

the **Banner** *of Truth*

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The Official Periodical
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United States and Canada

In this issue...

Jesus Therefore...Went Forth
To Give His Life
“I Am the Good Shepherd”

For our young readers...

Ruth
Fishing



*“Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep...
I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” JOHN 10:7&11*



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Meditation

Jesus Therefore...Went Forth

Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Rock Valley, IA

“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth...” (John 18:4a).

In our text the Mediator is about to enter upon His sacrificial labors. In the previous chapter we hear Him as the interceding High Priest for His Church. Now, He must as the High Priest on the Great Day of Atonement put on the holy linen coat and the linen breeches upon His flesh, be girded with the linen girdle, and with the linen mitre, go forth. He must enter into the most Holy Place to make atonement for His people. Nothing would go forth with Him or before Him. No basin with the blood of a bullock, but with His own blood the mercy seat would have to be sprinkled. He would come to the place where lay the Holy Law; He would enter into judgment with God, the supreme Judge.

In great soul agony the bloody sweat had already been pressed out of Him at this realization, but now the veil of His flesh must still be rent. *“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth.”*

What reverence should fill our hearts when we consider the above words. What holy awe should settle over us! *Jesus therefore...went forth.* What tongue can tell that which is comprised in His going forth? Yet, we do well to consider these words, with the Lord’s help, at the commencement of Passion.

Powerfully to the enemy

Here we see Him going forth. It is in the garden of Gethsemane where we find the Lord with His disciples. Judas also knew of the place and, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, he comes to betray Him, that He may be taken into custody. The enemy comes to take Him, but He goes forth to meet them. When, some time before, another thronging multitude came to take Him by force and make Him a king, He withdrew Himself. Now, here, a mob comes to make Him a prisoner, and Jesus went forth.

He went forth to meet them with a question. He is the first to speak, “Whom seek ye?” Upon their answer and His reply, “I am He,” the whole band falls backwards to the ground. Will those mighty Roman soldiers be broken under His going forth? Would the religious Jews suddenly realize they were standing before Him of whom their prophet Micah had spoken? He *“that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting”* (Micah 5:2b). No, they stand back up, unsavily touched by His power. He clearly displays to them who He is. He

will not leave Himself without witness to His enemies. His going forth would not only leave them without excuse but would also aggravate their condemnation if they remained in their hardened state.

Lovingly for His people

In His going forth He, at the same time, shows that He will neither succumb as one whose strength fails nor as one who is overtaken by an enemy more powerful than Himself. He maintains the power to lay down His life. This will be displayed to the disciples, but alas, neither do they have eyes to rightly behold His going forth. When His unspeakable suffering had begun, they fell asleep. When the band of men came to apprehend Him, yes, even to fulfill the Lord’s eternal good pleasure to His people (howbeit as wicked instruments), the disciples could not understand it. No, they were against it; Peter even took up the sword and went to slay the servant of the high priest.

Nevertheless, *“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth.”* He would not allow the enemy to stand in the way, but neither would He allow His people to stand in His way. Oh, how His people would have ruined it, but how lovingly He went forth, *“If therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way.”*

Knowing all things: the suffering that still lay before Him; the shame, the spitting, the crown of thorns, and the cross with its curse; the fleeing of the disciples; and the forsaking by His Father, He went forth. He went forth for His little flock. He knew their weakness. He knew that they could not stand a moment in the judgment hall of His Father. He went forth to pay the price and to satisfy the justice of His Father for them.

Faithfully before His Father

Jesus went forth in perfect submission to His Father’s will. Already in eternity it was His desire. *“Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of Me, I delight to do thy will, O My God.”* (Psalm 40:7-8a). Now He steps forward in His human nature that the saying might be fulfilled which He spake, *“Of them which thou gavest Me have I lost none”* (John 18:9b). Oh, what an incomprehensible wonder! Zion must be redeemed with judgment. *“Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth.”* The sword of the Lord of Hosts had awakened against His Shepherd, but Peter’s sword of defense He commands to be put away. Why? *“The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”* (John 18:11b).

Jesus therefore...went forth. Oh, that this would receive value in our life and for our soul! How many of us are left unsavingly touched by His power? Has He spoken in our life with accidents or afflictions? How easily we stand up after being struck down. If ye hear His voice today, harden not your heart. Many come in our day to take Jesus by force, perhaps not as professed enemies but with much religion. They come to make Him their King, yes, they speak of Him as their Saviour. However, the fear is that they are strangers to themselves. They have not learned their need of a Saviour as one who is lost and undone. How different for those who have learned of their sinful state and nevertheless are drawn by His love. What a mysterious wonder! With a love to Him they are brought to know their own enmity to a one-sided salvation. For this they grieve; they have fled their whole life from His willingness. Yet, *Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon Him, went forth.* In spite of them He went forth to shed His own

blood. When this becomes personal, then they are led a little into His going forth for them—a greater wonder when they see it stretches from eternity to eternity. How firm is the salvation of the Church! *“Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the LORD: His going forth is prepared as the morning; and He shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth”* (Hosea 6:3).

Friends, if in the Lord’s greatest humiliation, He showed such power, such love, and such faithfulness, what will be displayed when He returns in the last step of exaltation? What shall He do when He comes to judge if He did this when about to be judged? John saw Him as the Rider upon a white horse. A crown different from a crown of thorns was given unto Him; He went forth conquering, and to conquer (Revelation 6:2). He will go forth; His intercession will cease; His enemies shall then be trodden under foot. The Church which He loved will be gathered in, and the Father will be glorified (John 17:4&5). □



Bible Study

The Life of Moses (15)

Rev. C. Vogelaar, Clifton, NJ

“And the cherubims shall stretch forth their wings on high, covering the mercy seat with their wings, and their faces shall look one to another; toward the mercy seat shall the faces of the cherubims be. And thou shalt put the mercy seat above upon the ark; and in the ark thou shalt put the testimony that I shall give thee. And there I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel” (Exodus 25:20-22).

The Israelites were led to Sinai. There the holy and righteous God would give them His law. They would experience their great need of a Mediator. We read in Exodus 20:19, *“And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.”* Moses received many instructions on the mountain during the forty days and nights he was there. In Exodus 24:18 we read, *“And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.”* Moses was to tell the Israelites that they were to bring an offering. This offering would be a means to gather the materials necessary for the building of the tabernacle and its service (Chapter 25:1-9).

The objects in Israel’s ceremonial worship were thus determined down to the smallest detail by the Lord’s pattern and instructions. A divine plan was the basis of the ceremonial ministry of reconciliation. The ceremonies were the blossom of the tree: when the fruit would be ripe, the blossom would fall. So now, we are speaking of this blossom.

The first item in the divine place was the tabernacle or the tent of witness. It is the throne on which Israel’s king would reside in the midst of His people.

The meeting place

An ark or chest had to be made. The original word often meant a chest in which spices or food are preserved; so Christ provides the true nourishment for hungry souls. The chest had to be made of acacia wood. This wood is durable, beautiful, and has a pleasant smell. This was a picture of Christ’s human nature which would not be corrupted: *“For Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell; neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption”* (Psalm 16:10). This would be overlaid with pure gold, not gold mixed with another element. This is a picture of Christ’s holy, divine nature. In the ark the testimony or the ten commandments were placed. This is a declaration of God’s will; it is Israel’s constitution.

Moses had to make an atonement cover, also from pure gold. The root meaning of the Hebrew verb for “atone” is to cover or to hide. This atonement cover fit perfectly on the ark.

The meaning of this atonement cover or mercy seat is:

- 1) To cover the law, the testimony of witness which must not be visible for human eyes
- 2) To be a cover of atonement on which the blood would be sprinkled
- 3) To be a seat or throne of mercy and grace

There God would reveal Himself with His gracious presence. This mercy seat was laid upon the ark as a cover of grace and mercy. The cherubims point to the presence of the Lord; between them the Lord dwelt, and they had to be made of hammered gold to provide a protective covering for the mercy seat. There, the Lord would meet and commune with sinners.

The Holy of holies was the dwelling place of the Lord of lords—a picture of the heaven of heavens where the angels dwell, where Christ is, and where the triumphant believers are. It is also a picture of the heaven of glory coming upon the new earth, New Jerusalem. *“Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God”*

(Revelation 21:3b). In the Holy of holies was the ark of the testimony with the two tables of the law of love. It was the ark of the covenant, the glory and honor of Israel. When the ark was gone to the land of the Philistines it was said, “Ichabod...the glory has departed.” The ark had the shape of a box: it was the treasury of salvation. Of Christ we read in Colossians 2:3, *“In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”* The ark might not be touched by a human hand, and no one was allowed to look into it. There was the cover of atonement, the mercy seat where the Father rested in the work of His Son. There, He would meet sinners.

