

the Banner of Truth

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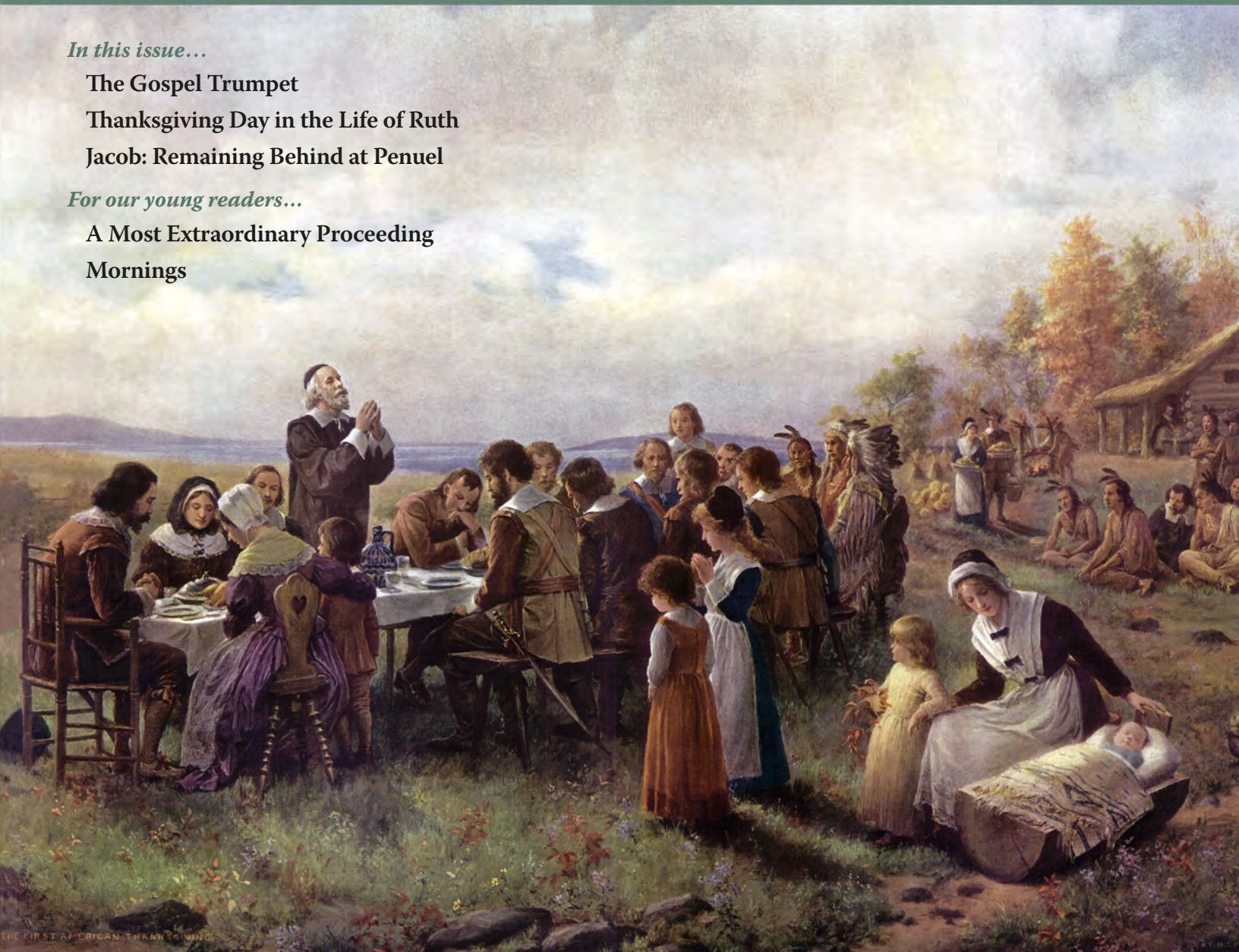
The Gospel Trumpet

Thanksgiving Day in the Life of Ruth

Jacob: Remaining Behind at Peniel

For our young readers...

A Most Extraordinary Proceeding
Mornings



"Thou shalt observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine...Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the LORD thy God which He hath given thee." DEUTERONOMY 16:13&17



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Cover: The First American Thanksgiving | © Jennie A. Brownscombe

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Meditation

The Gospel Trumpet

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

“And it shall come to pass in that day, that the great trumpet shall be blown, and they shall come which were ready to perish in the land of Assyria, and the outcasts in the land of Egypt, and shall worship the LORD in the holy mount at Jerusalem” (Isaiah 27:13).

We understand that the text reaches out to God’s children. That does not mean if you do not belong to God’s children there is no message for you. As you read and must say, “I do not belong to these people,” may this cause a great and deep sorrow in your heart so that you may become holily jealous. May the Lord give a deep cry in your heart, “Bless me with the same grace as all Thy children.”

The characters found in the text

The first characters spoken of are ones who are ready to perish in the land of Assyria. To them the Lord is saying, “My people shall never perish in the land of Assyria, no matter how low it has become in their spiritual life My people cannot perish” because they, by the grace of God, are destined for the land of Canaan.

Perhaps you are wondering who these people are that are “ready to perish.” I will try to explain. It was in the land of Assyria that the Lord came with His alluring love. What a good time it was in their life, His drawing love in their heart. Every crumb of His grace was like a meal of His love and communion for their soul, but when the Lord opened their blind eyes, they saw the breach between a holy God and a lost sinner. They saw the depth and awfulness of sin. Then there came a voice, “Pay what thou owest.” However, there was nothing with which to pay. Now it was fear before and behind.

Is that your life? Then you think you belong to those who must perish. You have a hunger, but it seems there is never any food for your soul. You now feel like the prodigal son. He said there is bread enough to spare in my father’s house, and I perish with hunger. Then comes the devil and he whispers that there is no pardon for you, so why not go back to the world. No, God’s people cannot do that. They sit with their back against heaven’s gate and all they can say is, “Lord help me to knock, help me to pray.” Oh, listen carefully. Soon the trumpet will sound, and then you will say, “Was not our heart burning when we heard the sound of the precious gospel message?”

Who are the characters we read about as “the outcasts in the land of Egypt”? There they live in bondage. Perhaps you may know that spiritual bondage for your soul. All is dark, all is empty; often you miss even the hunger and desire for

a small token of the grace of a forgiving God. You feel as though you are about to perish; you see nothing but sin and, on the other side, a righteous and holy God. Yet, in the darkest night you cannot stop; you must ask, “Lord is there yet a way for such a one as I?”

Do you belong to one of these characters? There is a message for you although it is hopeless from your side. Yes, you think you will never hear that loving voice anymore, yet you may hear that wonderful, precious sound of the gospel. Now you may hear His voice saying, “Come, you who are about to perish. Come, and lay at the feet of the dear Saviour. Come then to the place where there is a Hiding Place for those about to perish.” I know what you are thinking, that you do not know the way. Listen for the sound of the trumpet.

The blowing of the great trumpet

We may still hear the sound of that great trumpet. Those of you who are unconverted, you may hear “Turn ye, Turn ye unto Me,” and when you hear you may pray, “Lord draw me, plant my feet upon that way.” Oh, how happy you would be to be but a creeper upon that way. There you may say, “Oh, Lord I hear the sound of the trumpet. It is saying in my heart that I may come with empty hands, a burdened heart, and that the Lord will not despise me.”

You, who are about to perish, what do you want to hear? From that great trumpet you want to hear about a suffering and dying Saviour; you want to hear about the great price paid by a dying Saviour for all your sins. You want to hear that a holy and righteous God is satisfied with the price and has come to open the veil in the temple saying, “In My beloved Son there is now a way open unto the heart of the Father.”

Now, when the great trumpet is blown, those who are perishing may hear, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” It is a rest in Him who obtained it for perishing sinners.

The coming to the Holy Mount

Called by the great trumpet, they come, the perishing and the outcasts. They can no longer stay away. All the voices that sowed great darkness in their heart must now be still. All the doubts and fears are taken away. Now the poor may look up with love and trust in their heart; they come to worship the Lord in beauty and holiness. In deep spiritual affection they fall down before Him. Their soul may taste of His great love.

They come to the holy Mount. Where is that? That is where Christ sits at the right hand of His holy Father; that is where the perishing may see the Lamb of God in the midst of the throne; that is where that Great Host clothes all the children of the Father in white garments and where they sing a new song. Oh, the wonder of God when we may be among them. How often when we are perishing, we think upon the invitation, "Ho, every one that thirsteth,

come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye buy and eat." Oh, what a blessing when all our money is gone and we may come as poor, perishing people. Then we may hear the sound of the trumpet; we will never perish in Assyria because that sound will lead us to the holy Mount at Jerusalem. In that spiritual Jerusalem the perishing, the outcast, may worship our God for ever and ever. □



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (12)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

"And when the children of Israel saw it, they said one to another, It is manna: for they wist not what it was. And Moses said unto them, This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat" (Exodus 16:15).

The Lord showed Israel a miracle when the waters of Marah were made sweet and the thirsty ones could drink. The LORD was the Healer of Israel. After this, the people came to Elim, which was also a precious place. There they were refreshed with twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees gave them shade in the hot desert; they encamped for a little while, but then they had to continue their journey.

A grumbling people

The children of Israel came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai, on the fifteenth day of the second month after their departing out of the land of Egypt. Then we read, "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness." This was the third time that they rebelled against the Lord and complained about His way. The first time was when they were standing before the Red Sea, as we read in Exodus 14:11-13. They said, "Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" They even dared to say, "It had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness." The second time was when they had come to Marah: "And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" (Exodus 15:24).

Now, when they were in the wilderness of Sin, they said unto Moses and Aaron, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger." Truly, the Lord was grieved with

His people. How often we read in God's Word that pilgrims could not understand or agree with the way in which the Lord led them. It was a wonder of God's patience that the LORD said unto Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." The word *behold* indicates that it was an amazing promise for an undeserving people.

