit of the sacrament of Holy Baptism? □

(To be continued)



Commentary

The Man Born Blind (3)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world”
(John 9:5).

As we continue with the history of the great wonder of how the blind man received his sight, the Lord Jesus is in the direct presence of the consequences of sin. My dear reader, the man in John 9 is blind, blind from birth! That means he never has seen the green grass, the colorful flowers, the blue sky, or the moon shining at night. He never has seen his parents' faces. He never knew what his surroundings looked like. He sat by the temple but never has seen the priest, never has seen the sacrifice, never has seen the blood. The list can go on because all this man has seen is darkness, never a ray of light. We hear more often of people who become blind, but this man was always blind. The chief thing he does not see is the object of our text, “The Light of the world.” We, also, go to church, we hear much, and all of us have some knowledge of the truth. From our young days we have heard that we are conceived and born in sin. The question then becomes, have we ever seen what we have heard? We are blind to what we hear. We are blind to realize that we are under the wrath of God. We are blind to the precious callings that come to us under the gospel preaching. Dear reader, have we become convinced of our blindness?

“As long as I am in the world” refers to a period of time, the time of Christ's earthly ministry. God's Word reveals a fulfillment here. The Old Testament church was waiting for His coming, and now He has come. It is a fulfillment of four thousand years of promises: “I am in the world.” Christ speaks personally in this text. It is not the disciples who are speaking; very directly Christ says where He is, “in the world.” The world in the Gospel of John is a remarkable place. Really it is the place where all the inhabitants have said farewell to the Lord and, therefore, are in the darkness of sin. Yet, according to His sovereign decree there are sinners who need to be converted. The darkness is described in John 9 by the blindness of this man, but now Christ directly speaks to the place where He has come, the world in darkness. Isaiah prophesied, “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light” (Isaiah 9:2a). The Lord fulfills His word!

Christ also says what He will be while He is in the world, “I am the Light of the world.” This Light is Himself; He is not a reflection. These words clearly reveal that the Lord Jesus Christ is God and man in one Person. He is the express image of His Father. Christ, as Second Person in the divine Trinity, became man, but He remained very God.

He declares who He is when dealing with the blind man from birth. Do we know of such a wonder when we were in our sin and misery that God declared who He was? Dear reader, when the Lord converts a person, then He will declare great opposites. Shall I name a few? Then God is Holy and you are unholy, He is Just and you are guilty, He is Righteous and you are unrighteous. Here He declares, “I am the Light of the world,” but the man born blind from birth is blind. Oh, the reality is declared so clearly from God's Word. Has God's Word ever declared to us who He is and who we are?

How will the divine Light function in the world? Towards the end of the life of the Lord Jesus, the High Priest will examine the Lord Jesus concerning His disciples and His doctrine. As the Light of the world, He illuminated His doctrine that “no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.” He accompanied that doctrine with proofs of divine power. The wonder of coming to God was clearly shown through His miracles. Those in whose heart the Light had effect believed His doctrine and became His disciples. So, as the Light of the world, He has gathered His followers who were drawn by the cords of love. He gave them to see that in Him was the Light of life, but His Light also had another effect: “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil” (John 3:19). We also read that His illuminating words became a hard saying and “...many of His disciples went back, and walked no more with Him.” How necessary to examine our heart!

Is that now all passed? When Christ ascended into heaven, did He take His Light with Him? No, dear reader, He ascended so that the Father and the Son would send forth the Holy Spirit. He told His disciples that the Holy Spirit would guide them. What light was given to Peter into the Scriptures in his Pentecost sermon. What a blessed effect, by the preaching of the Scriptures, was seen in three thousand hearts! Christ's Light still shines today in the preaching of His Word, in the reading of the books based on His Word.

I close with a question: Have we been declared who we are by God already? Has it become personal? Church of God, in all your darkness see what He declares, “I am the Light.” God's people may at times be so happy with what He declares Himself to be for His Church in the world. The apostle wrote to the Corinthians, “For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face...” For God's true people what He has become He will always remain to all eternity, despite the remaining plague of darkness from their side. □

(To be continued)



Church History

The Spread of Christianity (5)

J.N. Mouthaan, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*)

Christians in the Early Church

Assembling together on Sunday

Sunday gatherings were a firm tradition for the congregations in the early church.

Remarkably, one of the oldest reports of Sunday gatherings originates from a Roman governor by the name of Pliny the Younger. As governor of Bithynia and Pontus, he had to deal with a large number of Christians. Somewhat shy with the situation, he wrote a letter to Caesar Trajanus. On the basis of what he had heard from Christians who had left the church, he wrote the following: “It was their custom to gather together on a fixed day before dawn to sing a hymn with each other before Christ as a God. They also bound themselves together with an oath, not to commit any crimes, not to rob anyone nor to commit any stealing, not to commit adultery, not to break any vows which they had made, and to return anything that had been pledged, if asked to do so. When that was done, they usually left one another, and then, later, to again come together for a meal, but then completely normally and without guilt” (*Letters, Book 10, Letter #96, paragraph 7*).

In that same letter, Pliny also said that Christianity had spread into all levels of society. “For many people of all ages, of all levels of society, yea both sexes are in danger to succumb to this contamination, even in the villages and in the countryside” (*Letters, Book 10, Letter #96, paragraph 8*).

A holy life

These citations give a clear picture of the early Christians. They came together every week to pray, to sing, and to again dedicate themselves to a holy life. In addition to a gathering early in the morning, they held another gathering where they had a “love meal,” probably in connection with a celebration of the Lord’s Supper. The wide spread in ages and generations as well as residences is an indication of a strong and living consciousness of evangelization among the early Christians. It is worthy to pause for a moment to note in the documents of the church fathers something of these early Christian gatherings.

Also the women

It is remarkable that for outsiders it was visible that Christianity was not only for men but also for women. The image projected for women in those times was downright negative and can best be summarized with the humiliating words of Demosthenes, an orator and politician

from Athens (384-322 B.C.). He wrote without shame, “We keep mistresses for our pleasure, slaves to provide our daily care, and wives to grant us legitimate children and to be caretakers of our households.” Christianity provided a break with this negative picture of the women. The gospel was also a message for women. They could also be “heirs of the grace of life” (1 Peter 3:7). Luke points specifically to the fact that women also belonged to the first Christian congregations (Acts 1:14). The church fathers went even further in that direction.

When Athanasius (296-373 A.D.) spoke of the expectation of death among Christians, he also spoke specifically about women. They also join in the strife with death. “Not only men, but also women take up the strife against death. Satan has become so weak, that even the women who in the beginning were deceived by him, now mock with him as with a dead, impotent and powerless one” (*The Incarnation of the Word, page 27*). In the gospel the woman received again her worthiness as a creature according to God’s image which she had lost.

Historical context

In our present day there is regularly a wrong application made of this biblical known fact—an assumption that this gives grounds for women to hold office. If that is true, however, the texts of this canonical outline are taken out of their historical context. It was God’s purpose that, against the dark background of the Greek-Roman rule, the gospel would again give back to the woman her worthiness. Whoever will use this as justification for compromise in today’s culture reads too much into these texts. Rabbi John Duncan very sharply and pointedly said about this, “We cannot put this apostolic account behind us just to satisfy our own ideas” (*Just a Talker, page 12*).