The Mediator

It is in Christ alone that sinners can approach a holy and righteous God. We cannot stand before God alone; the meeting is only possible in Christ the Mediator. When a sinner learns to know that God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity and that the sinner himself is unholy and leprous, then there is no way from him to God. What a blessing if we may be brought to bow under God’s just

sentence, but also, it is a blessing that there is a meeting place between a holy and just God and an unrighteous sinner. What a blessing it is if the eyes may be opened for Him who is the Son of Righteousness, when it may be given to behold Him and to learn to know Him in His all-sufficiency and His suitableness as a complete Saviour. In Him all our needs may be met.

What a wonder when the Lord also speaks to the soul from above the mercy seat, “I have found a ransom.” Nobody can come to Christ except he is drawn to the Father: *“No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him”* (John 6:44a). God the Father here reveals the thoughts of peace, the eternal covenant which He has made, of which Christ is the Head and Mediator and which He has confirmed with His own blood and sacrifice. Here is portrayed not only the work of the Father but also the Son, who is typified by the ark. Here is also the work of the Holy Spirit, for God will come and **commune**; that means He will come together and speak together. Communion with God has been

broken by sin; this is now restored, and the Holy Spirit will apply and seal what Christ has merited. What a wonder that a holy God and a fallen sinner can come together and that broken communion can be restored.

A blessed testimony

Here in the ceremonial worship is a preaching of what Christ’s sacrifice will purchase. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to glorify Him. He leads to the mercy seat; He opens the ear to hear what God speaks when He communes with them. He says, “Thou art My people,” and they say, “LORD, our God.” He says, “Thou art My bride,” and they say, “Thou art our Bridegroom.” He says, “Thou art My child,” and they may say, “Abba, dear Father.” It is by the testimony of the Holy Spirit, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). Here the three Persons come together with us and also dwell in us, in our heart, which is made a temple of the Holy Ghost. There is also a place of rest and fellowship. Here on earth that is mostly of short duration and imperfectly experienced. Sin makes separation, but the Lord may give foretastes of what He has prepared for them who were no children. It is the work of a Triune God to bring together that which never could come together and which is only possible through the one perfect offering of God’s dear Son in whom He is glorified. □

(To be continued)

The Scripture abounds in commands and cautions for our utmost diligence in our search and inquiry as to whether God’s Spirit dwells in us or not—which argue both the difficulty of attaining an assured confidence herein, as also the danger of our being mistaken, and yet the certainty of a good issue upon the diligent and regular use of means to that purpose.

—John Owen



From Our Inheritance

To Give His Life

Rev. J. Mol (1922-2015)

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, March 27, 2014)

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many”
(Matthew 20:28).

The time had approached when the Lord Jesus would be delivered into the hands of the enemies. The Lord Jesus had spoken much, also by parables and in performing miracles, to prove that He was the promised Messiah that should come.

In this portion of Scripture, we read that the Lord Jesus went up to Jerusalem with His disciples for the last time to celebrate the Passover and also to be slain as the true Paschal Lamb which was part of the purpose of His coming upon earth and the assuming of His human nature. More than once Christ taught His disciples concerning His suffering and death, His resurrection, and His going to His Father. All this was substitutionary for all the elect, to reconcile them to God.

Despite all the instruction the disciples received concerning His suffering and death, they lacked understanding. This is clearly evident from verses 20&21, where the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to the Lord Jesus and said to Him, “Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy right hand, and the other on the left, in Thy kingdom”; and from the answer which was given in verse 22 where the Lord Jesus said, “Ye know not what ye ask.” He pointed them to His cup of suffering and His baptism of suffering. Therefore, we read in verse 28, “Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

“Came not to be ministered unto”—what a lesson for the disciples and for all who, by grace, are brought into the school of the Holy Spirit. Certainly, as God, being coessential with the Father and the Holy Spirit, He has a right to be ministered unto, and that perfectly. Through our deep Fall this has become impossible. Moreover, we have become unwilling also. If Christ was sent to be ministered unto, it would have been a lost case. Then He, as Judge, would have to condemn man who is serving sin, but now the wonder: Christ has come to this earth as Saviour and Mediator to minister as God and Man in unity of person.

What a lesson it is for God’s people that He was not come to be ministered unto. Think of Martha who was cumbered about much serving, but look also at Mary who was allowed to sit at Jesus’ feet. She had chosen that good part.

Oh, that wriggling from out of a broken covenant of works, trying to bring something along for the Lord with our works. What a privilege it is, as well as necessary, to be placed outside of our works by the uncovering ministry of the Holy Spirit. Then we will have nothing left except a heaven-high guilt and will cry out, “Lost, justly lost.” Then the secret of salvation may be revealed, “I came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” Oh, then for someone who has come to an end with his works and servitude, it becomes such a wonder that there is One, namely Christ, who has done and merited everything for an entirely guilty and damnable sinner, One who can reconcile him to God. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” He came to minister. He did not come to do His own will but the will of His Father in heaven.

Christ is the Servant of the Father to reconcile the elect to God through His suffering and death. For transgressors of the law, He fulfilled the law with His passive and active obedience. On the cursed tree of the cross, Christ redeemed all His own from the curse of the law and bore away their punishment by satisfying the justice of the Father. “To give His life a ransom for many.” Oh, yes, He gave Himself completely. He bore the full wrath of God against sin under which man, the sinner, should sink away forever. He has given Himself as the only Substitute in the place of His own. Christ has given His life, and the Father has given His Son to that end, to make His soul an offering for sin.

Thus, all God’s people receive a given Saviour, who gave Himself, who gave His life, that Zion might be redeemed with judgment with an eternal redemption. Blessed is the man who may thus come to know Him by faith, in the beginning and in the continuation. The ransom which Christ had given was accepted by the Father. He died because of our sins and was raised for our justification.

May the Holy Spirit thus teach and lead His own, by grace, to learn that mystery of salvation with Paul, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.” Oh, that we might lose everything, yes, die to everything that must die in order to receive life from Him who is the only Fountain of Life. “Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

Oh, that something of this might be learned when we again have entered the Passion weeks. May the God of all grace yet place many upon the path that leads to life. Christ did not come for all, but may we learn by grace to belong to the many—blessed knowledge! ▣

Humility is nothing but the disappearance of self in the vision that God is all. —Andrew Murray



Commentary

The Man Born Blind (11)

Rev. H. de Leeuw, Franklin Lakes, NJ

“Is this your son...? ...that he was born blind...”
(John 9:19b&20b).

We have heard of the unbelieving Jews that they did not want to believe the Lord Jesus had performed a miracle. The evidence of the wonder was clear, but the hardness of heart intensified in their life under the clearest tokens of divine power. The Jews went to question the parents of the blind man who was healed. The purpose was to discredit Messiah’s power, but their purpose was a failed attempt because the Prince of Darkness is a defeated enemy.

The question is very simple: “Is this your son, who ye say was born blind?” They ask about the relationship they have with the healed one. The relationship that is questioned is a tender one. This shows that the enemy has no limits. As far as the Lord allows it, Satan will try to ruin and destroy. The Jews are instruments here of the Prince of Darkness and try to dishonor the power of the Lord Jesus. They bring into question if this well-known man, who once was blind and begging, was really their son. The evidence was clear that it was a miracle, but they were seeking to disarm the performed miracle of power so that the power of Messiah would be brought into question. Satan will always try to bring the work of God into question. He will go to all extremes to perform his destroying work. It is necessary that we are uncovered to his tactics. Church of the Lord, how often does Satan not feed the power of unbelief by bringing into discredit the work of God? This man was clearly healed, but now the most tender relationship, parents to children, was brought into question. Satan will try to bring the most tender work of the Lord into doubt.

Also notice that the parents must acknowledge that their son was born blind. The parents are asked about their son’s blindness from birth. They cannot deny it; in verse 20 they acknowledge the relationship and the fact that he was born blind. Dear parents, have we come to see our children that way already? Perhaps through painful ways you had to acknowledge this. Yet, I wish to point something out; we present our children for baptism where the water is pointing to the blood of Christ that cleanseth from all sin. Have we ever considered that, by bringing them there, they need cleansing because of their original sin? Have we ever considered, as we see them growing and developing, that the blood pointed to needs application for their actual sin? The baptism form instructs that our children are conceived and born in sin, but when we present them for baptism, have we seen their need for cleansing? When your hands are

dirty, you wash them. Our children need the “washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost” (Titus 3:5b). Never forget, parents, our children are small enemies of God because we are enemies of God, also. Original sin is imputed to them because of the first Adam which carries through the generations; so, we have passed that on to them in the moment of their conception. Job said, “Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one” (Job 14:4). The wonder is that you may present them in baptism to the Lord, and in your prayers you may present them to the Lord as baptized children. Oh, powerless parents, so you may present your unclean seed to the Lord.

I feel compelled to insert here that baptism is not the deciding factor for this grace to be applied—not to be supportive of Baptists, absolutely not! To withhold baptism from our children is to give our children an image that the gospel cannot be for them, and no matter how you twist or turn it you show that only when you are older and more advanced in knowledge may you come to the knowledge of the gospel. I feel compelled for those parents, especially the mothers, who often must go a lonely way with their grief because of miscarriages or stillbirths, that also from among that very young seed the Lord will have His Church. His power is not limited; He can convert already in the womb. Jeremiah and John the Baptist are biblical proofs.