Bread from heaven

Yes, the Lord led His people in an incomprehensible way. As for Moses, it required much courage to lead two million people in such a howling waste. Moses had lived for forty years in the immediate vicinity of this area, and he knew with certainty that only a series of daily miracles could meet the vast needs of such a multitude. Their sin was aggravated by an oath; they used God's name in vain, "Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD." This implied:

- a) We could better have died in Egypt. It would be better if we had not been saved behind the blood.
- b) "For ye have brought us forth..." This was a lie, for it was Jehovah and not simply Moses and Aaron that had brought them forth.

The Lord could have answered in anger and punished them. However, He said, "Behold, I will rain, no, not fire and brimstone that ye may be consumed, but 'bread from heaven for you.'" What a marvelous grace and sovereign, unmerited favor! He gave a warning, "and, behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud" (verse 10b). The fire in the cloud did not go out to consume them, but God showed His holiness and majesty. In the evening the sky became dark with birds—quails—which covered the camp, "and in the morning the dew lay round about the host." The people wondered when they saw "a small round thing, as small as the hoar frost on the ground." They had never seen this before. "They said one to another, It is manna: for they wist

not what it was.” It was bread for two million people. It was the greatest royal meal ever given. It lay outside of the camp.

A special gift

There are a few important characteristics of this gift from heaven:

- 1) Manna was supernatural; it came from heaven. God has given us the Scriptures.
- 2) Manna came right to where the people were, “round about the host.” So, the Word of God has come to us.
- 3) Manna was small in size. The complete revelation of God’s truth is in the Word of God and is all that is needed to make man perfect.
- 4) Manna was white in color. The words of the Lord are pure words. “Thy Word is very pure, therefore Thy servant loveth it.”
- 5) Manna was to be eaten. God’s Word is given to provide food for our souls.
- 6) Manna was gathered daily. We need to feed daily on God’s testimony.

In regard to this gathering, it is important that:

- a) They had to gather it early in the morning before the sun rose, before it was gone. Young people—seek Him early. The manna is there especially for you when you are in your youth.
- b) All did not gather the same amount. Some gathered more and some less. A child with two little hands full of manna did not have as much as older ones, but all had enough to satiate.
- c) They had to get out of their tents and go outside the camp, stooping down to get it. So, we must go out to the Lord unto His Word, humbly hearing what He says.
- d) The sixth day, they must gather a double provision and not gather on the Sabbath. Do not despise God’s Day, do not work on the Lord’s Day except when it is absolutely necessary.
- e) They had to bake it. If it is good, we must be active, exercised with God’s Word in our inner room, meditate upon it, and pray for God’s blessing upon it.
- f) It had to be eaten; nothing could be left for the next day, otherwise, the worms would creep out of it. It is a blessing if we may daily eat from God’s Word and not be satisfied only with former experiences or rest in them.

Is God’s Word also your daily food? Is it precious to you? Christ is the Bread that came down from heaven. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for His Righteousness.

The Living Bread

It was a blessing that Moses instructed them and said, “This is the bread which the LORD hath given you to eat.” It was necessary to be reminded of the fact that they did not earn this bread. The LORD had given it to them. Christ Himself said He is the Bread of Life that came from heaven—a wonderful Gift for hungry souls. It is true, by nature, we try to satisfy our hunger with what the world offers or, maybe, with a little religion without the tender fear of God’s name.

It is so necessary to learn that the Living Bread comes from Above, and that He alone can satisfy the hunger of a needy people.

- a) This Bread is free and sufficient for all. The gospel call goes out; sinners are called to leave that which never can satisfy and come to Him. No matter how much they have sinned and how poor they are, they may buy without money and without price.
- b) This Bread is exclusive, which means Christ is the only name given under heaven among men.
- c) This Bread must be used daily; it is not enough to speak about Him, but this Bread must be received by faith.
- d) This Bread is necessary for all. “And Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life: he that cometh to Me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).
- e) This Bread is suited for all, for every class of people. Some cannot eat meat or sweets, but bread is suitable for all.
- f) This Bread is satisfying. We may soon be tired of other food but not of bread.
- g) This Bread is ready after a long process. Christ is a prepared Food: “He was bruised for our iniquities.”

This is the Lord’s provision for a wilderness people in all their strife. “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna” (Revelation 2:17a). This Manna is sufficient for their journey, but when they come to the end of the journey, they will be satisfied with the fatness of His House and will be gladdened with His Presence and will see Him, God’s unspeakable Gift, as He is. May the Lord bless many with such hunger and urgency to have this Bread that they will cry for a crumb from the Master’s table as the Canaanitish woman did. How faithful is the Lord who cares for His people. ◻

(To be continued)

When you come to worship, take heed that you do not come in your own strength, for there is more required in sanctifying the name of God than your strength is able to carry you on in. Therefore, act your faith upon Jesus Christ every time you come to worship God.

—Jeremiah Burroughs



From Our Inheritance

Thanksgiving Day in the Life of Ruth

Rev. J. Spaans (1930-2009)

(Taken from the October 1985 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

“So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man’s name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz” (Ruth 2:17-19).

In these words, we would direct your attention to three thoughts: first, how much Ruth gleaned; second, what she did with it; and third, from where it came.

What a privilege we have when we with our families may come together in God’s house to acknowledge the Lord for the care and blessings bestowed on us in the past season. In Canada the churches this year [1985] will come together on October 14, and in the United States on November 28 for their annual Thanksgiving Day. It is a very special day in which we are especially called to look back in our life but are also called to look up and to look into our heart. We must confess, “Truly, the Lord has been good to us,” and must cry out with Jeremiah of old, “It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithfulness.” This was also the language in the heart of Ruth.

We were privileged to come together on Prayer Day to seek the blessing of the Lord in the coming season, and now the season lies behind us. It was, for many, a season of trials, sorrows, and disappointments. Empty places have come among both young and old who were with us on Prayer Day but who are no longer alive. I hope that the Lord may also give you a Thanksgiving Day in the midst of all your sorrows and afflictions. It would be an eternal wonder. We deserve nothing, but how little do we realize it. Unless the Lord brings us there, we will never come there of ourselves, but with the Lord all things are possible.

For some the season was a disappointment in that the drought continued and the farmers looked in vain for rain. We hope also for you who were troubled by dry weather and a disappointing crop that you may ask the Lord to keep you from your own thoughts and ways. By nature, we are such dangerous creatures. If all goes well, we can speak well of the Lord, but if circumstance go against us, we are inclined to show our enmity—one in a more refined way

and another in a more open way. By nature, we are all the same.

May it please the Lord to humble us also in the way of disappointments, trials, and afflictions. It can be in the heart of God’s people that they have a desire to hold a Thanksgiving Day, but in the midst of the strife and trials of life they cannot see how it is possible to do so. Here in the Book of Ruth we also find one whose ways were through deep waters, but she was enabled to hold Thanksgiving Day, even though it was but a small amount which she had received.

Think about the origin of our Thanksgiving Day. It was begun by our Pilgrim fathers with the desire to acknowledge the Lord for what He had done and to share the blessings which they had received from Him with their fellow men. That, too, we can find in the life of Ruth.

The story of Ruth is a familiar story. We are told: “Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.” Further on we read, “And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.”

This chapter gives us a day of Ruth on the field of Boaz. We could summarize it as the season of Ruth on the field of Boaz. We are told how that first she had a Prayer Day and then was active throughout the day. Think how she came on that field; it was with empty hands, as a poor and wretched creature from the land of Moab. It would be such a wonder if we were brought more often to that low place. It is such a wonder to be made a true beggar. In our deep fall in Adam, we have desired to become a king, but we find here a Ruth who, by grace, was willing and glad to have the privilege of being a beggar.

I hope that there were some on Prayer Day who could feel with Ruth that it is an eternal wonder that we are not consumed, that our place was not yet in hell, but that we might start the new season which already now has run its course. Now we may be together on Thanksgiving Day. If there never is a Prayer Day, there never can be a Thanksgiving Day. Prayer Day must first come in our lives before there can be a Thanksgiving Day. Some think Thanksgiving Day is easier than Prayer Day. If you were to ask this of

God's true people, they would tell you that Thanksgiving Day from our side is just as impossible as Prayer Day because for both we need a praying and thanking High Priest in heaven.

On the field of Boaz, Ruth began the morning with prayer, entering the field with empty hands. How much she gleaned is declared to us in the 17th verse.¹ She gleaned in the field until even, thus, was busy all day, and beat out that which she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. Perhaps we would say, "Is it worthwhile talking about a bushel of barley?" I wish I could take you with me to Ruth and ask her whether it was enough or was too little. She would certainly have exclaimed, "It is much; it is above expectation."

The law as prescribed in Leviticus could never give her a bushel, but in that bushel of barley there is a sermon about the gospel. Perhaps you will say, "Gospel in a bushel of barley?" Yes, in that bushel of barley there is a proclamation of that which the law could never give. The gospel, through Christ Jesus, can give more than we deserve—an abundance full and free, a gift of the Lord. The Lord is a wonder-working God.

Now notice what she did after having received such a blessing. Verse 18 tells us, "And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed." Here we find the true spirit of thanksgiving. She had a desire to share what she had received with her mother-in-law. That was also the desire of our Pilgrim fathers—to acknowledge the Lord and to share with their fellow men.

Here is an important question for each of us in the midst of all that we have received in the past season. We hear out of the Bible what Ruth did with that which she received. I hope, with all that we may still receive, that it may humble our heart, and that it may be our desire to help where help is needed—the church, the school, the mission, the poor, and wherever else there may be a need. The Bible teaches us that it is more blessed to give than to receive. To understand that we have to experience it.

If we may be led by the Holy Spirit to consider what we deserve, also in regard to the past season, then we must ask: "What is our life, and what has it been? What have we said and what have we done?" Then it can be no different than that our hearts are humbled and we cry out, "If Thou,

LORD, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psalm 130:3).

Finally, let us notice from where Ruth's gleanings came. In verse 19 we read, "And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz." It is a blessing when you may have such an instructor as Naomi. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, saw that which Ruth had brought home, and seeing the abundance she was humbled under it. However, before she partook of it with Ruth, she desired to know from where it came. What an important question it was which she put to Ruth!