Christians, however, may see in this restoration of the worthiness of the woman a token of God’s wise leading and care. God not only created man and woman after His image but will also re-create man and woman according to His image. □

(To be continued)

Christ’s blood has value enough to redeem the whole world, but the virtue of it is applied only to such as believe.

—Thomas Watson



Media Use

What do I do when I have a loved one who admits that he or she struggles with pornography?

(Submitted by the Lethbridge Modern Media Committee)

Addiction to pornography is a difficult situation that is becoming more and more common. We cannot normalize the viewing of pornography, but due to the stigmatization that is associated with pornography, it is often a difficult subject to discuss when there are issues. It is a sin that is often done in private and leads to great shame when it must be addressed and discussed.

It is important to understand that there are different degrees of pornography consumption. Not every situation can be addressed in the same manner. Some people fall into occasional compulsive or obsessive consumption while in others it turns into an extreme addiction. No case of pornography consumption is acceptable, but the more extreme cases need different treatment and will likely need the help of professional counselors. However, all cases require compassion, support, and, most importantly, prayer for deliverance from this temptation.

The dangers that are related to pornography are many—pornography can lead to the destruction of our families, to the hardening of our heart, and to our eternal destruction! Numerous online articles define the many resulting dangers to our families and society. Yet, despite all these dangers, many of us are still inclined to fall into this sin, even in our Reformed communities. Although we may never have fallen into the actual sin of pornography, God can show us how evil our human nature is. Then we recognize ourselves as the greatest of sinners.

Helping the individual

Other than prayer, the first thing you can do to help is listen. Since these acts are accompanied with implied shame and judgment, it is important that you do not impose more shame and judgment on individuals struggling with pornography as this may cause them to withdraw from sources of help. If you respond with sincerity, it is more likely that they will confide in you in the future. People who consume pornography usually feel remorse and know that it is wrong. Confiding in someone else can help them with their struggles as well as help to hold them accountable.

Oftentimes, you may experience anger, negativity, and perhaps even repulsion against the acts when hearing about them. Initially, it is not helpful to express your feelings. They may be discussed after allowing the person who is struggling to share. It is not healthy to repress these feelings; however, expressing them immediately may cause the person who is struggling with pornography to withdraw further.

If you understand the addictive nature of pornography, then try to sympathize with your loved one. Try to show

support—not for the compulsion but for the striving against the compulsion. For adults this involves accountability programs such as Covenant Eyes and filters as well as honest and open conversations. Let your loved one know that he or she is not alone and can talk to you if ever feeling this compulsion. Ask him or her what you can do to help since he/she best knows the times and places of those struggles. As with any compulsion or addiction (pornography, alcohol, drugs, etc.), the individual who is struggling needs to help initiate the recovery. Tell the person that he or she is not the only one who struggles with pornography and that there is hope to get past it.

While support is crucial, it is also important to be honest with the person about your feelings. You may not enable the person to continue his or her destructive behavior but emphasize the negative impact on him/her and the family. It does not help to shelter someone from the consequences of his or her actions. Whenever you are discussing this, try to find the right time, and keep as much emotion out of the conversation as possible.

It is also important to recognize the signs of someone falling back into these compulsions. In order to recognize this, you need to know the individual. Signs may include: the person becoming evasive when talking about his or her problem, lashing out, suddenly being gone more frequently or not being available, being agitated or short-tempered after being alone. If you suspect, based on these signs, that the person is in trouble again, try to maintain communication and discuss what you need to do.

Remember that many people's struggle with pornography is compulsive and reactionary. After this has been addressed with a family member, they may bury the compulsion for a period of time. When there is a trigger, however, such as stress at work, an argument with a spouse, or anything else, they may fall into their old habits again. Therefore, it is important to have multiple levels of support which could include a spouse, a family member, a friend, or a professional. It is important that the members of this support network can help each other. For example, if the one struggling has an argument with a spouse, the spouse can have someone else check in with that person.

Helping the spouse and family

It is common that a spouse may feel inadequate if his or her partner has been consuming pornography. Spouses feel that they should be good enough for their loved one and may interpret pornography addiction as a betrayal of their trust. It is important that they do not blame themselves

because pornography consumption usually has very little to do with satisfying a need for intimacy. They need to remember that this is their spouse's personal struggle, not their own. If we may know our own sinful inclinations, then we may be able to sympathize with the inclinations of others.

It is very possible that a spouse may feel betrayal, anxiety, depression, and a loss of trust. This can lead to severe emotional pain. Therefore, he or she needs a confidant—either a professional or a trusted family member or friend. Such a spouse needs to receive help for his or her own mental and emotional state. Seeking this help should never be to shame the one struggling with pornography; that would be destructive. Yet, if someone intends to help a struggling spouse or a family member, then he or she must first get emotional support for himself/herself.

The confidant should offer encouragement to the one seeking help. Most likely he or she does not have personal fault in his/her spouse's struggles with pornography. Therefore, efforts to lose weight, to dress differently, or to change routines are neither healthy nor necessary to help a loved one. There is no nicotine gum equivalent to replace the desire for pornography consumption. However, if there are other relationship problems unrelated to the issue of pornography which can be improved, it may be beneficial to encourage the couple to make those changes because a strong family bond will help them in the future. For example, if a family or couple lives a lifestyle in which one of the spouses is often away from home, it may be helpful to discuss scenarios where that can be improved. If there are preceding problems in the marriage, do not hesitate to encourage seeking marital advice to strengthen the marital bonds.

Discuss the broken trust since the feeling of betrayal can break the intimate trust but also emotional and spiritual ties that may exist in a family. Oftentimes, spouses can be each other's closest confidant when discussing emotional and spiritual concerns and issues. Therefore, if one spouse has hidden his or her pornography consumption, and suddenly the other spouse becomes aware of it, then any previous intimate trust that was built by sharing vulnerabilities in everyday and spiritual life may also come crashing down. It may take a long time to again restore trust, so it is important that there are other supports, such as a family member, to help rebuild that trust and help the spouses become close confidants again.

For a loved one, restoring trust can prove a very difficult process. Part of the process will be to forgive the offending loved one. Forgiveness may be the most difficult part. It is important to remember that forgiveness does not condone the offense or pretend that it never occurred. Forgiveness means that he/she will not hold the offense against his/her loved one. Reconciliation is aided when a secret sin is brought to light. If instead a grudge is held, further falling into sin may be kept secret rather than being confessed and addressed with support.

Helping yourself

Perhaps you suffer with this compulsion to sin but have never discussed it with anyone. It remains a hidden sin. Remember, nothing is hidden in the sight of God. Also understand that even if your family members are not aware of your sin at the moment; nevertheless, it is indirectly affecting you and your family. Consuming pornography is not a form of natural love; it will negatively affect any relationship that you may have. There are many articles online explaining the harmful effects of pornography in everyday life.