The parents of the man born blind had to acknowledge who their son was. Are there parents who must acknowledge that their children are conceived and born in sin? In this history of the man born blind, we see the power of the Lord Jesus unto one of those children. May that serve as an encouragement to our parents today. Perhaps Satan is busy to bring the power and comfort of the Covenant of Grace in question with your baptized child(ren). Consider well the reason why these parents were asked; it was because of the power of God manifested in the life of this blind man. So, I may point helpless, powerless, and questioning parents to the blood of Christ which can cleanse from all sin. He converts sinners because “To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them...” (2 Corinthians 5:19a). This was signified and sealed in baptism when you stood there with your spiritually “blind” child. May the God of the Covenant of Grace remember His own word to graciously fulfill and apply His irresistible work of regeneration by the Holy Spirit.

The Jews have asked their question; the parents have given their answer. There is much more to say, but let it suffice what we have written. The parents of this “wonder child” will shift the necessity to answer to their son. In

verse 22 the reason is mentioned, namely fear. The parents fear to be placed out of the synagogue if they would speak truthfully about the Healer of their child. What a wonder

that the Lord, despite parental weakness, was working towards the comforting truth that He, the unknown Healer, would make Himself known unto this healed man. ◻

(To be continued)



Doctrinal Studies

Of Predestination (2)

Nicholas L. Greendyk (1922-2010)

(Taken from *An Explanation of Rev. A. Hellenbroek's Catechism, Volume 1*)

How many parts, or acts of God, must we therein distinguish [in predestination]?

Two: election and reprobation. 1 Thessalonians 5:9: "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."

We now proceed with a more detailed explanation of the doctrine of predestination, beginning by defining election and reprobation. According to Rev. Kersten, "election is the decree of God by which He in perfect sovereignty determined in which persons, known to Him by name in Christ, He has decided to magnify His mercy gloriously unto their salvation, and also by which means He Himself shall bring those persons to salvation." A briefer definition might be, "the choice of God, in the exercise of sovereign grace, made of certain individuals of mankind to enjoy salvation by Jesus Christ."

Rev. Kersten defines reprobation as "the decree, whereby God from eternity, in His sovereign good pleasure, fore-ordained in which rational creatures He shall glorify Himself by His avenging justice to their eternal punishment in hell." An alternate definition might be, "the choice of God, for the glory of His sovereign power over His creatures, to pass by, and to ordain certain individuals to dishonor and wrath for their sin, to the praise of His glorious justice." "To reprobate" means "to reject," and it is a term used to express that act of God by which, when all mankind were before the eye of His omniscience, He rejected some, while He chose others.

The election of some to salvation in preference to others has always been a doctrine which has many enemies. Throughout the ages there have always been men who have accused God of being unfair if election is true, and there have always been those who have abused this doctrine as an excuse to abandon all religious endeavor. The first thing we must do then is to examine our Bible to see what the infallible Word of God says. There are many passages in

Scripture which speak of certain persons under the character of the "elect":

1. As chosen in Christ—"Salute Rufus chosen in the Lord..." (Romans 16:13a).
2. As chosen to salvation—"But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation..." (2 Thessalonians 2:13a).
3. As predestined to the adoption of children—"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:5).
4. And to be conformed to the image of His Son—"For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son..." (Romans 8:29a).
5. As elect according to the foreknowledge of God—"Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ..." (1 Peter 1:2a).
6. As vessels of mercy whom He hath before prepared unto glory—"And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had afore prepared unto glory" (Romans 9:23).

Each of these phrases obviously refers to some act of God in relation to the persons mentioned in these texts, by which they are distinguished from others. When a choice is made, it obviously implies that of a number of persons, some are taken, and others are left. There can be no such thing as the election of a whole class as separated from every other class of people. Election is a relative term and necessarily involves the idea of rejection. The election which the Bible teaches cannot be considered merely as a general purpose to furnish all mankind with the means of salvation. It is an express purpose to confer salvation upon certain individuals, but more on this in Question 6. ◻

(This installment marks the end of this series.)

The highest honor in the church is not government but service. —John Calvin



Reflections

The Life and Dying of Mientje Vrijdag (6)

B. Roest of Scherpenzeel, the Netherlands

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

(Dear reader, in the December 2022 issue we prematurely ended this series. The following portion about Mientje Vrijdag's funeral ends this series in our Banner of Truth. The original book continues with many letters Mientje wrote to spiritual friends. —Ed.)

Christ testifies: "Father, I will that they also, whom Thou hast given Me, be with Me where I am...for Thou lovedst Me before the foundation of the world." The Father chose Mientje to this end, the Son bought her to this end, and the Holy Spirit worked in her to this end—to fashion her as a vessel for glory. Thus, this royal child was home forever.

Now she may rejoice in the triune God with all those who were saved, to glorify Him forever. He who believes in Christ shall never die.

She was buried on Saturday of that same week. The home of the deceased was entirely filled with her relatives and friends. Rev. Fraanje conducted the service. Because the house was too small to contain the great multitudes, next door was a house full of friends also, where Rev. Heikoop conducted a service. All were filled with the happiness of the deceased, the happiness of all God's people. The mouths of these ministers overflowed with this. There was a pleasant peace. God gave testimony of His work to His glory. Man was abased and God was exalted. Let me add that God granted it. He gave opening and freedom to do so. God's honor was the highest end; that is what everything is about. "This people have I formed for Myself; they shall shew forth My praise."

This great light was carried out to burial having served God's counsel. Her only child walked behind the bier with the other relatives including also the only brother, a brother in a double sense, in the flesh and in spirit. For him it will not be an eternal separation. The ties between sister and brother had been very close, and they will remain forever.

A large crowd had gathered at the cemetery. This is always very striking. When a child of God is buried, there usually gathers a large crowd because something goes out from that. With emotion and joy, we stood at the graveside of this beloved deceased.

The first speaker was Rev. Fraanje. With great boldness he testified of God's great grace glorified in the deceased. He pictured her life as he also was so closely tied to her. The second speaker, Rev. Heikoop, was filled with the same also. Thus, they spoke with ready tongues to the glory of God. Heaven came down. The Lord was present with His Word and Spirit. After this, Elder A. Ligtenberg spoke from

his experience and contact with the deceased. And finally, the author of this spoke a word, feeling urged to do so. Together they stammered about the salvation of sinners, the happiness of God's people, and the misery of the unsaved if they remain in that state. What a fluent preaching of the gospel when the Lord gives opening at the open grave of such a child of God. What blessed peace and mutual communion there was that day at the home of the deceased and at the graveside.

What great grace has been shown to us. Once we were children of darkness, now we are children of light; formerly children of death, of hell, and now children of the Lord, of heaven. Oh, never forget, at what price this has been done. It all flows from the eternal, sovereign love of the Triune God.

Many God-fearing people have passed away already, also in Rijssen. Think of the beloved A. Baan, brother Van Noord, old Dieke, and so many others. The Netherlands has always had many children of God. How empty it is on earth now that so many have passed away. They are destined for this blessed end and for God's honor. The righteous are taken away from the evil to come, but God will have a Church until the end of the world, no matter how deep their ways may be.

Thus, the day of the funeral had flown by. Sweet, mutual connection is the communion of saints. This will continue until the last one will be gathered and the King will appear on the clouds of heaven with great glory. Then the whole body of Christ, of which He is the head, will be presented to the Father as a perfect, purchased, and redeemed bride. Then He will be eternally glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit. "I will praise Thee forever, because Thou hast done it."

This is a brief outline of the life and dying of our beloved, now blessed friend, Mientje Vrijdag. After being urged by many, I finally succumbed to bring something of her to light. It would have been done earlier, but the war and lack of paper have delayed it longer than we had hoped. It is full of shortcomings from my side, but firmly trusting that the friends will certainly take my incompetence into account, I will bring this to the printing press.

May God be glorified in it, His kingdom extended by it, and God's Church instructed and encouraged by it.

This is the wish of your unworthy friend,

B. Roest

Scherpenzeel, March 1947

(This installment marks the end of this series.)



For Young and Old

“I Am the Good Shepherd”

(The following is the introduction to a Passion sermon preached by Rev. J.W. Slager (1901-1982). The whole sermon, titled Prince Immanuel, can be read in Blue Book #149. The text for this sermon is John 18:8, “Jesus answered, I have told you that I am He: if therefore ye seek Me, let these go their way.”)

It is a very remarkable word which we read in the gospel of John 10:11: “I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep.” The attentive Bible reader will immediately observe that this is not said of an ordinary person or an under shepherd. No man can with freedom say, “I am a good shepherd; I have such good gifts.” Yet, the Saviour could testify in reality, “I am the Good Shepherd.” He is the Good Shepherd by reason of divine appointment. He has been appointed and sent by the Father. There is only one like Him. He not only feeds His sheep and protects them against attacking wolves, but He also gives His life for His sheep. This Good Shepherd is so good that He defends His sheep with His life. A shepherd knows his sheep; he knows their number and their weaknesses. Oh, this Shepherd knows all His sheep by name. Their weaknesses are all known to Him. They are not hidden from Him. He lays down His life for them. He has given His life for them and He was taken away by death. By His death the sheep are saved, and they can never go lost to all eternity. In John 18 we read about the reality of this mediatorial work, of giving His life to liberate His sheep.