It is an important question also for us, a question that we all should ask ourselves regarding that which we have received in the past year. From where did it come? Oh, that we might be directed to the Lord, the Giver of all blessings, and be reminded that it is not our doing or our wisdom but that it comes from the Lord. Natural blessings, as well

as spiritual, are all forfeited. That which we receive, we receive only because of the goodness of the Lord. Naomi had a desire to know from where it came. It was a blessing that she asked this question.

Fathers and mothers, speak about the blessings of this past season with your children. Ask your children from where those blessings of food, clothing, home, and all that we may have, come. It was not because "father" was so industrious; it was not because "mother" was so capable, but explain to your children that they are all blessings from the Lord, of which none of us are worthy.

I think that when Ruth gave her answer, it humbled the heart of Naomi before the Lord. She was reminded of that Greater Boaz. What a blessing it was as we can read in verse 20. When Naomi heard that it came from the field of Boaz, she began to explain to Ruth who Boaz was. He was a near kinsman. I am sure that at the moment the bushel of barley was forgotten and she was lifted higher. Oh, to see in Him not only a bushel of barley but enough for time and eternity! They may know that in the Greater Boaz, Jesus Christ, there are blessings possible for this time but also that which is necessary for eternity.

May the Lord remember individuals, families, churches and nation, granting a turning from sin and a turning to His Word. If He draws us, then we shall run after Him. ▢

If there never is a Prayer Day, there never can be a Thanksgiving Day. Prayer Day must first come in our lives before there can be a Thanksgiving Day.

¹An ephah is similar to a bushel in size.

All events are wisely disposed of by the governing care of God's providence. Providence is a servant to God's eternal counsel and purpose. There is no altering the course of providence.

—Matthew Mead



Doctrinal Studies

The Fruits of Holy Baptism (6)

Rev. G. Hoogerland, Kruiningen, the Netherlands

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit

We saw the fruits of Holy Baptism as they are professed and sealed through the Father and the Son. There is also a sealing by the Holy Spirit, and that also is concealed in the sacrament of Holy Baptism.

The Holy Spirit testifies and confirms that He wishes to live and dwell in us. We must not, however, interpret and understand this sentence to say that this will be true for every baptized individual, but the Holy Spirit testifies that He wishes to live in the hearts of deeply depraved persons. This is such an incomprehensibly great wonder. A person who learns to know his own heart as a filthy fountain of iniquity, a stinking source of corruption, a quagmire of sin—it is there that the Holy Spirit wishes to dwell. It is not written that mankind wishes that but that the Spirit wants to do so; that is what the Holy Spirit has taken upon Himself. In the hour of God's good pleasure, He is sent by the Father and the Son from whom He proceeds. Then He establishes His residence, nevermore to leave from there. When that may be believed, what a richly comforting fruit of baptism it is that He also wishes to reside in my heart.

Sanctifying and incorporating

The Holy Spirit comes to sanctify those who are His as members of Christ. The Holy Spirit incorporates them in Christ by means of the faith which He plants in the heart, as is taught to us in Lord's Day 7 of the Heidelberg Catechism. This incorporating into Christ is preceded by the cutting off from Adam. What a wonder if we personally may be cut off from the old Covenant of Works and be incorporated into Christ. Then we are sanctified as members of Christ and essentially separated. That is also the beginning of the life of sanctification.

God's child is, therefore, incorporated into Christ, and becomes a participant of all His benefits. There are two great benefits; in the first place, the washing away of sin and, in the second place, the daily renewing of our lives. These benefits we have in Christ.

The Holy Spirit also incorporates them unto us. That is to say that He immediately applies and makes us a partaker of the benefits. A child may have a right to an inheritance even though he is not aware of it because he is too young. As he grows older, the inheritance is seen but not yet received because the child is not of age. When the child reaches adulthood, he may receive the inheritance and take ownership of it. This is how, step by step, the Holy Spirit applies the inheritance to them which are in Christ.

People of the Lord, the token of baptism is the signature under the testament. Look at the drops of water, then you will see the assurance that you are a partaker of these benefits.

A new obedience

When we read the second part of the Form for Baptism, we read that we are admonished and duty bound to a new obedience. How much wrestling that can cause a living soul. He cannot find that new obedience, he cannot properly cling to a Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, nor trust and love Him. There is so much lacking. It can lead to the anxious question as to whether he has not deceived himself.

Child of the Lord, read once more what is written there "...appropriate unto us that which we have in Christ (therefore not in ourselves), namely...the daily renewing of our lives." The new obedience is, therefore, a benefit out of Christ which is appropriated unto you by the Holy Spirit. It is not because of an effort on your part.

How long will the Holy Spirit dwell in us? Until we shall be placed without spot among the congregation of the elect in life eternal. That is glorification. Sanctification ends in glorification. Then we will be without spot. We will never reach that level here below. Even though the Lord sees His people pure in Christ, they themselves continue to see their stains to their shame and humbling. Then all spots and stains will be removed, and we will live perfectly among the congregation, the gathering of the elect, to serve God in His temple. Then we will be arrayed in fine linen with long white robes, eternally before the throne.

Is there not an inexhaustible fountain of comfort in the sacrament of Holy Baptism? ▣

(This installment marks the end of this series.)

Those blessings are sweetest that are won with prayers and won with thanks.

—Thomas Goodwin



Commentary

The Man Born Blind (8)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

“...a man that is called Jesus...where is He?”

(John 9:11b, 12b).

The healed man has been asked to give testimony. It is a testimony asked due to the wonder that has taken place in his life. His life was one of begging, darkness, and a hopeless future until—a man that is called Jesus made clay and instructed him. The wonder of regeneration reveals itself in the instruction that the soul receives about the way of salvation. Christ prayed to His Father, “Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me; and they have kept Thy word.” Then further He says, “I have given them Thy word.” Here is evidence that the prophetic office of Christ reveals itself in the life of all His people according to the eternal will of the Triune God. The Father gave the elect to Christ, not only to be saved by His blood but also to be instructed by His Word. The Father gave His elect in the hands of a qualified Mediator; this is not only confessed, it is also taught and testified. Let us listen to the testimony of one.

Notice the first thing to which the man born blind points is the work that the Man Jesus has done. He relates what took place. Very clearly it is instruction about his blindness. His eyes had to be anointed with the clay. Dear reader, do you know of such instruction? Have you received instruction about your need for cleansing amid the darkness of your sin and guilt? That is clearly visible in this healed man’s testimony. The Lord Jesus comes to the aid of ruined sinners, not improved sinners. Here is testimony that “a man that is called Jesus” receives value for a blind one. Do you see what the Holy Scriptures do? They reveal the eternal wonder of where the Lord begins. So many are busy to reform their lives; they strive to read more, to pray harder, to be more faithful in church attendance because, then, maybe regeneration will happen. Oh, our blindness!

We can do nothing in our miserable state into which we have fallen but add sin to sin. A ruined child of Adam needs “a man that is called Jesus” to become his aid and rescue. Here in the testimony of the blind man, the wonder of the saving work of sinners is revealed. It is so outside of the blind man; the clay is not his, the man named Jesus is not his, the pool of Siloam is not his. The only thing that he owns in his testimony is the blindness, but God’s work shines as a diamond in this text. Oh, the beauty, the wonder, the inexpressible great wonder when God starts to work in a sinner by simply instructing. As a blind one he receives the instruction from “a man that is called Jesus.”

What shines here as God’s work in this testimony? Faith—God given, God honoring, true saving faith. I read

in this testimony that he believed the instruction of the God-given Instructor. “And I went.” He went as he was; nothing has improved from his side. In true regeneration, my dear reader, faith comes into exercise. Shall we not deny this biblical truth by basing our testimony on what we feel rather than what we believe? If it were left to the man who was blind and his feelings, he never would have gone. Who would feel right to walk as a blind man to a pool to wash clay off his blind eyes?

However, this testimony is of the power of true saving faith—“I went.” The “I” in this text is the miserable sinner who has nothing but blindness of Himself, but the work of God made evident by his faith was brought into exercise. His faith was not put to shame. Never will true faith be put to shame; it will be tried but never put to shame. Listen to his testimony, “and I received my sight.” My words are too poor to write of the wonder—a blind man received sight. Dear reader, have you received sight by faith? Paul writes in Romans 1:16, “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth...”

The testimony has been heard; the testimony is clear, but the chapter and the history of this miracle does not end in verse 11. This man is receiving a life which he never had before. This man in his blindness had strife to become seeing. Now, by the power of God, he has been healed and now the strife of this man is going to become different. It will be the strife of true saving faith about the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It comes to him by the question of those who have heard his testimony, “Where is He?” Now with all that he has received he is made honest, “I know not.”

Here you see very clearly that the Person of the Mediator needs to be revealed to him. The Lord makes room for that by asking the question “Where is He?” This blind man has received his sight, but he misses Jesus. A missing man needs to know Him, who was at first a man to him but needs to be known as the Benefactor of the benefit. His testimony is that he does not know Him. Now the healed man must reveal his ignorance. That is because the truly seeing ones are brought in the school of grace where ignorant ones are taught. There are so many who speak of Jesus and claim Jesus who they do not know nor has been revealed to their souls. In the man born blind the Lord will work to glorify “the works of Him that sent Me” to fulfill the eternal good pleasure of the Triune God: “And this is life eternal, that they may know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). □

(To be continued)



Reflections

Jacob: Remaining Behind at Penuel (2)

Rev. J. den Hoed, Lynden, WA

“And He said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And He said, thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel” (Genesis 32:27&28a).

It is now twenty years ago that a young man stopped by the well of Haran. For twenty years Jacob worked for the man who became his father-in-law. The Lord has been good for Jacob; he now has a family and a large business. More importantly the Lord did not forget him. In Bethel the Lord promised him, “I will be with thee.” (Oh, what a wonder that is when the Lord is with me. There are times that the enemies must be silent, times when I may walk in the fear of the Lord, trusting in Him who may be all and all for body and soul.) For Jacob the Lord was with him, but we do not read that in all that time there was another revelation of the God who was with him.

Now after twenty years the time has come that the Lord will bring him back. That is why Jacob is by the brook Jabbok. His family and all his possessions have passed over the brook. Why is Jacob remaining behind? He is afraid.