Every day our prayer must be, "Lead us not into temptation." This is not to appear pious in ourselves. When we understand something of our truly miserable nature, then we need a true spiritual prayer to be kept from such sin day after day. We read of David prior to his fall into sin with Bathsheba that he tarried in Jerusalem while he sent his army into war with the Ammonites. Later in the evening he arose from his bed, and while walking on his roof top he fell into temptation. Herein is an example that when we are not busy with our labors and lawful duties, it is easier to fall into temptation. Seeing how far this child of God fell, do we not have all the more reason to continually pray to be kept from temptation? Such a prayer should not be just a repetition before our meals but a true supplication to the Lord.

Personally, you may know that the struggle with pornography has its ups and downs. You may have developed an escape in which you are able to circumvent your Internet filters and your accountability programs. Consequently, you may become despondent as to how to truly break with this sin. The first practical step is to arm yourself with as many everyday defenses as possible. Remove opportunities for temptation, and if you know of ways to subvert a filter, try to find a backup that will disallow that possibility. Also, try to find accountability partners to help you in times of temptation. It may not be easy to open up to someone but doing so can be extremely helpful. Try to find someone in whom you can confide, one who is understanding, supportive, and trustworthy. You require someone who will hold you accountable and strongly encourage you to separate yourself from this addiction. Above all, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11). Be as Job, who made a covenant with his eyes that he would not look upon a maid. Beg for the grace of God to make the armour of God your front-line protection. Only the inward filter of the fear of the Lord may help keep us from such temptations as well as numerous other sins. □

Never think that you can live to God by your own power or strength, but always look to and rely on Him for assistance, yea, for all strength and grace.

—David Brainerd



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

Rev. H. Hofman, Beckwith, Grand Rapids, MI

We sometimes hear on Sunday—pray for “a Sabbath Day’s blessing.” What does this mean?

With a Sabbath Day’s blessing is meant a special blessing which the Lord often provides particularly related to His day. This is the reason why God’s children have a special love and desire for the Lord’s Day. Examples of such a blessing is an encouragement in the Lord’s ways and works, increase in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ, or direction in whatever matter may beset us. Sometimes their heart longs after God as a deer longs after water brooks (Psalm 42). It is in this day and in the house of God that their soul is fed with the Bread of Life. There it often pleases the Lord to abundantly bless the provision of Zion and satisfy her poor with bread (Psalm 132:15). Do you also know of this desire? Especially in the Psalms we read of the longing of the psalmist to be in the courts of the Lord (Psalm 26:8, Psalm 27:4, Psalm 84:1-4). Also, in Lord’s Day 38 of the Heidelberg Catechism we can read why this day is a day of blessing because there I learn what the rest of the eternal Sabbath shall be and when and how this already begins here upon earth. Is it not interesting that in the explanation of the Sabbath Day, the Catechism does not speak a word about what is forbidden but focuses only on what is to be done that day? The Lord did not institute this day to be a heavy burden for Israel but rather as a relief or *change* of labor. There is enough to do so as to obtain a Sabbath Day’s blessing—not in a legalistic way of touch not, taste not, handle not, but in a positive way. Remember this, parents; speak well of this day of the Lord with your children. Let the beauty of the Lord and the pleasantness of this day come out in everything. It might be that your children will come to love the day because of the enjoyment of dwelling in the house of the Lord and the profit of inquiring in His temple (see Psalm 27:4).

Let us remember, then, that such a blessing is also obtained in the way of faithful use of the means. Sloppy church attendance hinders the obtaining of such a blessing. No preparation on Saturday can also hinder such a blessing. I remember how some years ago I served the congregation of Urk, a small fisherman’s town in the Netherlands. We arrived on Saturday morning and spent the weekend in the parsonage. When it was 6:00 PM on Saturday afternoon, we suddenly heard the church bells ring all over town, and there are many churches in Urk. I went outdoors and asked someone why the church bells were ringing. I was told that this was to inform the whole town that it was time to lay

down the labors of the week and to prepare for Sunday. We can all learn from this, can we not? How many of us labor or are busy with various matters till late Saturday evening! Not to speak of other ways to spend the Saturday night—in all kinds of vanity and purposeless activities.

We read of John at Patmos that he was “*in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day...*” No doubt this referred to the first day of the week. In the New Testament this day became the day of the commemoration of the resurrection of Christ from the dead (see Acts 20:7 & 1 Corinthians 16:2). For the old and tried Apostle John, this day was observed in the midst of tribulation but filled with the desires of Psalm 92: “*It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto Thy name, O most High: To show forth Thy lovingkindness in the morning, and Thy faithfulness every night; For Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through Thy work: I will triumph in the works of Thy hands.*” Though far from the institutions of the Lord, his soul longed and even fainted for the courts of the Lord. His heart and his flesh cried out for the living God. The banishment to the dreary island where He was kept was, nevertheless, richly overshadowed by the glory of God and a comforting revelation of Jesus Christ. My friend, when that happens, though in a lowly station, the service of my Lord I will choose above all pleasures that sinful ways afford. John was in the Spirit. That means: all things were divinely placed in order to receive what the Lord was about to give. Then the soul is as a watered garden, prepared for communion with God in Christ. To be under the influences of the Spirit means that it is time for the Lord to work: “*I will hear what God the Lord will speak: for He will speak peace unto His people, and to His saints*” (Psalm 85:8a).

Of course, the blessings of which we wrote are not limited to the Lord’s Day only, for the Lord is free in what and when to give. However, bear in mind what one of our Dutch godly forefathers, Justus Vermeer, wrote in one of his sermons: “Jesus arose the first day of the week. Oh friends, this became for many the day of *their* resurrection. It also could become for you the day of *your* resurrection. To often think about the resurrection of Christ is very profitable, especially on Sunday, the first day of the week.” I would say, strive to obtain such a Sabbath Day’s blessing. □

Send your questions to Rev. H. Hofman, 2339 Deer Trail Dr. NE, Grand Rapids, MI 49505, or hofman@premieronline.net.



For Young and Old

A Word to Graduates

Rev. H. Hofman, Sr. (1931-2007)

(Taken from the June 1992 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Dear young Friends,

The Lord has been good to you and us. He has blessed you with a sound mind and helped you throughout the years of study at universities, colleges, and high school. The Lord has protected you and provided you with all that you needed.

After years of hard work, sacrifice and prayers of yourself, parents, grandparents, and office bearers, the Lord has rewarded your labors with a diploma. It behooves us, first of all, to acknowledge the Lord for His blessings bestowed upon you and us. Receive these blessings of the Lord with a humble heart. There is no reward in boasting in your own wisdom and strength. Give thanks unto the Lord who has been mindful of you.

In Proverbs 4 we read of the fruit in Solomon's life upon the instruction received from his parents. He always remembered the way in which he was instructed. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction. This wisdom is not only important, but all-important. Earthly wisdom may be a goodly pearl, but this wisdom from above is the pearl of great price, worth getting indeed, but only to be had by selling all that we have to buy it.