(The following is a chapter taken from The Bible History Told to our Children, Volume 3, by John Vreugdenhil.)

Boys and girls, many sheep are kept in the land of Canaan. The shepherds went out with their flocks and cared for them. In the Orient the sheepfolds are altogether different from ours. There the sheepfold was an open area surrounded by a wall or a fence. Usually, a cave was situated in the rear where the sheep could find shelter against the cold and rain. An opening was left in the front of the wall through which the sheep could go in and out, but a door was lacking in many of those sheepfolds. Wasn't this dangerous? Couldn't the sheep run away at night? Couldn't the wild beasts creep unhindered into the sheepfold and rend and kill their prey? Indeed not, the shepherd lay in this opening. Nothing could enter the sheepfold unless it passed the watching shepherd. The shepherd was the door. If a wild beast or thief approached, the shepherd would defend his flock with the courage of a lion, even if it had to cost

him his life. In the morning the shepherd would leave the fold with his flock.

We know shepherds to walk behind the flock and drive them forward, but in the Orient the shepherd walks in front and the sheep follow him. If one of these animals lagged behind, the shepherd called the animal by its name, and immediately it would walk to its master. Every sheep knows the shepherd and his voice. If a stranger should call a sheep by its name, it would not come to the stranger but would flee. The sheep knows by the sound of the stranger's voice that he is not his master. While the shepherd journeys onward with his flock, he clears the way. If one of the sheep falls into a ditch, the shepherd goes for it. He would carefully lift it up, lay it upon his shoulders, and carry the strayed sheep back to the flock. He delivers this animal from death. Boys and girls, I first had to tell you this, otherwise you would not understand the following.

After the Lord Jesus had witnessed the wicked actions of the Pharisees (to the man who was born blind), He says: “I am the door of the sheep...I am the Good Shepherd.” Oh, what does He mean by this? He compares the people to a flock of sheep and Himself to a shepherd. The Pharisees were no shepherds. They did not watch over the sheep; they did not comfort the people, but they pulled them to pieces and drove them away. Oh, the Pharisees appeared more like wolves than shepherds, but the Lord Jesus is the Good Shepherd. The man who was born blind was rejected and driven away by the Pharisees, but the Lord Jesus looked for him. The Lord Jesus is a Shepherd for His people; He will take care of them; He will keep them and lead them safely through this life. Not one of His sheep, not one of His elect, will go lost. The enemies may try to destroy God's people but they never will succeed. The Lord Jesus will protect them. The Lord knows His sheep by name and they know Him. God's people live in this world which is full of enemies. The greatest enemy of God's people is the devil. He continually tries to destroy them, but Jesus, the Good Shepherd, takes care of them; He watches over them. As a shepherd in the Orient walks first and clears the way, so also the Lord Jesus shows His people the way in which they must go.

A good shepherd goes to meet the enemy. The Lord Jesus also went to meet the enemy, and He defeated him. A good shepherd gives his life for the sheep. So, also, the Lord Jesus gave His life. He died the humiliating death upon the cross so His people could live forever; He died to deliver them from destruction. An Israelite shepherd sooner fought the enemy until he died rather than forsake the flock and save his own life. He did it out of love for

those dull animals. The Lord Jesus also gave His life voluntarily, and He died out of love for His people. Do you understand how the Lord Jesus is just like a shepherd? He is not only a good Shepherd for the converted Jews but also for the heathens who shall be converted by Him. Soon God's people will be gathered together in heaven. All will be one flock, for He is the only Shepherd, the Good Shepherd for all His "sheep"—Jew as well as Gentile.

Boys and girls, I know this portion is very difficult for you, really too difficult, but I still told you it. Why? So that

when you are sitting at the table listening to your father read the portion from the Bible where Jesus says, "I am the Good Shepherd" or "I am the Door of the sheep," you will understand a little of its meaning...

What do you say about it? Do you know the Lord Jesus? Do you know His voice in your heart? Does the Lord Jesus know you? Ask if this Good Shepherd will, by grace, make you a sheep of His flock. Only then you shall be safe and He will take care of you. Wouldn't it be a great privilege? ☐

A true believer looks on religion, not as a burden which he must be forced to endure—but a privilege which is his happiness to enjoy.

—Andrew Gray

Curatorium Announcement

The Lord willing, the Curatorium hopes to hold its next meeting on May 31, 2023, in Grand Rapids at the Beckwith Avenue Church. A prayer service is scheduled the evening before at 7:30 P.M. with Rev. P. van Ruitenburg officiating.

We may be glad that the studies of Student P. Kleijer could continue to this moment under all the difficult circumstances. Hopefully, by the time this announcement is placed, the U.S. border will be open for persons who are not vaccinated and have no residence status in the U.S. so that also Student Kleijer can travel to the Canadian churches to speak an edifying word and return to the U.S. May the Lord remember him further with his instructors so that he may take his final exams at the time appointed.

At the same time, we always hope and pray that the Lord may send forth more laborers into His vineyard. To that end we announce that once again the Curatorium hopes to consider any attestations set before us at this next annual meeting. Are there men upon whom the Lord has bound the need of souls, who are not strangers of a soul's need themselves? It was out of prison that the Lord set Joseph to reign. Paul writes that a "high priest taken from among men...can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity" (Hebrews 5:1b&2b). Of Christ Himself we

read, "For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted" (Hebrews 2:18). The Lord made Saul useful in His ministry by first casting him unto the ground. He, whom we might consider the greatest of the apostles, felt himself the least, yes, and "not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15:9b).

Especially considering our rising generation, may the Lord provide such men among us that may go forth in the days in which it is their lot to live, whether it be in the established congregations or on the mission field. Any that are no longer able to bear the weight of an inward struggle with the ministry should set themselves before their consistory for judgment, with a request for an attest that the Lord may give direction. Vacant congregations are advised to seek the help of their moderator. Consistories who receive freedom to grant an attest should notify the clerk of the Curatorium, who will then forward a request for more information. The applicant should also forward his own request to the clerk of the Curatorium, requesting a hearing at the upcoming meeting, the Lord willing. Please submit all information as soon as it is available, preferably by Wednesday, May 17. May the Lord Himself provide.

On behalf of the Curatorium,
Rev. J. den Hoed, *Chairman*
Rev. H.D. den Hollander, *Clerk*

Address of the clerk of the Curatorium:
Rev. H.D. den Hollander
P.O. Box 627
Fort Macleod, Alberta, Canada T0L 0Z0
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Church History

Persecutions in Germany

(Taken from the book *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* by John Foxe, Chapter 10)

The general persecutions in Germany were principally occasioned by the doctrines and ministry of Martin Luther. Indeed, the pope was so terrified at the success of that courageous Reformer, that he determined to engage the emperor, Charles V, at any rate, in a scheme to attempt their extirpation. To this end:

1. He gave the emperor two hundred thousand crowns in ready money.
2. He promised to maintain twelve thousand footmen and five thousand horsemen, for the space of six months, or during a campaign.
3. He allowed the emperor to receive one half the revenues of the clergy of the empire during the war.
4. He permitted the emperor to pledge the abbey lands for five hundred thousand crowns to assist in carrying on hostilities against the Protestants.

Thus, prompted and supported, the emperor undertook the extirpation of the Protestants against whom he, indeed, was particularly enraged himself; and, for this purpose a formidable army was raised in Germany, Spain, and Italy.

The Protestant princes, in the meantime, formed a powerful confederacy in order to repel the impending blow. A great army was raised and the command given to the elector of Saxony, and the landgrave of Hesse. The Imperial forces were commanded by the emperor of Germany in person, and the eyes of all Europe were turned on the event of the war (1546-1547).

At length the armies met, and a desperate engagement ensued in which the Protestants were defeated, and the elector of Saxony and the landgrave of Hesse taken prisoners. This fatal blow was succeeded by a horrid persecution, the severities of which were such that exile might be deemed a mild fate, and concealment in a dismal wood passed for happiness. In such times a cave is a palace, a rock a bed of down, and wild roots delicacies.

Those who were taken experienced the cruelest tortures that infernal imaginations could invent, and by their constancy evinced that a real Christian can surmount every difficulty, and despite every danger acquire a crown of martyrdom.

Henry Voes and John Esch, being apprehended as Protestants, were brought to examination. Voes, answering for himself and the other gave the following answers to some questions asked by a priest, who examined them by order of the magistracy.

Priest: Were you not both, some years ago, Augustine friars?

Voes: Yes.

Priest: How came you to quit the bosom of the Church at Rome?

Voes: On account of her abominations.

Priest: In what do you believe?

Voes: In the Old and New Testaments.