Why is Jacob afraid? Does he not have a promise of the Lord? Yes, but he misses faith, that faith which may lean upon a promising God even when the journey ahead is dark and dangerous. His thoughts go back twenty years. He sees a black page in his life

where he deceived a blind father and his brother Esau, and how he fled for his life. Now he heard that his brother was coming with four hundred men. True, he has taken certain steps dividing all into two bands, thinking that when Esau would capture one band perhaps the other would escape.

Why is Jacob remaining behind? Has the Lord not promised, “Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee”? Yes, but there is so much guilt. Guilt that has never been taken away; things are not right between him and the Lord. Perhaps some of you may understand how good the Lord has been good for you. When you look back upon your life, how many undeserved blessings you see. Yes, you may not deny a time when the Lord awakened a hope in your heart, a time that you thought that there also was a Bethel in your life. Still, today, you carry a burden which causes fear in your heart; you stand alone and are afraid to go forward. Often you wonder, “How can I ever cross that river?” Then you long for the application of that precious blood. There seems to be only one cry, “Lord, give me a place behind the blood of my

Saviour. Lord, I long to hear, ‘When I see the blood, I will pass over.’”

Jacob was left alone. Guilt stands open between him and a just God. Oh, Lord, my sins, my sins! Now, the Lord will not leave such a traveler by himself. We read, “and there wrestled a Man with him until the breaking of the day.” That Man is the God of Bethel; that is the ever faithful, good-doing Lord. In that night Jacob may cling to this God. Is there ever a better time for God’s dear children than when in such a night they may cling to the Lord who has come to hold them in His arms? That is the holy One who looks at the sacrifice of his dear Son and whispers, “No more Jacob, that has all been put away, washed in the blood for which thy heart longs.” “And He said, Let Me go, for the day breaketh.” Those people cannot let the Lord go anymore. If they have to let go of the Lord, how can it ever be light in their soul? That is why Jacob said I cannot let Thee go unless Thou bless me. And He said, “What is thy name?” There in that dark night, a man may hold onto his God. There in that dark night he may open his heart unto the

Lord. He looks back and all is sin. He deceived his father, his brother and his uncle. Lord, my name is Jacob; Lord all is sin. There in that night is a man who had to wrestle; in that wrestling heart comes a bowing. Oh, Lord, if Thou wouldst have to cast me

*Where did a holy God find a ransom?
Upon the cross of Golgotha; no more Jacob
because forgiveness flows through that
blood; it is because of that price.
Oh, how dear that blood now becomes.*

away to be forever lost, that would be just and right, but Lord, what would Thou then do with Thy holy name?

In that night these people cry, “Lord, is there yet a way that this awful breach may be healed?” How can such sinners plead for a blessing? Only when the Lord gives that they may have an eye upon Christ. When that God given eye may be upon Christ, then those Jacobs long for God’s answer. They long to hear the Lord say, “No more Jacob; it has all been washed away in the blood of the Saviour. No more Jacob because I have found a ransom for you.” Where did a holy God find a ransom? Upon the cross of Golgotha; no more Jacob because forgiveness flows through that blood; it is because of that price. Oh, how dear that blood now becomes. The sinner now longs for that white stone; he may now long to read his new name in the white stone. Jacob hears his new name out of the mouth of the Lord, “No more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God.” Jacob is preserved because the Lord loved Jacob; all his sin was washed away in the blood of his Saviour. “And he called the name of the

place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.”

Jacob passed back over the brook and he halted upon his thigh. Now a man who has experienced the wonder of forgiveness will be crippled the rest of his life. However, one day those crippled ones may come home; there they will

never be crippled anymore. There they may always be with the Lord who came, sought, and saved “a wretch like me.” Perhaps it is not wrong to now ask you, dear friend, “Where will you spend eternity?” □

(To be continued)

The Life and Dying of Mientje Vrijdag (4)

B. Roest of Scherpenzeel, the Netherlands

(Translated from the Dutch, published by bookstore P. Stuut, Rijssen, the Netherlands, 1977)

Many of God’s children were comforted and strengthened by her. One could trust her with their secrets and cares; she went with them to God. Is that not the truth, children of God, those who have known her, and who are still living? Do I say too much about it? Is this not to the praise of God’s grace in her life which was so richly glorified? She was as eyes to the blind and a support for God’s Church upon earth. A good odor of Christ emanated from her. She always left something behind wherever she had been. She was clear and sincere in doctrine, and that is why she was beloved by God’s upright people. This flowed forth out of the administration of God’s grace. I do not write this to idolize her but to glorify God in and through her.

The free good pleasure of God, the sovereign grace of God was her food and drink. When her Triune covenant God was glorified, her countenance shone. The honor of God weighed heavily upon her heart. Oh, she was a wrestler for home, congregation, country, people, and government. Whenever one of God’s servants came to preach the Word in Rijssen, she had either openly or in secret brought them before the Lord. This was frequently revealed in the testimony about the experiences of her soul. The office bearers were certainly well aware of this.

Oh, servants of the Lord, must we not proclaim this to the honor of God for what He has given us in her? Often times they went up to the pulpit after having been encouraged by her words. She was continually wrestling on her knees in solitude for the needs of the times, oftentimes like Daniel with open windows. Then she poured out her heart in such a manner, with such godly reverence, that all would

be weeping when she said Amen. She also fell on God’s side continually with the guilt of land, people, and church. Then she could so justify God’s dealings.

I still have to tell you that she was among those exceptional people whom the Lord awakened; she wrestled with the many needs before the Lord. She had nightly exercises in prayer. Continuously she was then like Esther in that the golden scepter was extended to her. Yea, that wrestling with God was not an unusual happening with her. Many godly mysteries were revealed unto her. Of the many, I will relate some of them.

Long before wars and destructions have come, like a Jeremiah, she has in a night listened to the great sounds of the war. She was then so upset and shuddering that she lay weeping before the Lord. One time the Lord directed her to Jeremiah 25:15 and especially the end thereof. Read this carefully for yourself; tell me, has that not been fulfilled? Have not all the people of the earth drunk out of this beaker? Has that not been fulfilled in this great World War? Then, again, she was affrighted by the horrors and destructions of the Almighty.

In 1936, she was powerfully given to know of the famine that would come. Has the time of great hunger not come upon our land? In that night she received a covenant promise from her heavenly Father for her family out of Proverbs 27:26&27 which has been fulfilled. Many matters I must pass by which concern people who are still alive and also other matters which must still be fulfilled. Great carefulness is necessary here. □

(To be continued)

Meditation and prayer are like two turtle-doves—if you separate one, the other dies.

Illumination makes us shining lamps; meditation makes us burning lamps.

Meditation imprints and fastens a truth in the mind.

A Christian without meditation is like a soldier without weapons or a workman without tools.

Meditation is like the watering of the seed; it makes the fruits of grace to flourish.

Meditation is the chewing on the truths we have heard.

Let us go into hell by contemplation—that we may not go into hell by condemnation.

—Thomas Watson



Questions & Answers

Questions from Our Readers

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

What is meant by “removal of the candlestick”?

This is often heard in public prayer, sometimes with the addition “the candlestick of *Thy Word*.” That addition is not wrong in itself but is not necessarily scriptural. In Revelation 2:5b, Christ warns Ephesus “*or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove **thy candlestick** out of his place.*” The golden candlestick mentioned in both the Old as well as the New Testament contains a rich symbolism. The candlestick in the temple served to spread light. Therefore, it is not to be put under a bushel (basket) but must be placed where it serves its purpose (Matthew 5: 14&15). In the Old Testament in the Holy place, there was only one candlestick with seven arms or branches. Israel was called to be that light of the world, that city set on a hill. In the new dispensation Christ mentions seven golden candlesticks (Revelation 1:12&13,20).

These candlesticks are *golden*. This points to the purity of the Church. She is not merely a worldly, polluted society or company but a holy, peculiar, washed, justified and sanctified generation by the Spirit and the Word of God. Christ walks in the midst of her. He is in the center; He binds them to Himself, and in Him the Church is bound to one another. Out of His fullness they are all served and maintained by Him. We could ask how it is possible that Christ uses the term gold. Within the outward manifestation of the seven golden candlesticks of the Church, it certainly does not appear to be “all gold that glitters.” Is it not true that there is, alas, so much that looks more like old, rusty steel, brass and iron, rather than fine gold?

The prophet Jeremiah already complained in his days: “*how is the fine gold become dim.*” Yes, that is true. However, in Christ, the Church of God is not what she is in her **appearance** but what she is in her **essence**. Therefore the poet of Psalm 45 sang: “*The King’s daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold.*” It is clear that the purpose of the candlestick was and also is today not *ornamental* but *instrumental*, namely, that it diffuses the light that streams from the countenance of Christ. There are seven of them with seven arms or branches—forty-nine lights—a fullness of light that shines into a dark world.

Notice, moreover, that the King of the Church not only is in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, but (Revelation 2:1) that He **walks** in the midst of them! He does not merely observe from the sideline or from a distance, but His walking points to a continual care and attention to what happens within the Church of God. Zion is His delight in which to dwell, but what is now the danger? When that bond to Christ weakens—not from Christ’s side—but from the Church’s side, when love waxes cold, when that walk with Christ becomes less, when the first love is left, then the threat is made that the candlestick will be removed. It means that the Church ceases to exist as a punishment for backsliding. Then the Spirit of Christ is grieved or quenched.

To say it with the words of Song of Solomon 7:13, the mandrakes no longer give a smell and the gates of Zion no longer show all manner of pleasant fruits. Then it is possible that the structures of church *building* and *doctrines* may still stand, but the life is out of it. Though we may have the form, the essence of godliness is lacking or all together missing. What a fearful thing it is when the candlestick is removed! Are there signs among us that the branches are still being filled with oil of the Spirit, or is it the opposite? Remember, to five of the seven Churches of Asia Minor Christ had to write: *repent!* And to three it was added: “*I have somewhat against thee.*”

What is removed often does not return anymore, and no church or congregation is exempt from danger and warning of being removed. Let it, therefore, be our collective prayer that Christ and His blessed Spirit be not grieved or quenched so that the candlestick remains to give its light and there be a message for lost souls, so long as it is called the precious day of grace and the acceptable time—before the night comes and no man can work. □

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

Knowledge brings us to the door of truth, but meditation opens the door to the house and takes us into all its rooms. This is the way to enter into the secret places of the things of God.