I hope and pray that God may plant a desire in your heart to stay with the truth wherein you were brought up. It is one of the greatest outward blessings and privileges we can receive—to be brought under the administration of the means of grace. Please do not despise your heritage. May each one of you be given to say with Joshua, "As for me... I will serve the LORD."

I hope that you may have a desire after graduation to become a full member of the congregation. It is an unbiblical (and thus wrong) custom to quit attending catechism class after graduating from high school. You can never graduate from a catechism class until you become a member of the church. Satan knows very well the longer he can keep you from joining the church, the more chance he has to influence the many life-long, pattern-setting decisions you make during your critical, young adult years. Satan laughs when he hears your excuses: "I am too young; I am not ready. I first will finish college; when I am older, I'll get more serious."

Dear young friends, may the Lord grant you a strong desire to walk in His ways. May He guide and direct your paths and incline your heart to fear the Lord all the days of your life. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." ◻

Advice for Graduates, Advice for All

J.K. Popham (1847-1937)

(Taken from *Spiritual Counsel to the Young*)

My dear young Friends,

This month I ask your attention for an important matter, a matter which, according to your attitude toward it, will affect your life for good or ill, since God in His all-wise providence works by means. The matter lies in the word *industry*. The Bible (which treats all things relating to our mortal life) deals with this very important matter as you will readily see in the following passages: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest" (Ecclesiastes 9:10). "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Proverbs 10:4). "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men" (Proverbs 22:29). "Not slothful in business" (Romans 12:11a). "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

We then see that God in His Word honors diligent labor, and it is certainly a matter of common observation that He honors industry. Yet, not in the same way in every individual instance, for many poor people, especially among the saints, try their utmost but rarely obtain more than the plainest living. Nevertheless, their industry is still honored by God. No doubt this is sovereignly ordained for divinely wise ends, but it does not affect the general truth that ordinarily success follows diligence.

Now industry is first a matter of the mind. I use the word "mind" in the general sense of attention, purpose, disposition, and will. If a youth at school has no mind for his work, he may read and hear as much as any in the same form, but he will make no adequate progress. Another, attending with all his mind, purposing to fit himself for a business or a profession, will hear, read, and think, absorb, and assimilate; his progress is seen and bears fruit. Industry, then, is not first in externals but in the disposition of the mind. In Ecclesiastes we see in the remarkable instance

of Solomon the result of his attention to those matters which interested him. He acquainted his heart with wisdom. "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards." His was the planning mind; he gave his heart to it. His eye was on every object around him; he considered all things, "And he spake three thousand proverbs: and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar tree that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall: he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes" (1 Kings 4:32&33). He did not merely see things without considering them. His mind, which God had given him, was exercised in and about all that came within his observation. So, I say to you, do likewise. Nothing will be drudgery or ignoble toil which God in His providence puts to your hands if your minds are engaged. You will see a dignity and a beauty in work. As poverty is no disgrace if it be in good company, so no kind of work can be said to be ignoble in itself. You may make it so to yourselves by properly regarding it. Endeavour then to follow the divine direction, "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

Are you going to another school? Apply your whole mind to your daily tasks. Are you now learning a business or studying for a profession? Follow the same rule. Observe detail. Keep your eye on the top rung of the ladder, but never attempt two rungs at one step. Be sure of every step. Attempting too much or seeking to attain the top quickly would probably mean disaster affecting all your life. Use your time well; use it in the evenings; be keepers at home. Do not seek much society. Avoid clubs. It is probable that club-life will sap, is sapping, much of the love of home-life, and the moral life of this country. Read well. I do not mean read many books or read quickly. Read with the intention to understand, absorb, assimilate what you read, so that it shall become your own, your mental nourishment, strength, and equipment for your life. Industry is real pleasure as well as profit. Whoever looked with regret on his application of any subject? Do you fear God and seek that His kingdom come in your heart? Read the divine direction given through Peter (2 Peter 1:1-11), and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. □



Current Events

Harsh Christian Persecution Situations in Somali

Christians living in the Somali Peninsula regularly face harsh persecution. Converting from Islam is prohibited in Somalia. Those who defy the law, like a married couple who preached the gospel, are arrested, charged with apostasy, and deported. Nearby in Eritrea, gatherings of believers are raided resulting in many being sent to prisons with inhumane conditions. Some pastors are facing solitary confinement of more than ten years. Meanwhile, some Ethiopian Christians are vulnerable to persecution from the Orthodox Church as well as attacks by Islamic extremists. All these conditions are not likely to change without a concerted multinational effort to champion religious freedom.

—ReligionNews.com

Militants Kill Eight Nigerian Christians

On the evening of May 3, militants affiliated with the group Islamic State West Africa (ISWAP) launched an attack on a Christian village in northeastern Nigeria. Eight people were reportedly killed in the violence, with many more still missing. In the latest of several attacks by ISWAP they not only shot and killed the villagers, but according to area residents also looted properties and destroyed many homes. Hundreds of residents were forced to flee the area. Last year, Nigeria earned the title of the worst country for Christians. The president of International Christian Concern said: "The military, the police, and the intelligence agencies are all controlled by Muslims. The world is waking up and starting to ask, 'Is the Nigerian government complicit in these attacks?'"

—Persecution.org

Persecution in Myanmar

Thousands fled an historic Christian village in a region of Myanmar after it was attacked by the Tatmadaw (military) on May 7. At least twenty houses were set on fire during the raid. The village, which has been attacked before by the military, is in a region where Christians and Buddhists have lived peacefully side-by-side for decades. Inhabitants

of this and other historic villages are descended from Christians who settled in the area in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The military, which seized power in February 2021, has for many years persecuted Myanmar's Christian minority, estimated to make up 6.2% of the population.

—BarnabasFund.org

"Medical Assistance in Dying" Continues to Expand in Canada

Today in Canada, ending one's life with "medical assistance" simply requires a physician and a witness to agree that physical or mental suffering is such as "cannot be relieved under conditions that the patient considers acceptable." Next year that will expand to include anyone with a mental illness, like PTSD or depression. There is also talk about expanding the practice to include minors. Soon, elsewhere under Canadian law, someone accused of a crime "must possess the capacity to understand that his or her behavior was wrong in order to be found guilty." However, in order to choose death, someone will not need the mental capacity to understand the implications of "medical assistance in dying." Even in the so-called "safe" cases grave evil has been done. Life is sacred, a gift of God, and should never be thrown away.

—ChristianHeadlines.com

Anxious Time for Pro-Life Americans

A leaked U.S. Supreme Court draft opinion signaling the end of *Roe v. Wade* made for an anxious Mother's Day and the week following for churches and pro-life groups across the U.S. Vandals attacked the offices of a pro-life group in Wisconsin. In Colorado, a night of vandalism left graffiti, paint, and broken glass at a Catholic church. In the Washington D.C. area dozens protested outside the homes of conservative justices. The Democrat majority U.S. Senate tried to pass a federal bill to codify legalized abortion [if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned] but this bill failed. If Republicans gain control of the Senate this year, a more extensive law promoting a national abortion ban is even possible.