Priest: Do you believe in the writings of the fathers, and decrees of the Councils?

Voes: Yes, if they agree with Scripture.

Priest: Did not Martin Luther seduce you both?

Voes: He seduced us even in the very same manner Christ seduced the apostles; that is, he made us sensible of the frailty of our bodies, and the value of our souls.

This examination was sufficient. They were both condemned to the flames, and soon after suffered with that manly fortitude which becomes Christians when they receive a crown of martyrdom.

Henry Sutphen, an eloquent and pious preacher, was taken out of his bed in the middle of the night and compelled to walk barefoot a considerable way so that his feet were terribly cut. He desired a horse, but his conductors said in derision, "A horse for a heretic! No, no, heretics may go barefoot." When he arrived at the place of his destination, he was condemned to be burnt, but during the execution, many indignities were offered him, since those who attended, not content with what he suffered in the flames, cut and slashed him in a most terrible manner.

Many were murdered at Halle. Middleburg being taken by storm, all the Protestants were put to the sword, and great numbers were burned at Vienna.

An officer being sent to put a minister to death, when he came to the clergyman's house, pretended that his intentions were only to pay him a visit. The minister, not suspecting the intended cruelty, entertained his supposed guest in a very cordial manner. As soon as dinner was over, the officer said to some of his attendants, "Take this clergyman and hang him." The attendants themselves were so shocked after the civility they had seen that they hesitated to perform the commands of their master. The minister said, "Think what a sting will remain on your conscience for thus violating the laws of hospitality." The officer, however, insisted upon being obeyed, and the attendants, with reluctance, performed the execrable office of executioners.

Peter Spengler, a pious divine of the town of Schalet, was thrown into the river and drowned. Before he was taken to the banks of the stream which was to become his grave, they led him to the market that his crimes might

(continued on page 44)



Questions & Answers

Many Stripes and Greater Lustre

Rev. B. Labee, Veenendaal, the Netherlands

(Translated from *De Saambinder*, December 1, 2022)

*Are there “degrees” in bliss and “degrees” in hell?
Is being baptized without true repentance a reason
for heavier punishment?*

Many stripes

We read in an old conversion history: “From my earliest youth the Lord gave me impressions of death and eternity, of heaven and hell, and of the holiness and righteousness of God; that I could not die as I was born and had lived. Oh, I saw so clearly: something needed to happen to me, I had to be born again, I could not exist before God like this. The Lord is too pure of eyes to behold evil. I felt, if I had to die once and then stand in the judgment without a Surety, what that would be like; because it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. No one would have such a heavy judgment as I. Always having known the way and not having walked in it, I would be beaten with many stripes and the Lord would be glorified in my damnation” (from: *De groote genade God verheerlijkt in de krachtdadige bekeering en verdere leiding naar Gods vrijmachtig welbehagen in een zondig Adamskind—The great grace of God glorified in the powerful conversion and further leading after God’s sovereign good pleasure in a sinful child of Adam*, Grietje van Dijk, born February 18, 1863, in Doornspijk).

Indeed, there are degrees in hell, according to the words of the Saviour, “And that servant, which knew his lord’s will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes” (Luke 12:47). What solemnity and responsibility if we are born or brought onto the property of the covenant; if we received the sign and seal of Holy Baptism on our foreheads and live under the ministry of reconciliation. Two more comments we would like to make about this text from God’s Word: it does not say with “double” stripes, but with “many” stripes. According to this standard, a bad Christian (in a general sense) will receive a greater punishment than a bad pagan. Readers, “While He proffers peace and pardon let us hear His voice

today, lest, if we our hearts should harden, we should perish in the way” (Psalter 255).

Greater lustre

As there are degrees in hell, so are there degrees in heaven. Several places in Scripture teach us this. We read, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven” (Matthew 5:11&12a). In the Old Testament, we think of Daniel 12. We read in verse 3, “And they that be wise (margin: teachers) shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

The well-known Bible commentator Matthew Henry (1662-1714) wrote: “Ministers of Christ, who have obtained mercy of Him to be faithful and successful, and so are made burning and shining lights in this world, shall shine very brightly in the other world, shall shine as the stars. Christ is the sun, the fountain, of the lights both of grace and glory; ministers, as stars, shine in both, with a light derived from Him, and a diminutive light in comparison of Him; yet to those that are earthen vessels it will be a glory infinitely transcending their deserts. They shall shine as the stars of different magnitudes, some in less, others in greater lustre; but whereas the day is coming when the stars shall fall from heaven as leaves in autumn, these stars shall shine for ever and ever, shall never set, never be eclipsed.”

However, all, who by grace shall enter into Immanuel’s land, will point away from self. They will agree with the angels, whom we hear say very reverently, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen” (Revelation 7:12b).

(Note: Due to a heavy work schedule with the holidays, Rev. Hofman was unable to provide an article this month. He hopes to resume next month, D.V.) □

Send your questions to:

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or hofman@premieronline.net.

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

—Jonathan Edwards



Current Events

Abortion Battles Continue

The South Carolina Supreme Court struck down the state's six-week abortion ban on Thursday, ruling the law that restricted abortions after detectable fetal cardiac activity "an unreasonable restriction upon a woman's right to privacy" and unconstitutional. The ruling comes nearly two years after the state enacted the law, known as the Fetal Heartbeat and Protection from Abortion Act, which banned abortion after six weeks except in limited cases. The decision by the state's highest court comes as fierce legislative and judicial battles over abortion access are being waged across the United States more than six months after the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*. South Carolina's governor criticized the court's decision, saying that the state Supreme Court "found a right in our Constitution which was never intended by the people of South Carolina."

—*WashingtonPost.com*

Singer Shares Regrets to a Sinful Life

A once popular singer in the music industry shares her experience with other women about her life after abortions. She had three abortions before she became a Christian. She said, "After the first one, you don't think you've done anything wrong. It's been normalized...Once you cross that line, it's a very slippery slope to continue to cross those lines." Her conscience was triggered when she saw two little girls looking up at her during a concert. Then she recalled, "There was nothing beautiful about me. I was tainted. I was destructive. I was destroyed...I was living in my worst self." She understands the pain and anger some women go through but warned them not to make the same choices she did. "I've gone through it all. I will assure you, you will regret it your whole life," she said. Becoming a Christian compelled her to share her story about abortion regret. "Nothing can make that go away but God Himself when you lay it at His feet and ask for salvation," she said.

—*FoxNews.com*

How China is Suffocating Christianity

As is already known, China is cracking down on religion. From church demolitions, to the arrests of pastors, to the restriction of Bibles, to the law that bans children from church—the patterns are clear. But the dramatic examples and videos of persecution are not really the norm. Persecution in China looks different now as it is more a steady squeeze. 1. They are wielding unprecedented technological power. Religious speech on the Internet is always under the microscope and restricted. 2. They are targeting young people. Any children under the age of eighteen are banned from attending church. 3. The government wields powerful social controls. The government oversees something called the Social Credit System. This system penalizes people for spreading religion "illegally." 4. The government wants to make sure God's Word and churches fall in line with their interpretation of communism. This

includes a new translation and annotation of the Bible. 5. They are making sure no one steps outside of the lines. The government is unconcerned with many churches—provided they stay inside the lines which the Communist regime has established. In late 2018, they shut down two prominent churches as they refused to comply with government regulations and registration.

—*GlobalChristianRelief.org*

India Used to Have Such Promise for Religious Freedom

Thirteen Christian families, made up of sixty-six people, were expelled from their home village in rural, central India in early December because they refused to deny their Christian faith. The families were summoned to a meeting of the village council and pressured to deny Jesus Christ and return to Hinduism and animistic beliefs. Because they refused to do so, the villagers angrily abused the Christians, beating them with canes. Whole families (men, women, children, and elderly persons) were expelled from the village and had to leave all their possessions behind. They have gone to live with relatives in other villages. The incident was reported to the local police, but they did not take any action.

—*ChurchInChains.ie*

Christmas Season in Nigeria Darkened

One Christian was killed and fifty-three were kidnapped on December 25 in Kaduna state, Nigeria, after more than forty Christians were slain in the week leading up to Christmas, according to sources. Fulani herds-men and other terrorists attacked Christmas Day at about 10 A.M. "Church worship service was about to commence when the attackers arrived at the village riding on motorbikes and shooting sporadically," an area resident said. The fifty-three Christians are still being held captive. Elsewhere in the state, residents said herds-men and other terrorists killed forty Christians on December 18 and another three Christians on the 23rd. "We're being attacked again by terrorists. There are gunshots everywhere again this night," a resident said in a message to a news agency. "This is worse. Please we need help."

—*ChristianPost.com*

Christian Education Attacked

The Canadian arm of an international textbook publishing company will discontinue some sex education books used by Catholic schools in Ontario following accusations they contain homophobic and transphobic content. "Fully Alive," a series of textbooks and accompanying teachers' resources published by Pearson Canada, is aimed at teaching students in Grades 1 through 8 about sexuality, marriage, and family. It has been accused of not being inclusive of anyone who does not identify as heterosexual and cisgender. For this reason, Pearson Canada has decided to stop printing the books.