—William Bridge



For Young and Old

A Most Extraordinary Proceeding

(Taken from the October 1934 issue of *The Banner of Truth*)

Certainly, the little lad thought it so. He had never, in the whole of his brief life, heard of such an extraordinary thing before—much less had he witnessed it as he did on that memorable morning.

It must have happened over ninety years ago. The boy, whose name was William, was on a visit to his great-uncle Ferdinand who lived in the Sussex village of Ringmer. He was spoken of as “Uncle Fardy.” William always enjoyed these visits, not only because of the holiday it entailed but, also, because of Uncle Fardy’s companionship, he being a cheerful, old gentleman with a youthful heart which appealed to William in no small degree.

There was, however, a certain mystery about old Uncle Fardy which aroused William’s curiosity. It was in this wise. The old gentleman had a private room, a kind of study, and no one ever thought of entering it without first knocking on the door. His room was over the front door of the house, and every morning—immediately after breakfast—Uncle Fardy made his way to his room and locked himself in. It was understood that on no account was he to be disturbed while in his study during that half-hour or so after breakfast.

William, like most boys (to say nothing of the girls) was endowed with a fair supply of curiosity, and as the days passed, he felt increasingly curious to know what Uncle Fardy did every morning after breakfast in the little room over the front door.

As William pondered the mystery, it seemed to deepen. It must indeed be something altogether out of the ordinary, for why did the old gentleman always lock himself in? The boy was determined to solve the mystery, and where there’s a will, there’s a way—and so it proved in the present instance.

Close to the front door there grew a fine pear tree, and William after much consideration decided to climb it and from its higher branches to look through the window directly into the study.

Watching for an opportunity one morning, William climbed the tree and stretching forward he obtained an excellent view of what was going on in Uncle Fardy’s study. He saw something very different from what he expected.

There was old Uncle Fardy with his head bent over a table, doing—what do you think?

He was reading a Bible on a weekday! That, in William’s eyes, was a most extraordinary proceeding. Why, thought William, the Bible is a Sunday book, and whoever would think of reading it on a week-day! In the home where William lived the Bible was never looked at excepting on a Sunday and not very much then. Yet, here was Uncle Fardy reading the Bible as though he loved doing it, and so he did. If the old gentleman had been asked why he read the Bible on a weekday, he possibly would have replied that he needed food for his soul as much as he did for his body, for did not God Himself say, “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Bishop Jewell, who lived in Reformation times, thus speaks of the Bible: “The Word of God is the water of life—the more ye lave it forth, the fresher it runneth. It is the fire of God’s glory—the more ye blow it, the clearer it burneth. It is the corn of the Lord’s field—the better ye grind it, the more it yieldeth. It is the bread of heaven—the more it is broken and given forth, the more it remaineth. It is the sword of the Spirit—the more it is scoured, the brighter it shineth.”

If this is so, and it certainly is, then—

*Study it carefully,
Think of it prayerfully;
Deep in thy heart let its oracles dwell;
Slight not its history;
Ponder its mystery;
None can e’er prize it too fondly or well.*

*Divine Instructor, gracious Lord!
Be Thou for ever near;
Teach me to love Thy sacred Word,
And view my Saviour there.*

I believe old Uncle Fardy went to heaven many years ago. William, too, has followed him, but he often related the incident to his son, who now passes it on to our readers.

—W.S.M. □

The best course to prevent falling into the pit is to keep at the greatest distance. He who will be so bold as to attempt to dance upon the brink of the pit may find by woeful experience that it is a righteous thing with God that he should fall into the pit! Sin is a plague, yes, the greatest and most infectious plague in the world; yet, ah! how few are there that tremble at it, that keep at a distance from it!

—Thomas Brooks



Current Events

Christian Clinics Continue Post-Abortion Care in States with Bans

Some women who travel out of state for the procedure still rely on local pro-life pregnancy centers for support in the aftermath. “We’ve seen an increase in women coming back with a lot of needs—physical, emotional, and spiritual,” said the vice president of a pro-life agency. Thirteen states have effectively banned abortion, prompting some companies to begin paying travel for employees for out-of-state abortions. Among those companies are Starbucks, Amazon, Disney, and Meta (Facebook). The California governor’s reelection campaign purchased billboard space in other conservative states this month inviting women to travel to California for abortions! Pro-lifers are asking whether the situation opens a need for a new ministry. There is definitely a need for more healthcare as abortion clinics are not following up with out-of-state patients for aftercare.

—ChristianityToday.com

Killing of Christians at Epidemic Levels in Nigeria

Suspected Fulani herdsmen killed two Christians in Plateau state on September 25, a day after Islamic State terrorists allegedly killed two others in the city of Kano. These killings followed a September 18 bomb attack on a Christian-owned business in Taraba state. Three Christians were in the shop at the time, and although injured and hospitalized, no life was lost in this incident which was the fourth such attack in eight months. Many more incidents and deaths have occurred in the past months. According to the Open Doors’ 2022 World Watch List report, Nigeria led the world in Christians killed for their faith last year at 4,650, up from 3,530 the previous year.

—ChristianToday.com

Taliban Behead Afghan Christian

Despite always saying otherwise the Taliban have shown their true colors. The International Christian Concern organization reported on a video from Afghanistan that showed the brutal beheading of a Christian man by the Taliban. Words cannot express how sickening and evil this was. The report said, “We expect this type of persecution to continue as the Taliban show their true despicable colors.... Please keep our brothers and sisters in Afghanistan and throughout

the Middle East in prayer that they would courageously share their faith. Pray also for their oppressors—radical Muslims—that they would trust in Jesus. With your help, we continue to fight for and rescue Christians in Afghanistan and beyond.”

—Persecution.org

Church in Indonesia Attacked

Many have condemned an attack on a Pentecostal church in Indonesia on October 7. The attack was carried out by an unknown person. Police have been asked to immediately investigate this terror act so as not to cause fear and unrest among the people of the city, especially Christians. The perpetrator came to the church by motorbike. He opened the gate and entered the courtyard while shouting. He broke the glass and the headlight of the pastor’s car; he kicked the trash can and broke the window of the pastor’s residence before fleeing. Police are investigating.

—Persecution.org

Pastor and Wife in Ukraine Abducted

On September 23 the pastor of an Evangelical church in Mariupol and his wife were taken away from their home by men in military uniform and masks. There are growing concerns for them as all attempts to find out where they are being held have failed. It is thought they have been charged with “participating in extremist activities.” Authorities issued a warrant to search the church building for extremist literature. This area has been controlled by the Russian-backed separatists, and Russian forces gained full control of the city in May. Ukrainian officials reported that about 22,000 civilians had been killed during the siege. As detailed in this article, other churches in Ukraine have been having similar difficulties with the Russian invaders. This pastor’s church continued to meet until one Sunday in September when military officials asked the church to open their prayer house for use in organizing a referendum on the region becoming part of Russia. Church members refused and authorities came during the week and sealed up the prayer house. Church members re-opened the prayer house the following Sunday for their regular meeting, but army officers interrupted the service. The church building now has also been confiscated by the Russian authorities.

—ChurchInChains.ie

“For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee” (1 Chronicles 29:9-20).

Then the people rejoiced, for that they offered willingly, because with perfect heart they offered willingly to the LORD: and David the king also rejoiced with great joy. Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be Thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is Thine; Thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and Thou art exalted as head above all. Both riches and honour come of Thee, and Thou reignest over all; and in Thine hand is power and might; and in Thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. Now therefore, our God, we thank Thee, and praise Thy glorious name. But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee. For we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners, as were all our fathers: our days on the earth are as a shadow, and

there is none abiding. O LORD our God, all this store that we have prepared to build Thee an house for Thine holy name cometh of Thine hand, and is all Thine own. I know also, my God, that Thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness. As for me, in the uprightness of mine heart I have willingly offered all these things: and now have I seen with joy Thy people, which are present here, to offer willingly unto Thee. O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of Thy people, and prepare their heart unto Thee: And give unto Solomon my son a perfect heart, to keep Thy commandments, Thy testimonies, and Thy statutes, and to do all these things, and to build the palace, for the which I have made provision. And David said to all the congregation, Now bless the LORD your God. And all the congregation blessed the LORD God of their fathers, and bowed down their heads, and worshipped the LORD, and the king.



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (35)

Article XXXI: Of the Ministers, Elders, and Deacons *(continued)*

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

Last time something was written about the different methods of elections which can be used in the churches. In such elections the church members and the consistory have different responsibilities.

The consistory especially has a very responsible task, not only before the congregation but also before the Lord. Their task is to put up candidates for the offices. They must be sure, as far as this is possible for man, that those who are nominated as candidates satisfy the conditions which are given us in God's Word. We must remember that the persons nominated can form the consistory. Perfect people are not found on earth, and also the members of the consistory are sinners, yet that which is necessary to be known according to the Word has to be there in beginning. The Apostle Paul wrote about it to Timothy, as he also had to install office bearers in the congregations. Calvin and other authors have written about it; he emphasized that unfit office bearers are an offense to the Lord and do spiritual harm to the congregation.

Probably among the office bearers there are some who think, "I am afraid this is written about me." In this statement we are not being personal; however, it is not so bad when we feel ourselves as unfit. It does not give a good feeling inside, but it will drive us out to the great Office Bearer, Jesus Christ, who has promised to give wisdom also in this when we really need it.

It is often very difficult to judge a person, to know whether or not he is fit for office. Those who are faithful members of the church can be unfit for office. Some are not able to rule over their own families, or they are not a priest in their own family. There can also be members who are under silent censure, which is not known to the members but only to the consistory. Therefore, it is easy to understand that it would not be right for the congregation to make a free choice from all the members, but that the leading of the consistory is necessary. They in turn may ask advice of their moderator; this advice must

be asked when a minister is to be called. The moderator will also sign the call letter, which represents the approval of the Classis. As we have said before, all such elections will be of no value if not preceded and ended with prayer.