—CBN.com



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (30)

Article XXIX: Of the Marks of the True Church, and Wherein She Differs from the False Church (continued)

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

The marks of the true church are mentioned in this article. Previously we have seen how the true doctrine must be preached in the true church. The second mark mentioned is that the sacraments must be administered according to the Lord's institution. We will not say much about this second mark since we hope to speak of them in later articles, D.V.

This time we will try to say something about the third mark, namely, "If church discipline is exercised in punishing of sin." As a consequence of sin, church discipline is necessary; there must be order in the church as well as in the family and in the country. God is a God of order. In 1 Corinthians 14:40 we read, "Let all things be done decently and in order." In Matthew 18 the Lord describes how this discipline must be exercised. God's Word is very clear about the discipline which must be maintained and which is so necessary for the welfare of the church.

Since the Second World War there has, in general, been less strictness with discipline in families, which in turn has also had its effects in the schools. This is often stated in the opposite order so that the schools are blamed for the revolutionary life of many young persons. We cannot deny that the schools have a great influence upon the youth in our days, but if we as parents were stricter, we could, with God's help, offset much of this influence. In general, we are too busy with many other things and forget our main task in bringing up our children, for whom, as Solomon says, we may not spare the rod. Governments, judges, the military services, etc., all have become more lenient, and I think that this has had its influence on church discipline as well. However, the main reason has not yet been mentioned, and that is the backsliding from God's Word.

When the Word of God is no longer the center of our life, then the next step is to forget the Law. We can see what disorder there is in our society

with being lenient, and it should be a warning for all churches that this shall also be the case with them in the future if church discipline is not maintained. Moreover, the Lord will withdraw Himself if sin is no more punished. In His law He has revealed His will, and His will is good; when we will not walk according to it, then His anger will be kindled against us. Discipline must be maintained to honor God because He hates sin; it is also, we repeat, necessary to the welfare of the church.

Our article summarizes these marks by saying, "In short, if all things are managed according to the pure Word of God, all things contrary thereto rejected, and Jesus Christ acknowledged as the only Head of the Church." This includes everything in respect to the truth, but it also emphasizes that Christ is the Head of the church. Although He ascended on high and sitteth at the right hand of the Father, He is the Head of the church, always working to their benefit, as described in Lord's Day 19. That Christ is the Head of the church is partially denied by Rome as they make the Pope the vicar of Christ. This doctrine gradually found entrance in the church of Rome during the eighth and eleventh centuries, but is clearly against the Word of God. The church militant has an invisible Head, and there is no basis given in God's Word for the doctrine of Rome, which, nevertheless, they still maintain.

Rome misuses and misinterprets Matthew 16:18a where it is written, "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church." For the word *rock* they use the word *petra*. They then reason that *petra* and Peter are the same, but this a human invention to justify their error and make the popes the successors of Peter. The word *rock* used in the above text refers to Peter's confession. How much better it is that the church has an invisible Head in heaven. He knows of all their needs

and is ready to help. Stephen saw Him standing at the right hand of God the Father. This is an inexpressible comfort for the church militant who have no rest here in time. They may know that their Head is also watching the enemies who are trying to destroy them and that these enemies will not overcome.

Thus, we have tried to explain something about the marks of the true church. Has this any value for us today? What is the condition of many so-called *Reformed* churches in our days? Are there guidelines as to where we may find these marks and where they are not to be found?

There are many who no longer bow before God's Word. Atheists are allowed to become ministers, elders, deacons; women may also be office bearers. In the administration of the sacraments, an historical faith is considered to be sufficient. Children of members and non-members are baptized alike, and no discipline is maintained. Others no longer believe the first chapters of the Bible, saying that it is only symbolical language and not real history when it speaks of the Creation and Fall of man. Many speak of presupposed regeneration of all children, saying that they must only show this in their life and they

will be saved. Every member is a child of the covenant and must take part in the Lord's Supper. We have to say with sorrow that the marks which our fathers have given us in this article based upon God's Word have become very vague or have disappeared. It is sad to write this, knowing that these churches have had an influence in the past century here in our country.

The preaching of the three covenants has had a great influence, often leading to the denying of man's state of death. When we leave any ability in man to do something for his own salvation, then we are going in that direction. The responsibility of man is over-emphasized and the sovereignty of God is under-emphasized. I read in a sermon on John 15:11 that a certain minister said that the Lord does not want sad people, but that they should be joyful. How? Does the Lord not work a sorrow?

Friends, I wish I could write differently about the churches, but it is a sad time. The next time, D.V., we hope to go further, but we should not forget ourselves. Be careful that we not say with Jeremiah's contemporary, "Trust ye not in lying words, saying, the temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, The temple of the LORD, are these."



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Gideon (1)

(Based on Judges 6)

There was again trouble in the land of Israel. The children of Israel did not know what to do. Their country had been invaded by their enemies, the Midianites. What awful things these people were doing to them. The Midianites were wrecking their fields of grain, destroying their plants and trees, and stealing their animals. They left the children of Israel with no food. Without grain, they had no flour or bread; there were no animals, so they had no meat; thus, they found very little to eat.

Year after year passed. The Midianites ruled the land and became more and more cruel. Soon some of the children of Israel began to hide from them in dens and caves. Finally, after seven years, the Israelites cried to the Lord. God did not forget His people but sent them a prophet who told them,

"God brought you out of the land of Egypt. God saved you from the Egyptians and from many other enemies, too. He gave you the land and helped you every time you needed Him, but YOU are not obeying Him! He told you not to worship other gods, but you did. HE has always helped you, but YOU have not listened to HIM." The Israelites heard the words of the prophet and were sorry. They had not obeyed God. Would God still help them?

A man, named Gideon, was very sad about what was happening to his country. One day he was thinking about it while he was working. He had saved some wheat before the Midianites found it, and now he was secretly threshing, or beating, it. Suddenly, he noticed someone next to him. The Bible tells us it was an angel, but Gideon did not know this yet.

“The LORD is with thee,” this person told Gideon. Gideon, however, was still thinking about his poor people.

“If God is with us,” he said, “why has all this happened to us? We have heard so much about all the miracles that He did in the past, how He brought us all the way into this land, but now He is not helping us. He must have forsaken us.”

“You are the one who will help save your people from the Midianites,” said the stranger. “God is sending you to help them.”

Gideon was surprised! “I?” he asked. “How can I help them? My family is poor, and I am the least important in my father’s family. Who am I, to do such a thing? I am no one!”

However, the stranger said to him, “Surely God will be with you and help you defeat the Midianites.”

Gideon could not believe that such a person as he was really the one God had chosen to do this. “Please show me a sign that this is really going to happen.” Gideon said, “Stay a moment, and I will make you some food.” The stranger said he would wait.

Gideon hurried back into his tent. He cooked a kid of the goats, made little cakes and soup, and brought it back to the stranger as he waited under a large tree.

“Put the meat and cakes on this rock,” the stranger told Gideon, “and pour the soup over it.”