—*CBC.ca*

There are some of us who think to ourselves, "If I had only been there! How quick I would have been to help the Baby. I would have washed His linen. How happy I would have been to go with the shepherds to see the Lord lying in the manger." Why don't we do it now? We have Christ in our neighbor.

—*Martin Luther*



Timothy FOR THE YOUNG

The Confession of Faith (38)

Article XXXII: Of the Order and Discipline of the Church *(continued)*

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

The authority given to the church is different from the authority of the government. The government receives the sword, but the church uses the keys of the kingdom of heaven. The sword is a symbol of force by which to rule, while the key is more the symbol of serving, a moral authority. The government receives the authority to punish the trespasser, while the censure of the church is more as a medicine to heal.

Censure is not only in respect of our daily life, but it is also in respect of doctrine. Not only an unchristian conduct is condemned but also an unchristian doctrine. We may neither give room to the lie in the church, nor to the wickedness in our daily life. Although we must be faithful in censure, it should always be done in the spirit of meekness. It should be such a wonder that we are not living in the same sin, and it is only due to the restraining hand of the Lord. For example, if you visit a person in prison, you should not look down upon that person, but realize that if the Lord had left us a moment unto ourselves, we would also be behind the bars. Censure is to be used out of love for the Lord and out of love for our neighbor, and never out of revenge. This is the way that censure must be administered.

To maintain unity in the church according to God's Word, both in conduct and in doctrine, our fathers decided that every office bearer must sign the forms of unity and promise to subject himself to God's Word and these three forms of unity. We know that these forms are human institutions and stand under the authority of God's Word, but we may not deny that they are according to God's Word and give a good insight into the Truth. The forms of unity have a binding power for the church only if it can be proved that they are according to God's Word; if the opposite can be proved, they would then lose their authority. However, if we make a careful study of them, we will find out that they are according to the Scriptures. No office bearer is allowed to make changes in these

forms by himself; it may only be done by a General Synod, but we do not find errors and contradictions in these forms contrary to God's Word.

Our article does state, "And therefore, we reject all human inventions and all laws which man would introduce into the worship of God, thereby to bind and compel the conscience in any manner whatever." Human inventions and laws may not rule the church, because it is God's house and the body of Christ. We have only to take notice of the church of Rome, which is full of human institutions contrary to God's Word or the spirit thereof. Calvin was very much opposed to them, and thought that every law in the church made by man without the backing of God's Word and used to instruct the people in how to serve the Lord should be rejected. Calvin was not an advocate of many laws and provisions. Those rules stimulate only to sin, because our sinful nature is drawn to the forbidden and thus the outcome can be the opposite of that originally proposed. Only that which is not according to God's Word can be censured.

The weakness of sinners should be warned with patience, love, and meekness. That is the reason why our fathers have also applied the censure in steps. Censure already begins with the ecclesiastical admonition by the consistory, which goes together with a temporary denial of taking part in the Lord's Supper, as it is the calling of the consistory to keep the Lord's Table holy. They will also lose the other rights of a full member as long as this censure is applied. If no attention is paid to these admonitions or silent censure, the three steps will follow, which will also be made known to the congregation. Of silent censure, nobody may know of it except the consistory and the trespasser. Such a censured member does not immediately lose his or her membership (this can only happen by excommunication or withdrawal), but by this censure he loses the rights of his membership—he may not take part in baptism or in the

Lord's Supper, he may not vote, etc. He, of course, may come to church, where he will receive a place just as anyone else, and this can be blessed by the Lord to return him from his ways, but also to his conversion. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

The three steps of censure take place only if there is no repentance. After admonition, the first step of censure follows, meaning that the sin but not the name of the sinner is announced in the congregation. Members of the congregation are asked to remember him or her in their prayers. If the sinner hardens himself, it is necessary to ask advice of classis regarding it before the second step of censure is applied. It is possible that church authorities may wish to hear from the parties involved, for which purpose a committee is often formed. If they are in agreement with the views of the consistory, permission is then given to proceed to the second step of censure. At that time the sin and also the name of the sinner will be made public in the congregation, and the request is repeated to remember him or her at the throne of grace.

We are not better than a person who is placed under censure. If the Lord gives a little discovering light in our life, we become the chief of sinners and need to make confession of guilt before the Lord daily. Have we ever made confession of guilt before the Lord? Or are we still able to maintain ourselves before Him and have never had sorrow about our sins? This is a work of the Lord, but at the same time we must ask Him to give us what we need. When we know our own sins, it will be easier to pray for someone else who has fallen in sin. Many times, we are as the Pharisee and think ourselves better than the publican. The third step of censure is excommunication, which is accompanied by the reading of the form written in the back of our Psalter. Then the bonds with the church are cut off, which is a terrible thing to do and to be done unto us. May the Lord bring the serious warning to our attention under the administration of the Holy Spirit, "Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness."



Bible Stories for Little Ones

Ruth (1)

(Based on Ruth 1)

Many people lived during the days of Gideon, Samson, and the other judges. Most of them we never hear about, but the Bible tells us about one family of Israel, and that is for a very special reason. It was from this family that, many, many years later, the Lord Jesus Christ would be born. This special family was the family of Elimelech, his wife, Naomi, and their two sons.

One day Elimelech and Naomi decided to move away from Israel. There was a great famine in the land. This meant that there was very little food, and they worried how long they could live. But Elimelech and Naomi did something they shouldn't have done. They moved to a very wicked country, the country of Moab, where the people did not believe in God.

Time went by. Soon Elimelech died. After a while, the two boys became friends with Moabite girls, and they married them. If only Elimelech and Naomi had not moved to a wicked country. Then their boys might

have married God-fearing, Israelite girls, but God had a special purpose for what happened.

However, then the two sons also died. Naomi was left alone with the two wives of her sons, her daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.

One day Naomi heard some good news. God had remembered Israel and had given them food again. The famine was over. There was no reason for her to stay in Moab anymore. Her husband and children were dead, and she had no other family there, so why should she not move back home again to the land of Israel?

The two girls, Ruth and Orpah, bundled up their clothing and followed Naomi as she left their home. They loved their mother-in-law and wanted to be with her. As they walked, Naomi spoke to her daughters-in-law.

"Ruth and Orpah," she said, "I know you love me, but you have your own families here in Moab. Go back

to them. This is your country, and these are your people. May God bless you both.”

However, the girls would not leave. “No, no!” they cried. “We want to come with you. We will go back to your people with you.”

Naomi said, “No, go back, girls. Why would you want to come with me? Are you waiting for me to have sons so you can marry them? I am too old to get married anymore, and even if I were to be married tonight, you can’t wait until my children would be old enough to marry you.”

Then Ruth and Orpah cried, and they hugged Naomi. They loved her so much; they did not want to leave her, but Orpah kissed Naomi and then hurried back up the path toward her family. She loved them and their gods too much to leave them forever.

Ruth stayed with Naomi. Naomi looked at her. “Look, Orpah went back home to her people and to her gods; why don’t you go back, too?”

Then Ruth cried out, “Oh, please don’t tell me to leave you! Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I want to live. Your people will be my people, and your God shall be my God. Wherever you die, I want to die, and that’s where I want to be buried! May God never separate you and me!”

Naomi probably was very happy to hear Ruth say that. Now she knew that Ruth really loved her. Not only that, but Ruth had also learned to love Israel’s

God. We all are like either Ruth or Orpah. We go to church, but, if we had a choice, would we stop going to church and go back to the world, like Orpah? Or would we say, like Ruth, “I want to keep going to church. No matter what happens, no matter how people treat me, I am going to keep going to church. I want the Lord to give me a new heart. I want to die with this religion.”

Naomi knew that Ruth was not going to change her mind, and she didn’t say any more about going back. On and on they walked, until they finally reached the city of Bethlehem.

The Israelites in Bethlehem were surprised when they saw Naomi. “Is that Naomi?” they cried. “How she has changed. She once was so happy. She was so rich and had so much, and now look at her.”

“Please don’t call me Naomi anymore,” Naomi answered. “Please call me Mara, which means bitter. I went out with so much, but God has brought me back with nothing. God punished me for leaving to go to a wicked country.”

Was Naomi really empty? No, for she had the greatest thing in the world; she had the grace of God in her heart. She was being taught and led by the Lord Himself, and then one needs nothing else.

Naomi and Ruth stayed in Bethlehem; it was then the beginning of harvest time.



Bible Quiz

Fishing

Dear Boys and Girls,

Have you ever been fishing? Maybe you have your own fishing pole and a tacklebox. In the Bible we also read of fishing. Fishermen made it their occupation, often fishing all night and mending their nets during the day. Although the Bible does speak of a fish hook, mainly the fishermen used large nets instead of a hook and line. This net they tossed and spread over the water. Weights on the edges of this large open net would sink down so that the fish were caught in the middle of the net, and then the net was drawn in again.

Look, there stands a fisherman. He is standing on the shore. Swinging the large net he throws it onto the surface of the water, and the sides sink down.