We know that there are differences in the offices of minister, elder, and deacon, but I now want to emphasize the duration of the office. A minister has his office for life, providing he does not lose it under special circumstances. A minister may not leave his office unless there are very special and legal reasons, and these must be judged by the Classis. According to God's Word a minister remains in this service to the end of his life.

This is not the same for elders and deacons. According to Article 27 of the Church Order, the elders and deacons serve only two years, and every year half of the consistory must retire from office. In general, this is not practiced in our congregations because of the lack of office bearers. Voetius thought that three or four years of service would be more suitable since two years is too short to become well acquainted with ecclesiastical matters. When we read the explanation of the Church Order written by Rev. de Gier, several reasons are given why periodic retirement should take place. Scripture does not stipulate the term of office and also gives a possibility of changing offices. It can be necessary to prevent hierarchy and to bring forward some of the gifts and abilities which are hidden in the congregation. Likewise, as Rev. de Gier mentions, incompetent officers can be removed. It can also be that family circumstances make it necessary for others to serve.

It is self-evident that in days of war or disaster, the elections may be postponed for some time. Above all, we must remember that Christ gives the office and takes it again according to His pleasure; He rules also over these things. Why is a minister chosen for life? Usually, he moves from one congregation to another, while elders and deacons remain in one

congregation. It was for this reason that our fathers have said that in order to prevent hierarchy and ambition of power, elders and deacons should regularly resign. I must say that our fathers had good reasons for this decision; however, we also know how difficult it is to form a consistory. Many people are not available for church work, being too busy with their own business. Many cannot be nominated because they prefer the idols in their homes above the service of the Lord. There is also another serious reason, and it is that we find so little spiritual life in our days, which is necessary for the office. None may be unconverted according to God's Word, but the

practice is so different. Where is the grace of former days? It should bring us upon our knees before the Lord, begging that He might remember us also in this respect and that His Spirit might work powerfully among us.

Actually, the consistory should have more experience than the minister, since they are to listen to the preaching whether it is sound and according to God's Word. These offices are given to the church by Christ, and we hope that the great Office Bearer may remember us in mercy. This would be to the glory of His name and to the welfare of His church.



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Samson (2)

(Based on Judges 14)

Samson was going to get married! Yes, much time had passed. Samson was now no longer a baby but a young man. You will remember that the angel had told his mother that he could never cut his hair because he was to be a special kind of person, called a Nazarite, unto the Lord. Since he had obeyed and had left his hair long, God had blessed him and made him very strong.

Now Samson had found a girl that he wanted to marry, but there was one big problem. She was not an Israelite. Worse than that, she was a Philistine, an enemy of the Israelites. At that time, the Philistines were forcing the Israelites to obey them. Manoah and his wife tried very hard to change Samson's mind. "Why do you want to marry her?" they asked. "There are so many Israelite girls. Aren't there any of them that please you?"

Samson refused to listen to his parents' advice. "No," he said. "She's the girl I want. I want you to get her for me!"

Samson, Samson! One day you will regret that you did not listen to your parents. This girl is not an Israelite, and neither does she believe in your God. That can only cause trouble. However, God had a purpose in allowing Samson to marry this Philistine girl; this marriage was in His plans for Israel's deliverance from the Philistines. Manoah and his wife could not change Samson's mind, so they prepared for the big wedding.

One day, as he went to visit the girl, a young lion in the field roared ferociously at Samson. Then the Lord poured His Spirit on Samson and made him very strong. Samson grabbed the lion and ripped him apart like a piece of paper. He did that with his bare hands, but he did not tell anyone about it, not even his parents. The day of the wedding came. On the way to the wedding, Samson walked past the place where he had ripped apart the lion. Was it still lying there? He looked, and—sure enough, there it was, but there also was something else. A swarm of bees was buzzing around the honey they had left in the dead lion. Samson scooped up some honey with his hand. Was it ever delicious! The honey was so good that he kept eating it, and he even brought some to his parents, but, again, he told no one where he had found it.

At the wedding, the Philistines gave Samson thirty companions. Then he had an idea. "I have a riddle for you," Samson told them. "If you can answer it within seven days," for that is how long their weddings lasted, "I will give you thirty sheets and thirty change of clothes. If you cannot guess it, then you will have to give me thirty sheets and thirty change of clothes!"

"Tell us!" his companions cried. "Tell us the riddle!"

"Here it is," Samson said. "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness."

The companions were stunned. They didn't know what to say. That certainly was a strange riddle. The friends talked together, talked to others, and thought, day after day. Finally, the third day came, and they still had not thought of an answer, but they did not want to lose the game. Then they had a mean idea. They went to ask Samson's wife to find out the answer. "Find out the answer, and then tell it to us," they told her. "If you don't, we will burn you and burn your father's house down, too!" What horrible men they were. How wrong it is to get so upset over a game.

Samson's wife went to him. She cried, and begged, and said, "You don't love me! You gave your friends a riddle and didn't even tell me the answer, and I'm your wife!"

Samson said, "I didn't even tell it to my mother and father. Why should I tell it to you?"

His wife just cried all the harder. "You don't love me! You don't love me!" she sobbed.

Finally, Samson became tired of her crying. "Okay, okay, I will tell you." So, Samson told her, but then—the deceitful girl immediately hurried off to tell her friends.

The last day of the wedding came, and Samson asked, "Well, have you men guessed the answer to my riddle?"

"Yes, we have," they smiled. "Now you have to give each of us sheets and clothes. The answer is, 'What is sweeter than honey? and what is stronger than a lion?' Is that the correct answer?"

Samson knew he had been tricked. He knew who had told them the answer. Angrily he cried, "If you hadn't asked my wife, you wouldn't have found out the answer."

"Don't forget, Samson," the men sneered as he stormed angrily out the door. "Now you have to give us the sheets and clothes. Don't forget!"

Again, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson and made him very strong. The Lord brought him into the camp of the Philistines, and there he killed thirty men. He took the spoils and clothes of those men and brought them to the thirty friends who were waiting. Then, angrily, he went home.

Samson was blessed by the Lord with great strength, and, at times, he was able to use that strength to take vengeance on the Philistines who were oppressing his people. However, anger can also be very sinful. The Bible tells us that God is angry with the wicked every day; therefore, we in our lives must guard against all kinds of sin, including anger, which often leads to other sins. Our prayer must always be that the Lord will keep us from angry thoughts, words, and deeds, and that for Jesus' sake He will forgive those sins which we do commit.



Bible Quiz

Mornings

Dear Boys and Girls,

Bradley rested his chin on his hand and opened the newspaper that was lying on Grandpa's table. He might as well take a look at it while he waited for Grandma. Grandma was putting some sandwiches in his knapsack for his campout in the backyard. Grandma and Grandpa had a large yard set back from the road. A few enormous maple trees cast their shadows over the hillside, and crumbling stone walls bordered the edge. Bradley had pitched his small tent near the biggest tree, furthest from the house. He was going to sleep there all night, just he and Grandpa's dog Blake. It would be such fun!

Bradley glanced over the headlines. Earthquake in China, flooding in Pakistan, landslide in Uganda, war in Ukraine, drought in Utah, death of the queen of England, Covid infection numbers rise...Bradley's face grew sober. "Grandpa?" he questioned. "Does all this happen in just one day?"

Grandpa nodded. "Yes, and more," he said. "There are shootings and robberies and fires and kidnappings and accidents and drug and alcohol problems that don't even make it into the newspaper. And that is daily—every day..."

Bradley heaved a sigh. The world seemed full of unrest and turmoil, full of sad and wrong things.

Was anyone safe in this world? Who, really, could be free from fears, troubles, and calamities in this world?

Grandma appeared in the doorway with the knapsack and a bottle of water. She patted Blake on the head and gave Bradley a hug. "Have a good campout, you two," she smiled.

Boy and dog were soon settled in the tent. Bradley put his hands behind his head and looked up through the screened portions of the tent. Far, far above, tiny bright stars twinkled. His thoughts turned back to the newspaper, and he frowned. Looking at the peacefully shining stars in the enormous black expanse above, it was hard to imagine that the world was in such turmoil. How could one grow up and survive in such a wicked, difficult, bad world? It gave Bradley a lump in his throat and a funny jumpy feeling in his stomach. He wished he hadn't looked at the newspaper. It sort of made one feel gloomy. Still, the news was all true. It couldn't really be ignored. What would his future be like? Would the world be even more dark with troubles when he was all grown up?

The crickets began their steady chorus, "Ch-ch-chrrrr-ch-ch-chrrrr-ch-ch-chrrrr..." Slowly, Bradley's eyes closed, and his breathing deepened. Blake rested his head on his paws and dropped off to sleep too. He knew nothing of world troubles.

When Bradley opened his eyes the next morning, he wondered why he had awakened before daylight. The sun was not up yet, but something was telling him it was morning. He lay quietly for a moment, and then he knew. It was the birds! Bradley listened in awe. Were there so many birds in Grandpa's backyard? How many types were singing, creating one beautiful big chorus to welcome the morning? Bradley heard tweets and trills, rollicking melodies and shrill whistles, happy twitters and joyous warbling. He lay perfectly still, just listening. It was beautiful. It was...breath-taking!

How differently Bradley felt while listening to the birds in comparison to when he saw all the awful headlines in the news. The world was a very gloomy place full of sin and tragedies, yes, yet...yet the Lord, who created the birds and gave them their voices—the Lord who created stars and crickets, too, was above it all. God knew of every disaster and war and death in the world, and He always would. Amidst turmoil and misery, suffering and pain, God still gave blessings, gifts, care, and mercies. Was it any wonder that the birds awoke to praise Him?

Because of sin, this whole world could have been a place without any joy. All people could be sick, and there could have been no Bible at all. That is, actually, what all people deserve. No one deserves a single

mercy, yet they are there. Every morning, when we awaken, we are given another day. Every Sunday, we are given another message from God's Word. Every school day, we have teachers, friends, and things to learn, and on other days, we have family. We may play, and smile, and eat, and celebrate when we have a birthday. That is all a wonder.

Why do we receive these things in the midst of a perishing, suffering world? That is because God is patient. We receive much more than we deserve. We even receive the message from His Word that it is still possible to be saved.