Gideon did just as he was told, and then—see what happened. The stranger touched the food with the end of the staff that was in his hand. At once, fire came out of the rock and burned up the food. Then the man was gone. This was the sign Gideon had asked for. Suddenly he was afraid. This was not just a man, or just a prophet. This had been an angel, an angel of GOD. How afraid he felt.

Do we think of God as Gideon did? We must always remember that God is not just a person as we are.

We must stand in awe and reverence before Him, and seek to walk in the ways which He has commanded. How careful we should be from day to day, knowing that His eyes are upon us.

Gideon was so afraid that he cried out, “O Lord GOD! What is going to happen to me, because I have seen an angel?”

God told him, “Peace be unto thee; fear not: thou shalt not die.” Gideon was so thankful and humbled that he built an altar to God at that spot.

That night God told Gideon to do something very dangerous. His father had an altar to the false god Baal, and the Lord told Gideon to break it down. Then, in that same place He wanted Gideon to build an altar to the true God instead. What a dangerous thing to do! However, Gideon knew that God would be with him because He had promised. In the middle of the night he stole over to the altar of Baal with ten other men. Quietly they broke down the false altar, put up one to the true God, and hurried home.

The next morning the men of the city were angry when they found out what had happened. “Who did this awful thing?” they cried. “We shall put him to death!” Soon someone had discovered the answer. “Gideon did it,” they cried; and off they went to Gideon’s house.

Joash, Gideon’s father, answered the door. “Why do you want to kill Gideon?” he asked. “Why do you have to do it? Why can’t Baal do it himself? If he is a god, then I’m sure he’s strong enough to punish wicked men. Let him punish Gideon. You don’t need to do it for him.”

The men thought about this. Yes, that was true. A god didn’t need men to do his job. They would let Baal himself take care of Gideon. But do you think the idol Baal punished Gideon? Of course not, an idol is not alive. So, you can see how God saved Gideon to fight the Midianites.

The Education of Children

The education of children should proceed on the principle that they are in an unregenerate state, until evidences of piety clearly appear, in which case they should be sedulously cherished and nurtured. These are Christ’s lambs—little ones, who believe in Him—whom none should offend or mislead upon the peril of a terrible punishment. But though the religious education of children should proceed on the ground that they are destitute of grace, it ought ever to be used as a means of grace. Every lesson, therefore, should be accompanied with the lifting up of the heart of the instructor to God for a blessing on the means. “Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy Word is truth.”

—Archibald Alexander



Bible Quiz

Search

Dear Boys and Girls,

“Search!” The command was short and stern. Encouragingly, the police officer pointed ahead. The dog lifted her head, and her intelligent eyes gazed into her master’s face for a moment. Then, confidently, she stepped forward, nose to the floor. All around her in the busy airport, people milled everywhere, hurrying to stand in the right line for security inspection. The dog glanced up for a moment when she noticed a second search dog, but then she got down to business. Was there a dangerous object somewhere? If so, she would find it. She would not stop until she did! Her golden head dropped lower, and her nose snuffled busily along the floor.

The other dog, a German Shepherd, was eager to do his work, too. As two people at a time passed through the line, the young dog eagerly zigzagged behind them, sniffing in every scent. Were these people safe? Were they allowed to board the airplane? He would find out. He would search and make sure. Suddenly, he sat down, his long black nose pointing. “Master, come here! I smell something!”

When you are standing in line at the airport, your bags are scanned and searched carefully, you have to walk through a metal detector, and sometimes, a security guard may pat your clothes or a dog may sniff along the line. Your passport or license is inspected, and your ticket is scanned. When you are finally through and see the entrance of the plane, you feel relieved. You have made it through all the searches, and you have been cleared without any problems. This searching is necessary. It is the only way to find out if everyone boarding the plane is the person he says he is.

It is quite a thorough search, but it is only a search of whom you are on the outside. It is a search of whom you are in this world regarding your name, nationality, and other legal records. These people are not able to search your heart, your inmost being. You would not want anyone to do so, either. Your heart has secrets in it which no one may know—secret thoughts, desires, and sins. You may think that it is not fair that someone else has something you do not have, but you do not say so aloud. You may wish you did not have to sit through catechism class, but you would not tell anyone. You might know that

you lied to escape being in trouble, but no one else may know that.

By nature, we think that our heart is private; it is not for anyone else to see. We do not want our heart to be searched. We like to hide our heart and to be left alone. Would you want someone to search your heart? The psalmist in Psalm 139 asks for it. “Search me, O God, and know my heart...” Why does he do this? Well, he knows more about his heart now than in the past. The Lord has shown him some things which he never knew, and now he knows that his heart is very deceitful and desperately wicked. He is so afraid that he will deceive himself. He can fool others; he can even fool himself by thinking that he has received a new heart from the Lord, but he can never deceive God. He does not want to make a mistake. He does not want to be wrong. Only the Lord is able to tell him whether the desires in his heart are truly from Him.

The psalmist knows there are sins he does not even see but God sees, and He knows that only God can make it right. He longs for God to look into his heart and see the things he cannot put into words—the longings and fears. Sometimes he bows his knees, but no words come out. That is why he sighs, “Search me, O God, ...Please look in my heart and see there what I cannot express in words. Thou knowest it better than I know it myself—all my burdens, all my fears, not only all that I miss but also whether there are any longings for Thee.” He longs to feel that God knows of him. When he has strayed away from God, he needs the Lord to come and search for him. Just as a shepherd searches for his lost sheep, so the Lord will search until He finds him.

The Bible also tells us to search. Imagine if we searched the Bible as hard as those police dogs search? Or do you just read it casually? Do you forget to listen? How *should* we search the Bible? We should do so with a prayer in our heart that the Lord will bless it and the Holy Spirit will bring it into our heart.

When you search for something and you find it, there is an end to your searching, but in searching in His Word there is no end. It is like a mine of gold in which you can keep digging and digging and still find more—more about who you are and who God is. We never really know how much wickedness lives

in our heart, no matter how much we are shown, and in searching to know more about God, there can never be an end.

Ask the Lord to look into your heart. Ask Him to show you something of His holiness—He cannot step over sin as if it isn't there. He sees the sin in your heart and my heart. He sees when we live only for ourselves and the world around us. Ask Him often, "Search me, O God, and know my heart..." and may it be cleansed by Thee."

*"The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts."
(1 Chronicles 28:9b)*

Fill in the blanks.

1. Ezekiel 34:11 – "For _____ saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out."

2. Amos 9:3 – "And though they _____ themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them:"

3. Obadiah 1:6 – "How are the things of _____ searched out! how are his hidden things sought up!"

4. Zephaniah 1:12 – "And it shall come to pass at that time, that I will search Jerusalem with candles, and punish the men that are settled on their lees: that say in their heart, The LORD will not do _____, neither will He do evil."

5. Lamentations 3:40 – "Let us search and try _____ ways, and turn again to the LORD."

6. Psalm 44:21 – "Shall not God search this _____? for He knoweth the secrets of the heart."

7. Matthew 2:8 – "And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search _____ for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also."