The fisherman is quite tired, but he waits hopefully. Further out into the lake, a few fishing boats bob gently on the waves. There too, fishermen are working busily, casting the net and drawing it in again.

Fishing with a net was hard work. The men had to cast it over and over. Here and there, a struggling fish would make its way out again. When there was a good catch in the net, the men were very happy. The catch was valuable and was caught with much effort.

Some of the disciples were fishermen. They were used to catching fish, but now the Lord Jesus had a new task for them. Jesus said to the disciples, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Fishers of *men*? What does that mean? Can men be caught in a

net? Well first of all, the word “men” means people—men, women, girls, and boys. Yes, the Lord did, indeed, want the disciples to catch people but not with a real net. He appointed them to catch their souls. He wanted them to preach, and the Word of God which they preached was just like a net.

When the Word of God is preached and it catches a soul, that means this heart must stop going in the wrong direction which it goes by nature. The Word stops him short, and for the first time, he realizes that he is lost and cannot meet God at the end of his life. For the first time, he begins to cry to God in truth because he sees that God is good and he is evil. That is how one is caught in the net of the Word of God.

Did the disciples themselves catch those souls? No, they could only spread the net. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring these souls into the net. That is still how it is today. Ministers also cast the net of the Word of God when they preach, and missionaries spread this net, too. Their work is hard work, just like the work of a fisherman. The Word of God is preached over and over, and although they work diligently, the ministers cannot always see if their work has any result. Sometimes very few souls seem to be caught. When one or several souls are caught, this “catch” is very precious and causes gladness. Just as the disciples were called, ministers are called by God to do this task. This is what makes them qualified. They leave their former calling and become “fishers of men.”

We can read of examples of people who were caught in the net of the Word. There was Lydia, who was by the riverside with some other women and listened to Paul’s preaching. There was Cornelius, who asked Peter to come and preach. Sometimes, the Bible simply tells us that “many” turned to the Lord during the times when Paul went on his missionary journeys and the disciples were preaching.

Just as fish are taken unexpectedly by the net, so sinners are taken unexpectedly by the Word of God. When God catches someone, it is His work and cannot be resisted. The sinner will struggle to get away, but the Lord will not let go.

However, think about this, boys and girls. Perhaps you have been fishing, and you could see the fish gathering around your bait, eyeing it from all angles, yet never taking a bite. Or your bobber jerks under the surface, but when you reel the line a little, you realize that a fish has been nibbling small bites without being caught. This can also happen with a net. Fish sometimes swim near, even brushing along the outside of the net with their scaly sides, or they are in the net for a moment but somehow slip out again before the net fully closes.

That is how it can be with people. They become a bit more serious after hearing a sermon, but they draw back, forget, and continue on. Others are also touched by the preaching, but they struggle hard to get away—they squash all their serious thoughts. They come close, they gather around and listen, but it never comes any further. It never takes hold of their heart so that they fall before God and say, “God, be merciful to me, a sinner!”

How do you listen in church? Do you push away the words you hear, saying you are too young to be serious? You may be young, but... you are not too young to die... and you are also not too young to be converted. Ask the Lord if you may be caught as a small fish in His net.

* * * * *

1. In the word search find the words from the box below. Words can go in any direction and share letters as well as cross over each other.

“And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

M A U N T O E S W F N E K A M A A N D
M U N T O E R O W K S A T H L M M F O
S R E S I F L O H N M A K E O N O E N
E U N T O L L U I U T H E M M E M M N
N O N U O L L Y O E O M T M N L L I W
E I S F O D U U T K N Y F H A M E H T
M T L F N K O O N A S L H O E N M M Y
U H O A O L Y Y U M T H I M H M D W L
T E M L H F I S H E R S H W A U N T O
S M N I K M H S A I T H E E O I H N I
I H T I A S K E S A I T H F U L L E S
I S M E O W E T M E H T S W E E L M O
W E R K E H O L L O F N O R R W M O I
O U E H F I S H E R S L T H E T E A F
L M I W E W I L F N L U I T M H I M I
L T E H M A K E E O U N D I Y Y S A M
O I H E K A M M F E F T O A O M F I S
F H E N E A A D D F A O F S U N I M F
U O Y A A H N N A E O L L O F E I E A
L W N H M H A D M N N L F H H O M N T

Fill in the blanks.

2. “_____ saith unto them, I go a fishing.”
(John 21)
3. “And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and _____

his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers." (Matthew 4)

4. "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast an _____, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee." (Matthew 17)

5. "And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were _____ their nets." (Luke 5)

6. "And when they had this _____, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake." (Luke 5)

7. "Jesus saith unto them, _____ of the fish which ye have now caught." (John 21)

8. "But I will put hooks in thy jaws, and I will cause the fish of thy _____ to stick unto thy scales, and I will bring thee up out of the midst of thy rivers, and all the fish of thy rivers shall stick unto thy scales." (Ezekiel 29)

9. "The Lord GOD hath _____ by His holiness, that, lo, the days shall come upon you, that He will take you away with hooks, and your posterity with fishhooks." (Amos 4)

10. "The fishers also shall mourn, and all they that cast angle into the brooks shall lament, and they that _____ nets upon the waters shall languish." (Isaiah 19)

11. "And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their _____, mending their nets; and He called them." (Matthew 4)

For the Older Children

12. Place the tiles in order to form a verse.

heaven is that was the sea, Again,
of every kind: the kingdom of a net,
cast into and gathered like unto

Please send your answers to the
address shown below:

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

For the Younger Children

13. Color the picture.



Answers to January's "Journeys" quiz:

- | | |
|----------------|---------------------|
| 1. Compassion | Luke 10:33 |
| 2. Angels | Luke 16:22 |
| 3. Money | Mark 6:8 |
| 4. City | Ecclesiastes 8:10 |
| 5. Red | Deuteronomy 2:1 |
| 6. Nothing | Luke 11:6 |
| 7. Wearied | John 4:6 |
| 8. Destroy | Genesis 6:13 |
| 9. Straightway | Matthew 25:15 |
| 10. Arise | 1 Kings 19:7 |
| 11. Riotous | Luke 15:13 |
| 12. Sought | Luke 2:44 |
| 13. God | 2 Chronicles 24:16 |
| 14. Mount | Acts 1:12 |
| 15. Dead | Acts 5:10 |
| 16. Perils | 2 Corinthians 11:26 |
| 17. Leah | Genesis 49:31 |
| 18. Journey | 1 Corinthians 16:6 |
| 19. Nineveh | |
| 20. Joppa | |
| 21. Jerusalem | |
| 22. Damascus | |
| 23. Spain | |

Answers to previous quizzes were received in November from:

Esther Bakker 1
Michael Byl 1
Jaxon DeKorne 11
Juliette DeKorne 13
Cody Driesen 34
Ethan Driesen **6**
Toby Driesen 34
Allison Ekema 9
Jacob Ekema 2
Kaylynn Ekema 40
Weston Ekema 27
Ronna Geuze 9
Kurtis Groen 29
Kate Hoogendoorn (2) 23
Weston Hoogendoorn 17

Kendra Kattenberg 1
Anthony Knibbe 16
Ashley Knibbe 29
Whitney Knibbe 29
Christian Koepsell 2
Justus Koepsell 1
Molly Koepsell 2
Paris Krygsman 2
Abby Maassen 8
Kari Mans 21
Abraham Mol **6**
Madeline Mol (2) 22
Olivia Mol (2) 26
Teddy Mol 31
John Murphy (2) **31**

Andrew Murphy (2) 11
Blake Pannekoek 22
Lauren Pannekoek 34
Kadri Post 1
Andrew Remijn 31
Daniel Remijn 11
Lauren Remijn 27
Collin Rozeboom (2) 15
Neveah Rozeboom 14
Alex Rus 32
Jacob Rus 1
Lakia Rus 23
Micah Spaans **6**
Tessa Spaans 9
Kyle Taylor (2) 2

Megan Taylor (4) **30**
Colin Ten Hove 28
Hannah-Jo Ten Hove 15
Gerard Van Deuveren **6**
Maurice Van Garderen 35
Emmalyn Van Garderen 37
Sadie Van Lagen 4
Kaiven Van Middendorp (2) 42
Konner Van Middendorp (2) 40
Janessa Van Wingerden (3) 3
Taylina Van Wingerden (3) 15
Jake Vande Stouwe 14
Jonah Vande Stouwe 14
Adalyn Vande Waerdt 4
Joelle Vande Waerdt 5

Wyatt Vande Waerdt 25
Aubrey Vanden Berg 20
Heidi Vandenberg 35
Kristen Vandenberg 22
Caleb Vogelaar (2) **18**
Matthew Vogelaar (2) 20
Jayden Weeda 25
Nathan Wesdyk 31
Rebekah Wesdyk 35

7 Bibles were sent to Bolivia this month. The total is now 658—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:
Michael Byl, Kyle Taylor, Justus Koepsell, Esther Bakker, Jacob Ekema, Janessa Van Wingerden, Kendra Kattenberg, and Paris Krygsman
Love,
Aunt LenaBeth

Paige Bakker

I enjoyed the break from school, too, Paige. It is good to have some family time, isn't it? I'm glad you had a visit with your grandma and grandpa for several days; that is very special. I'm sure you enjoyed staying with your uncle and aunt, as well. During the break, you also had special services in church—Christmas, New Year's Eve, and New Year's Day. Do you remember what the texts were in the sermons on these days? The Lord has brought us through a whole year, but now we need His help and blessing again in the coming year.