How do you use these mercies? Do you take them for granted? It is so easy to do that. It is so easy to forget that we deserve nothing, not even a new morning. What do you do with every new morning? Perhaps you are up early, eagerly readying yourself for your day at school, and you forget your morning prayer. Maybe you have a hard time getting out of bed, and you no longer have time to have a proper breakfast that ends with the reading of the Bible.

The next time you wake up in the morning, think of it this way—mornings are an opportunity to begin the day with prayer. A new day has begun...how will YOU begin it? A new day has begun...WHY has God still allowed that to happen? A new day has begun...it is yet one more day to seek the Lord!

Bradley wished he hadn't looked at all the bad news, and in the same way, we often do not want to think about what is real and true. We would rather ignore serious messages which warn us that one day we must die, and we would rather not think about the fact that we must be prepared. We might even wish we did not know so much about sin and how it grieves and angers God. If we did not know, we could not be bothered with it and could just be happy. At least, often, we THINK that it would make us happier if we could forget all serious things.

Would it? What does the Bible tell us about being happy? "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth"; "Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God"; "Whoso trusteth in the LORD, happy is he." That is a different happiness, is it not? That is REAL happiness.

These people can have many, many troubles, in life, in the world, in their heart, but they have something to hold on to: they will never be forsaken by God. Although their life may not be easy, and God may have to correct them, they will not be punished as their sin deserves to be. Then they would long ago have been in hell, but the Lord's mercy keeps them. They sing, "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is Thy faithful-

ness." In those beautiful mornings when the birds sing so clearly, they sometimes see the Lord's great kindness and goodness.

Boys and girls, do you pray every morning, when it is a new day? It is another day of grace—it is not YET too late!

* * * * *

Fill in the blanks.

1. It is of the Lord's _____ that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. (Lamentations 3)

2. And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first _____. (Genesis 1)

3. And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the _____ of the city. (Genesis 19)

4. And Abraham rose up early in the morning, and saddled his ass, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and _____ the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up, and went unto the place of which God had told him. (Genesis 22)

5. And they rose up betimes in the morning, and sware one to another: and Isaac sent them away, and they departed from him in _____. (Genesis 26)

6. And Moses stretched forth his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to his strength when the morning appeared; and the Egyptians fled against it; and the LORD _____ the Egyptians in the midst of the sea. (Exodus 14)

7. And in the morning, then ye shall see the glory of the LORD; for that he heareth your _____ against the LORD: and what are we, that ye murmur against us? (Exodus 16)

8. And it came to pass, that at even the quails came up, and covered the camp: and in the morning the _____ lay round about the host. (Exodus 16)

9. Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there _____ not one of them that was not gone over Jordan. (2 Samuel 17)

10. And he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the _____ grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain. (2 Samuel 23)

11. For when David was up in the morning, the word of the LORD came unto the prophet _____, David's seer. (2 Samuel 24)

12. So the LORD sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the time appointed: and there died of the people from Dan even to Beersheba _____ thousand men. (2 Samuel 24)

13. In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike _____. (Ecclesiastes 11)

14. And when I rose in the _____ to give my child suck, behold, it was dead: but when I had considered it in the morning, behold, it was not my son, which I did bear. (1 Kings 3)

15. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the _____; and he drank of the brook. (1 Kings 17)

16. Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days; and caused the dayspring to know his _____; (Job 38)

17. Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry _____: and he shall hear my voice. (Psalm 55)

18. But I will sing of Thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of Thy mercy in the morning: for Thou hast been my _____ and refuge in the day of my trouble. (Psalm 59)

19. But unto Thee have I cried, O LORD; and in the morning shall my _____ prevent Thee. (Psalm 88)

For the Older Children

20. What do the psalmists see in the morning? (Psalm 92:2 & 143:8) _____

21. What does the psalmist compare his waiting for the Lord to? (Psalm 130:6) _____

22. Complete these sentences found in Isaiah by unscrambling the letters.

"Be Thou their _____ (mar) every morning."

"Then shall thy _____ (hilgt) break forth as the morning."

For the Younger Children

Choose an answer from the box below.

23. Who rose up before day, in the morning, to pray? _____

24. What is heard in the morning? _____

25. Where did the women go very early in the morning? _____

26. Where did the people come early in the morning to hear Jesus? _____

27. Where did Jesus stand when the morning had come? _____

Shore (John 21:4)
Cockcrowing (Mark 13:35)
Jesus (Mark 1:35)
Temple (Luke 21:38, John 8:2)
Sepulchre (Mark 16:2)

Answers to October's "Bears" quiz:

1. Sheep
2. Lamb
3. Lion
4. Bear
5. Smote
6. Beard
7. Philistines
8. Paws
9. Ribs Daniel 7:5
10. Beast Hosea 13:8
11. Ox Isaiah 11:7
12. Doves Isaiah 59:11
13. Whelps 2 Samuel 17:8
14. Hand Amos 5:19
15. 2 Kings 2:24
16. Proverbs 17:12
17. Proverbs 28:15

Please send your answers to the
address shown below:

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

Answers to previous quizzes were received in September from:

Britni Blom 35
Tiffany Blom 10
Carly Brouwer (2) 16
Derek Brouwer (2) 35
Thomas Brouwer (2) 34
Jaxon DeKorne 10
Juliette DeKorne 11
Sarina Den Bok (4) 28
Lindsey Driesse 24
Geraldyn Engelen 24
Trevor Engelen 25
Kyal Grisnich 19
Kynlee Grisnich 4
Logan Grisnich 21
Taryn Grisnich 17
Anthony Knibbe 15
Ashley Knibbe 28
Jarynne Knibbe 25
Meredy Knibbe 7
Whitney Knibbe 27
Jakayla Loedeman (2) 3
Abraham Mol 5
Lydia Mol 28
Teddy Mol 30
John Murphy (2) 29
Andrew Murphy (2) 9

Blake Pannekoek (2) 19
Lauren Pannekoek (2) 31
Colin Ten Hove 27
Hannah-Jo Ten Hove 14
Almonzo Timmer 2
Hunter Timmer 27
Kadin Timmer 27
Laurencia Timmer 20
Sierra Timmer 25
Wyatt Timmer 25
Gerard Van Deuveren 3
Maurice Van Garderen (2) 33
Emmalyn Van Garderen (2) 35
Aubrey Vanden Berg 17
Heidi Vandenberg 32
Kristen Vandenberg 19
Caleb Vogelaar 15
Matthew Vogelaar 17
Jayden Weeda 23

**4 Bibles were sent to Bolivia
this month. The total is now 614—
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.



Letters to My Young Readers

Welcome to our new members:
Paris Krygsman

Love,
Aunt LenaBeth



Paris Krygsman

It is certainly true that Uncle Garret made the quiz and answered the letters for many, many years, Paris. Your parents probably learned so much doing the quiz during those years. I hope you will enjoy doing the quizzes with us. Do you have a favorite subject at school? Do you have chores on the farm? What do you like to paint most? You have many enjoyable hobbies. Do you have a favorite book or story you like to read? One of my favorite stories as a child was "Simple Gerrit" in the book *What a Wonder!*

Cease to pray and you will begin to sin.

WILLIAM GURNALL

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Extended:

To Rev. P. van Ruitenburg, Chilliwack, British Columbia, by the congregation of Rotterdam, Sionkerk (Alexanderpolder), the Netherlands.

To Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, by the congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta.

Declined:

By Rev. H. de Leeuw of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, to the congregation of Grand Rapids (Covell), Michigan.

By Rev. B. Labee of Veenendaal, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

By Rev. P. van Ruitenburg, Chilliwack, British Columbia, to the congregation of Rotterdam, Sionkerk (Alexanderpolder), the Netherlands.

■ Obituaries

FEYTER, George G. – Age 94, October 7, 2022; Picture Butte, Alberta; Wife – Martina (nee Spaans); Children – Frans & Sienke, Johanna & Clarence Arnoldussen, Andrew & Jane, Peter & Andrea, George & Andrea, James & Irene; 26 grandchildren, 70 great-grandchildren, 5 great-great-grandchildren; predeceased by first wife Nellie (nee Wisse), son Adrian, two grandsons, and daughter-in-law. (Rev. E.C. Adams, Romans 6:23.)

HEIKOOP, Anna (nee Rijken) – Age 91, September 24, 2022; Grimsby, Ontario; Husband – Samuel (deceased); Children – Rick & Rita Brown, Herman & Anne, Dick; 4 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren; Sisters-in-law – Cornelia & Truus; predeceased by her nine siblings. (Rev. A.H. Verhoef, Isaiah 55:6.)

NICHOLS, Nellie Ann (Ann, nee Everett) – Age 90, September 26, 2022; Fond du Lac, Wisconsin; Granddaughter and friend – Valarie & Greg White-Harpold, 2 great-grandchildren; Sister-in-law – Lillian Everett; predeceased by 2 siblings and son David.

■ Post-High School Young Adults Winter Conference

January 6&7, 2023

The Timothy Youth Group of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, is planning the annual winter conference for January 6&7, 2023. All post-high school young adults are invited. For more information and to sign up, please visit www.timothygroupnrc.org (password: January2023).

■ Positions Available at Sunset Manor, Chilliwack, BC

The Sunset Manor Board is seeking applicants (male or female) for the position of **care home administrator**. The administrator will be responsible for operations of Sunset Manor including staff, residents, and related functions. The successful candidate will have the ability to lead a multi-disciplinary team to ensure consistent quality and care. Professional RN designation or equivalent is a definite asset. The position is full-time but there is some flexibility.

We are also seeking applicants for **nursing** (RN & LPN) and **care-aide** positions. Care-aide training is available. Flexible shifts can be accommodated.

If you would be interested in joining the Sunset Manor team, please contact:

Neil Stam at 604-316-4182 or
castam71@outlook.com

Jake Klaassen at 604-819-3949 or
jklaassen@jakesconstruction.ca

You contribute nothing to your salvation except the sin that made it necessary. —Jonathan Edwards

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on November 3, 2022, our dear parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents,

Marinus & Ann Vanden Hoek

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

They were united in marriage by the late Rev. Verhoef with the following text: *"LORD, be Thou my helper"* (Psalm 30:10b).