8. Acts 17:11 – "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the _____ daily, whether those things were so."

9. Romans 8:27 – "And he that searcheth the _____ knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

10. John 5:39 – "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have _____ life: and they are they which testify of Me."

11. Proverbs 20:27 – "The spirit of man is the candle of the LORD, searching all the inward _____ of the belly."

12. Ecclesiastes 1:13 – "And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under _____: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith."

13. Isaiah 40:28 – "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the _____ God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? there is no searching of His understanding."

14. Jeremiah 17:10 – "I the LORD search the heart, I try the _____, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."

15. 1 Corinthians 2:10 – "But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the _____ things of God."

Fill your answers from 1-15 into the blanks.

T _____	S _____
H _____	H _____
E _____	E _____
	P _____
G _____	H _____
O _____	E _____
O _____	R _____
D _____	D _____

16. Read the first letters from top to bottom. Who is this and whom does He seek? _____

For the Older Children

Place the number of each text below in the correct category. One of the texts fits in both categories.

God's searching out of the heart _____	Man's searching for knowledge of self and God _____
---	--

17. I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: (Revelation 2)

18. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29)

19. My spirit made diligent search. (Psalm 77)

20. O LORD, Thou hast searched me, and known me. (Psalm 139)

21. Search me, O God, and know my heart: (Psalm 139)

22. If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; (Proverbs 2)

For the Younger Children

Fill in the correct name from the list below.

Benjamin, Jericho, Jacob, Hanun, David

23. _____ was angry at Laban for being suspicious and searching all his stuff. (Genesis 31:37)
24. Joseph's steward searched the sacks and found the cup in _____'s sack. (Genesis 44:12)
25. _____'s king was warned that Israelite spies had come to search out the country. (Joshua 2:2)
26. King Saul told the Ziphites to search all the hiding places, saying he would search the whole land until he found _____. (1 Samuel 23:23)
27. The princes of Ammon told _____ that David had not sent men to comfort but had sent spies to search out the land. (2 Samuel 10:3)

* * * * *

Answers to May's "Take Heed" quiz:

- that your heart be not deceived
Deuteronomy 11:16
- that thou be not snared
Deuteronomy 12:30
- that I sin not with my tongue
Psalm 39:1
- of the leaven of the Pharisees
Mark 8:15
- deceive you
Mark 13:5
- watch and pray
Mark 13:33
- be not deceived
Luke 21:8
- your hearts be overcharged
Luke 21:34
- Standeth
1 Corinthians 10:12
- Devour
Galatians 5:15
- Footsteps
Psalm 17:5
- Fall
Jeremiah 23:12
- Heed, slip
Hebrews 2:1
- Plow
Job 4:8
- Dwell
Job 11:14
- Wicked
Psalm 92:7
- Fallen
Hosea 14:1
- Power
Micah 2:1
- Tongue
James 3:6
- Thing
Isaiah 64:6
- Psalm 73 (B.), Psalm 94 (A.),
1 Corinthians 10 (D.), Isaiah 59 (C.)
- Falling into sin

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

Welcome to our new members:
Ethan Driesen, Allisyn Rozeboom,
and Emily VandeHoef.

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth



Answers to previous quizzes were received in April from:

Clay Bakker 13
Andrew Baum 8
Britni Blom 31
Marissa Blom 29
Tiffany Blom 5
Carly Brouwer (2) **12**
Derek Brouwer (2) **31**
Thomas Brouwer 30
Jaxon DeKorne (2) **6**
Juliette DeKorne (2) **7**
Sarina Den Bok 23
Cody Driesen (2) **30**
Ethan Driesen 1
Toby Driesen 29
Lindsey Driesse (2) 17
Allison Ekema (2) 3
Kaylynn Ekema (2) 33
Weston Ekema 21
Geraldyn Engelen (2) 20
Trevor Engelen (2) 21
Kyal Grisnich 15
Logan Grisnich (2) 17
Taryn Grisnich (2) **13**
Kari Groen (2) 23
Kurtis Groen (2) **24**
Evan Kaat (3) **14**
Logan Kaat 4
Shane Kaat (2) 5
Jack Kamp 5
Joey Koenen (2) 5
Lydia Koenen (2) **7**
Lydia Mol 25
Teddy Mol 25
John Murphy 23
Andrew Murphy 3
Lindsey Muis 10
Marielle Neels 20
Blake Pannekoek 14
Lauren Pannekoek 25
Andrew Remijn 23
Daniel Remijn 3
Lauren Remijn 19
Allyson Rozeboom 1
Kamryn Rozeboom 2
Nevaeh Rozeboom 6

Alex Rus (3) **25**
Kaela Rus (3) **14**
Lakia Rus (3) 16
Amara Stam 3
Marla Stubbe (2) 8
Hunter Timmer **24**
Kadin Timmer **24**
Laurencia Timmer 17
Sierra Timmer 22
Wyatt Timmer 23
Charity Van Brugge (2) 6
Gerard Van Deuveren 2
Maurice Van Garderen 28
Emmalyn Van Garderen 29
Lydia Van Manen 33
Rosalee Van Manen 30
Brett Van Velthuizen 10
Kason Van Velthuizen 13
Trent Van Velthuizen 10
Ellie Van't Zelfde 14
Alivia Vande Hoef 32
Emily Vande Hoef 1
Lindsay Vande Hoef 2
Micah Vande Hoef 27
Raelene Vande Stroet (3) **12**
Adalyn VAnde Waerd 2
Sophia VAnde Waerd 2
Wyatt Vande Waerd 17
Aubrey Vanden Berg 11
Heidi Vandenberg 26
Kristen Vandenberg 13
AaneKors Versteeg 9
Tena Versteeg 9
Jayden Weeda **18**
Nathan Wesdyk (2) **25**
Rebekah Wesdyk (2) 28
Allyson Ymker 19
Cameron Ymker 25

17 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 544—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.

News & Announcements

Ministerial Calls

Declined:

By Rev. A.H. Verhoef of St. Catharines, Ontario, to the congregation of Rotterdam, Thabor Church (Ijsselmonde), the Netherlands.

Obituaries

MOL, Aalbert – Age 69, April 23, 2022; Norwich, Ontario; Wife – Willemijntje Louise (nee Vlot, deceased); Children – Jan & Carolyn, Theo & Rachel, Elisabeth & Marco Mossel, Pieter & Hilda, Asti; 18 grandchildren, 3 great-grandchildren. (Rev. E. Hakvoort, John 1:29b.)

ROZEBOOM, William (Bill) – Age 98, April 21, 2022; Inwood, Iowa; Wife – Jacoba (Jackie, nee Van Zweden); Children – Ruth & Teunis Hoefakker, 2 grandchildren, 8 great-grandchildren; Sister – Dena Erickson; Sister-in-law – Hermina Rozeboom; predeceased by grandchildren Steven Hoefakker and Kayla Hoefakker, brothers, sisters and in-laws. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Ecclesiastes 11:7&8.)