Box 2, Nobleford, AB T0L 1S0

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on November 10, 2022, our dear parents, and grandparents,

Andrew & Jan VanderMale

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in His temple" (Psalm 27:4).

1015 White Pine Dr. SW,
Grand Rapids, MI 49534

50th Wedding Anniversary

The Lord willing, on November 17, 2022, our dear parents, and grandparents,

Jerald & Trudy Fluit

hope to commemorate their 50th wedding anniversary.

"The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms" (Deuteronomy 33:27a).

1205 3 Mile Rd. NW
Walker, MI 49544

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

■ The Banner of Truth in Audio Format

Monthly copies of the articles 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 make 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.

Minutes of Classis Midwest Summer 2022 Meeting (Summary)

Prayer Service for Classis Midwest Summer 2022

On the evening of July 19, 2022, Rev. H. Hofman of Grand Rapids (Beckwith) led the prayer service at the calling church of Rock Valley, Iowa, for the Classis meeting to be held the following day. The service was opened with singing Psalter 349:1,3&4, reading 1 Kings 18:20-46, and with prayer. The text was from 1 Kings 18:41-43. The theme was The Sound of the Abundance of Rain with the following points: 1) Ahab and that sound; 2) Elijah and that sound; 3) Elijah's servant and that sound; 4) The congregation and that sound.

Article 1—Opening

The Classis meeting convened on Wednesday, July 20, at 8:30 A.M. in the Rock Valley, Iowa church. On behalf of the calling church, Rev. J.J. Witvoet opened the meeting with the singing of Psalter 417:1-3, the reading of Matthew 10:16-28, and with prayer. A warm welcome was extended to all delegates, office bearers, theological students and friends present. Mention was made that many times this is called a special meeting of Classis since it is a special and solemn occasion for which we are together today when a candidate has completed his — studies in the theological school and may be examined.

Rev. J.J. Witvoet opened with a few thoughts regarding the words read. We also read of a special day when the Lord Jesus Christ called His disciples together. He is ready to send them out. It is striking when we see the instructive nature of His words, and how encouraging He is. He makes His disciples aware of what to expect. He spoke briefly on verse 27 which is especially instructive. "What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye in the light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops." With a few words on this verse, he declared our special Classic meeting open for business.

Article 2&3—Credentials & Moderamen

Credentials from 10 congregations; 19 delegates were approved;

President – Rev. H. Hofman (by rotation)

Vice President – Rev. J.J. Witvoet (by rotation)

Clerk – Elder L. Teunissen (by appointment)

Treasurer – Elder D. Fluit (by majority vote)

Article 4—Minutes

The minutes of our last meeting held in Grand Rapids (Covell), Michigan, on April 6, 2022, which everyone had received prior to this meeting, were approved and signed.

Article 7—Examination of Candidate J. Slingerland

The President spoke a few words considering the solemn occasion this was that after four years and a successful completion of theological studies, we may examine Candidate J. Slingerland for the ministry.

A. The following documents were reviewed and examined. Copies of these documents will be attached to these minutes. All were found to be in good order:

1. The Certificate of Membership from the NRC Beckwith congregation;
2. The Diploma from the NRC Theological School dated June 8, 2022;
3. The letter from the calling church of NRC Corsica, South Dakota, dated June 13, 2022;
4. The acceptance letter of the candidate in which he accepts the call to the NRC Corsica, South Dakota congregation as defined in their letter dated June 22, 2022.

B. The examination of Candidate J. Slingerland by his three instructors was conducted at the table in the front of the church. All delegates, deputies, and visitors were seated in the audience. The examination had three parts:

1. *Dogmatics* and *Homiletics* by Rev. C. Vogelaar
2. *Exegesis* and *Polemics (Pastoral Care)* by Rev. P. van Ruitenburg
3. Church History and Church Order by both Rev. C. Vogelaar and Rev. P. van Ruitenburg, respectively, on behalf of Rev. A.H. Verhoef

This concluded the examination of Candidate J. Slingerland.

C. Candidate J. Slingerland preached a trial sermon in the presence of delegates, deputies, and visitors. From the pulpit he began with prayer and read his text from John 3:29: "He that hath the bride is the

Bridegroom: but the friend of the Bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the Bridegroom's voice: this my joy therefore is fulfilled." His theme was "Christ the Bridegroom" with three main thoughts: 1) The sufficiency of the Bridegroom; 2) Laboring for the Bridegroom; 3) Rejoicing in the Bridegroom. Following these three main thoughts, he expounded on this text.

Article 8—Deliberation by Classis

The discussion pertaining to the examination and trial sermon of Candidate J. Slingerland was done in a closed meeting and consisted of three parts:

A. Advice was given by the Deputies of Article 49. Classis East was represented by Rev. C. Vogelaar and Classis Far West by Rev. P. van Ruitenburg and Rev. H.D. den Hollander. With gladness they gave a positive report and advised that the candidate be admitted.

B. Next, after discussing the sermon and the preaching, the classis delegates voiced their opinions which indicated their support also.

C. Following the discussion there was a vote by ballot which by majority gave classical approval on Candidate J. Slingerland's examination. This decision gave the candidate permission to be ordained in his first congregation of NRC Corsica, South Dakota.

D. The Credential of Candidate for the Ministry was signed by the president, the clerk and the candidate. Copies were prepared as was appropriate.

Rev. H. Hofman announced this to Candidate J. Slingerland on his return to the meeting. He requested to sing Psalter 30:1.

Article 9—Discussion Regarding Ordination Plans

Plans for the ordination were discussed. The date was established to be Wednesday, August 24, with the ordination service at 2:00 P.M. and the inaugural service at 7:00 P.M., both to be held in the Corsica church.

Article 12—Church Visitation

Rev. H. Hofman and Rev. J.J. Witvoet agreed to develop a schedule for Church Visitation which is to be completed by and reported on at our next Spring meeting.

Article 13—Customary Questions

Grand Rapids (Beckwith) confirmed the Synod meeting to be planned for January 11&12, 2023 with the prayer service on January 10. They decided that the alternate dates for the Synod meeting will be revised to February 8&9 with the prayer service on February 7.

Article 16—Next Classis Meeting

The next Spring Classis Midwest meeting is scheduled for March 29, 2023. The next calling church is the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Article 17—Closing

Rev. H. Hofman gave a few closing remarks. He thanked all the delegates for a unified and peaceful meeting. He acknowledged the efforts of the calling church, the women who set up coffee and refreshments and the meal that is waiting for us, and the treasurer and the clerk for their efforts. The Lord has done great things, that we may have another servant, and also that he may be part of our Classis where the need is very great. He asked the delegates to remember Candidate J. Slingerland and his family in the weeks ahead. May we also be given to remember student P. Kleijer as he continues his studies. May the Lord add His blessing. He then asked Rev. J.J. Witvoet to close the meeting. Rev. J.J. Witvoet, on behalf of all present, thanked Rev. H. Hofman for his leading of the meeting. He also thanked the many male members of Corsica that were able to attend this special meeting. He acknowledged the instructors of the theological school for their labors and deputies for their advice. He also encouraged student P. Kleijer for his final year of study which he must do alone since there are currently no other students. He closed with the singing of Psalter 345:1&2 and with prayer.

All the Lord willing,

Rev. H. Hofman, *President* Elder L. Teunissen, *Clerk*

*For brevity in *The Banner of Truth* some articles in the full meeting minutes have been omitted.

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 Maaïke 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 level to begin in January 2023, 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 MCCA Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mcca.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.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, continues to welcome applications for positions in our school. For more information about elementary opportunities, contact the elementary principal Mr. Andrew Korevaar at elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 241. For more information about secondary opportunities, contact the secondary principal Mr. Gerrit TenHove at secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 303. We continue to invite inquiries about our locally developed teaching training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. Cover letters and resumé's should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed and those applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

NERIAH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL—The Calgary, Alberta branch of the NRC is working to establish Neriah Christian School (NCS), to begin in the 2023-24 school year. We are in need of a teacher/principal who is interested in the unique opportunity of setting up and teaching this very small school, beginning with elementary grades but with opportunity to grow. The candidate's tasks will include: supplying input on school structure, providing our children with a Christian education, maintaining relations with the school board, students, parents, and community, and performing administrative tasks as required. Applicants must be eligible for Alberta certification and must be a member of the Netherlands Reformed congregations or a closely related denomination. To apply, or for more information, please contact the NCS school board president, Mr. Daniel Visser, at 403-554-1097 or by email at visser.daniel@outlook.com

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!**

Church Worker—Bolivia

The North American General Mission continues to look for someone to fill the church worker position in Bolivia. If there is someone in our denomination with a heartfelt desire and love for the truth, with a love for the souls of our fellow man, someone who has learned by grace that salvation can only be found outside of themselves in Christ, please inquire for further information at nagm@execulink.com. Certain conditions will apply.

"Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods" (Psalm 96:3&4).

The Method of Salvation

The Father we bless,
Whose distinguishing grace
Selected a people to show forth Thy praise;
Nor is Thy love known
By election alone;
For, oh, Thou hast added the gift of Thy Son.

Thy goodness in vain
We attempt to explain,
Which found and accepted a ransom for men;
Great Surety of Thine,
Thou didst not decline
To concur with the Father's most gracious design.

To Jesus our Friend,
Our thanks shall ascend,
Who saves to the utmost, and loves to the end;
Our ransom He paid;
In His merit arrayed
We attain to the glory for which we were made.

Sweet Spirit of grace,
Thy mercy we bless
For Thy eminent share in the council of peace;
Great Agent divine,
To restore us is Thine,
And cause us afresh in Thy likeness to shine.

O God, 'tis Thy part
To convince and convert,
To give a new life, and create a new heart;
By Thy presence and grace
We're upheld in our race,
And are kept in Thy love to the end of our days.

Father, Spirit, and Son,
Agree thus in One,
The salvation of those He has marked for His own;
Let us, too, agree
To glorify Thee,
Thou ineffable One, Thou adorable Three.

—Augustus Toplady