FLUIT, Clarence – Age 86, April 14, 2022; Luverne, Minnesota; Wife – Joyce Gertrude (nee Jansen); Children – Kevin & Tina, Cheryl & Keith Van Der Brink, Brent & Dorenda; 10 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren; Sisters – Anna Marie Kaster, Joyce & Greg Hetrick; In-laws – Sylvia Fluit, Evelyn Fluit, Donald & Lavonne Jansen, Lila Jansen; predeceased by infant granddaughter Nicole Fluit, brothers and in-laws. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Job 8:7-9.)

VANDENBERG, Ayden Marc – Age 11 months, May 6, 2022; Nobleford, Alberta; Parents – Harvey & Ranetta; Siblings – Logan, Lynell; Grandparents – Marco & Patricia de Wilde, Harry & Antonia; Great-grandparents – Adrian & Grada de Wilde, Gerald & Rita Beekman. (Rev. G.M. de Leeuw, Lamentations 3:31-33.)

Classis Farwest Youth Conference

July 9, 2022

The Classis Far West Youth Conference, for our young people sixteen years or older, is scheduled to be held on July 9, 2022, in Fort Macleod, Alberta, D.V. If sufficient interest is shown, we hope to arrange separate activities for older young adults. Registration can be sent to nrcfortmacleod@gmail.com. May the Lord incline the hearts of our young people to attend, and may these means be blessed.

In Memoriam

Mr. Clarence Fluit

“Though thy beginning was small, yet thy latter end should greatly increase”
(Job 8:7).

On April 14, 2022, it pleased the Lord to remove from the midst of his family Mr. Clarence Fluit at the age of eighty-six years. Mr. Fluit faithfully served the congregation of Rock Valley as an elder for nineteen years (1991-2010). The above text was used at his burial on April 19. May the Lord graciously remember his grieving widow and sanctify this calling to his family.

— The Rock Valley NRC Consistory

Classis East Youth Conference

July 15&16, 2022

The Classis East Youth Conference is scheduled for July 15&16 and will be hosted by the Franklin Lakes and Clifton, New Jersey, churches. All young people ages sixteen and older are welcome. Topics will be presented by Rev. H. de Leeuw and Rev. C. Vogelaar. We extend a special invitation to our older young adults. Separate activities are being planned for them. All who wish to participate in the conference are asked to register. To do so, please visit www.njyouthconference.org (password: july2022), or contact Corné Vogelaar at Corne@RBFangus.com or 908-234-1377. We look forward to sharing a profitable time together with our youth and young adults.

Young Adult/Post High School Youth Camp, Northern Michigan

August 18-20, 2022

A three-day/two-night trip to northern Michigan is being planned, the Lord willing, by a Grand Rapids' committee under the oversight of the Beckwith consistory. We are planning to stay in a beautiful lodge located in Boyne Falls, Michigan. On Friday we plan to drive to Mackinaw City and take the ferry across to scenic Mackinac Island. Rev. H. Hofman and Elder Bill Greendyk hope to provide meaningful topics and discussions. For further information please call or text 616-329-0705 or email NRCMackinawTrip@gmail.com.

New from Bible Truth Books

Two new collections of short stories have been recently printed by the NRC Book and Publishing Committee. The first, *For the Generations to Come, Volume 3*, contains thirty-one stories (hardcover, 120 pages, \$12.25). The second, *Of Thy Faithfulness to Tell*, is a collection of twenty-one true stories (hardcover, 151 pages, \$7.75). Both books are tastefully illustrated and are heartily recommended.

2022 Catalog Available: Bible Truth Books has recently printed its 2022 catalog. Those who have not received a catalog should feel free to contact us for a free printed or Adobe copy.

Website: Books can now be ordered online at www.bibletruthbooks.org where you can also find our most recent catalog. In addition, free audio versions of several books are available including Vreugdenhil's *Bible and Church History*, *Mercies of a Covenant God* by John Warburton, and more.

The prices above do not include postage.

Bible Truth Books
P.O. Box 1290
Grand Rapids, MI 49501-1290
Phone / Fax: 616-776-2593
BibleTruthBooks@igatweb.com
www.bibletruthbooks.org

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on June 30, 2022, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Darold & Joanne Den Boer

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

“Withhold not Thou Thy tender mercies from me, O LORD: let Thy lovingkindness and Thy truth continually preserve me” (Psalm 40:11).

425 N. Pleasant View Ave.,
Corsica, SD 57328

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.**

Dear reader, the need is great. If you have an education background, please take a moment to consider the many positions available across our congregations.

Administrators Needed

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY. 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.

TRINITY REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, SUNNYSIDE, WASHINGTON, welcomes applications for an administrator/teacher 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 Maaike Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email trinityrcs@embarqmail.com.

Teachers Needed

CALVIN CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, COAL-HURST, ALBERTA, invites 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 youth. All applicants must be members of the NRC or a closely-related denomination, and eligible for Alberta certification. For information about positions available, 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. For any questions regarding this position and all interested applicants, please contact Randal Teunissen at 920-828-0225 or e-mail rdteunissen@yahoo.com.

MOUNT CHEAM CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, CHILLIWACK, BRITISH COLUMBIA, anticipates an URGENT NEED for the next school year with multiple openings for teachers 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. 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.

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@pskzoo.com or 616-644-2661.

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

NETHERLANDS REFORMED CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, POMPTON PLAINS, NEW JERSEY. 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 must be a member in good standing of one of Netherlands Reformed congregations or a denomination with similar teachings. To apply, please see our school's contact information in the Administrators section.

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 resumé 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 information and/or an application form, please 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.

To All Candidates for Education 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 News & Announcement section of *The Banner of Truth* frequently overflows its customary two pages. Consequently, a good deal of effort is spent attempting to fit the contents. We kindly request that announcements, especially education ads, be restricted to one hundred words (approximately sixteen lines in print). If an announcement is too lengthy, we will reply with a request that it be shortened. You are at liberty to include a link to a webpage where more details can be found. Thank you for your consideration.

—The Editors

The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles appearing in *The Banner of Truth* are available on MP3s and CDs for those who have reading difficulties such as poor vision. These MP3s are produced by a committee in Norwich, with the support of the Norwich consistory, who makes the MP3s available to your consistory. Consistories distribute the MP3s and CDs which are provided at no cost. You may contact Mrs. Tillie Lamain at 616-242-0291 or blamain@netscape.net to arrange for a free subscription or to discontinue receiving *The Banner of Truth* on CD.

From **THE BANNER OF TRUTH**
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Hitherto the Lord Has Brought Us

Hitherto the Lord has brought us,
Children, teachers, on our way,
Our beloved school maintaining
Even to the present day.
Ebenezer!
God hath helped us, would we say.

He has given a place for worship,
May we love these pastures green,
May we heed the sacred Scriptures
Where the Son of God is seen.
Ebenezer!
Hitherto our help He's been.

In the future yet before us,
We shall need His helping hand,
Still to wait for His appearing
And to go at His command.
Ebenezer!
Only by His help we stand.

And when death our souls shall summon,
May we be prepared before,
Washed in Jesus' blood, and landed
Safely on the heavenly shore.
Ebenezer!
Hitherto and evermore!

—Young People's Hymnal

the
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