Persecutions in Germany (continued from page 36)

he proclaimed. Such were not going to Mass, not making confession, and not believing in transubstantiation. After this ceremony was over, he made a most excellent discourse to the people and concluded with a kind hymn of a very edifying nature.

A Protestant gentleman being ordered to lose his head for not renouncing his religion, went cheerfully to the place of execution. A friar came to him and said the words in a low tone of voice, "As you have great reluctance publicly to abjure your faith, whisper your confession in my ear and I will absolve your sins." To this the gentleman loudly replied, "Trouble me not, Friar, I have confessed my sins to God,

and obtained absolution through the merits of Jesus Christ." Then turning to the executioner, he said, "Let me not be pestered with these men, but perform your duty," on which his head was struck off at a single blow.

Wolfgang Scuch and John Huglin, two worthy ministers were burned as was Leonard Keyser, a student of the University of Wertenbergh, and George Carpenter, a Bavarian, was hanged for refusing to recant Protestantism.

The persecutions in Germany were horrid but after many years eventually subsided (in the latter 1500s), but again broke out in 1630. □

News & Announcements

■ Ministerial Calls

Accepted:

By Rev. H. de Leeuw of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, to the congregation of Brant County, Ontario.

Declined:

By Rev. H. de Leeuw of Franklin Lakes, New Jersey, to the congregation of Lethbridge, Alberta.

By Rev. C. Sonneveld of Alblasserdam, the Netherlands, to the congregation of Kalamazoo, Michigan.

By Rev. J.J. Witvoet of Rock Valley, Iowa, to the congregations of Grand Rapids (Covell), Michigan, and Sheboygan, Wisconsin.

■ Obituaries

FLUIT, Joyce G. (nee Jansen) – Age 83, December 20, 2022; Luverne, Minnesota; Husband – Clarence (deceased); Children – Kevin & Tina, Cheryl & Keith Van Der Brink, Brent & Dorenda; 10 grandchildren, 11 great-grandchildren; Brother – Donald & Lavonne Jansen; In-laws – Lila Jansen, Anna Marie Kaster, Joyce & Greg Hetrick, Sylvia Fluit, Evelyn Fluit; predeceased by infant granddaughter Nicole. (Rev. J.J. Witvoet, Psalm 102:11-13.)

HOOGENDOORN, Cornelia (nee Vanden Brink) – Age 93, January 9, 2023; Rock Valley, Iowa; Husband – Gilbert C. (deceased); Children – Jerald, Dennis & Joan; Linda Rich, Sheryl & Greg Steuk, Connie & Glenn Vande Kamp; 24 grandchildren, 35 great-grandchildren, 1 great-great-grandchild; Brother – John &

Lois Vanden Brink; Daughters-in-law – Debra, Wanda; In-laws – Arlene Hoogendoorn, Peggy Hoogendoorn, Sadie & Albert Schelling, Barb Hoogendoorn, Frank Wynia; predeceased by sons Gary and Marlin. (Rev. H. Hofman, Psalm 61:2.)

VANDER VALK, Ann Margaret (nee Van Houten) – Age 83, December 8, 2022; Blacksburg, Virginia; Husband – Henry (deceased); Children – Henry & Olga, Peter, Thomas, Betty Ann & Jim Jensen, Janet & Frank Poth; 6 grandchildren, 2 great-grandchildren; Brothers – Arthur & Carolyn Van Houten, James Van Houten.

■ Installation and Inaugural Services of Rev. H. de Leeuw in NRC of Brant County, ON

The consistory of the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Brant County, Ontario, announces with gladness that the Lord has inclined the heart of Rev. H. de Leeuw to accept our call to become our shepherd and teacher. The Lord willing, Rev. H. de Leeuw will be united with our congregation in an installation service conducted by Rev. G.M. de Leeuw on Wednesday, March 29, 2023, at 2:00 P.M. Rev. H. de Leeuw hopes to preach his inaugural service the same evening at 7:00 P.M. Both services will be held at the Netherlands Reformed Congregation of Norwich located at 45 Main Street E., Norwich, Ontario.

■ Employment Opportunities at Eventide Home, Lethbridge, AB

Eventide Home plans to open in the spring of 2023 and is requesting RN and LPN applications. Nurses will be responsible for all aspects of care and related tasks to their full scope of practice. Safe, quality patient and family-centered care will be provided while reflecting on the shared traditions and doctrinal beliefs of the NRC and God's Word. If you are interested in joining the team at Eventide Home, please contact Paul Vanden Broek at 403-892-3617 or manager@eventidehome.ca

■ 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

Minutes of Classis Far West 2022 Meeting (Summary)

Initial Classis Meeting Held on July 6, 2022

Rev. E.C. Adams of Picture Butte delivered the prayer service on the evening of July 5, 2022 in the Nobleford church. His text was taken from Ezekiel 9:3-5. Theme: *Ezekiel's Special Vision Concerning the Sighers at Jerusalem*. 1. The time of these sighers; 2. The judgment approaching these sighers; 3. The mark placed on these sighers; 4. The safety of these sighers.

Article 1—Opening

The Classis meeting convened at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, July 6, 2022 in the sanctuary of the Nobleford NRC. On behalf of Rev. den Hollander, Rev. van Ruitenburg opened the meeting. He read from 1 Corinthians 16 and opened with prayer. He meditated on 1 Corinthians 16:22, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha." We need unity in doctrine. We need unity in loving the Lord Jesus Christ. We need such knowledge. Dear brothers, may we meet

today with this wish that the Lord Jesus be with you. After not meeting for four years there were many noteworthy anniversaries and events.

Article 2&3—Credentials & Moderamen

The credentials of delegates were approved. The following officers were selected:

President – Rev. H.D. den Hollander (by rotation)
Vice President – Rev. P. van Ruitenburg (by rotation)
Clerk – Elder Arie Van Wingerden (by vote)
Treasurer – Elder Paul Neels (by appointment)

Article 5—Correspondence

1. January 18, 2019—Certificate of Dismissal from Classis Far West for Rev. A.A. Brugge.
2. February 28, 2019—Letter to calling churches of each Classis, recommending a common date for potential Synod meeting.

3. May 22, 2019—Admittance to Classis Far West for Rev. den Hoed prior to his installation in Lynden. All necessary documents were found to be in order.

4. July 18, 2019—Admittance to Classis Far West for Rev. E.C. Adams prior to his installation in Picture Butte. Minutes were attached.

5. November 24, 2020—Admittance to Classis Far West for Rev. G.M. de Leeuw prior to his installation in Nobleford. Minutes were attached.

Article 7—Submitted Points

Artesia sought advice on how to proceed or continue as a congregation with one office bearer and three male members living locally. For now, they are to continue as they presently are doing. The moderator will visit them and assess the situation and report back to the next Classis meeting.

Fort Macleod consistory requested Classis to affirm that the doctrine taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Article 20, concerning Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience is according to the Word of God and consistent with our own Confessions. This was delayed until after the appeals were heard.

The Fort Macleod consistory requested permission of Classis to solicit donations toward their new sanctuary. This was granted.

The consistory of Lethbridge requested on behalf of *Ezra for Israel* to submit to the Synod their desire to have *EFI* become a board under our denominational Synod. The structure of such a board would be decided by the Synod. The Classis will ask the Synod to begin our own mission and relief work in Israel.

Nobleford requested the Synod to consider writing a North American version of “A Pilgrim in Media Land,” since there is so much European content and the current translation accepts viewpoints we do not necessarily agree with. Classis will request the Synodical Modern Media Committee to write information from our perspective to supplement “A Pilgrim in Media Land,” and to consider asking to have it printed in a special edition of *Insight Into*.

Nobleford requested that when confessing members ask for their membership papers with the intent of transferring to another NRC congregation that:

a) The clerk of the other NRC congregation be advised to expect them; b) they be advised that, for good order, they should attend the

NRC church that is closest by; c) the other NRC consistory be informed of any concerns with their conduct before the transfer takes place. Classis stated that the first two points are already established procedure. The third point was approved with the words “very serious” added before the word concerns to read “informed of any very serious concerns.”

Nobleford asked how should we deal with adult children of a family that requests their membership for transfer? The consistory needs to talk directly with these adult children.

Nobleford requested the Synod, due to travel restrictions, to consider revising the Classis structure according to Canadian and American Classes. This request was denied as it was considered premature since the pandemic rules are still evolving. Besides the many practical problems with this request, the proposal does not solve the denominational problems as the Synod and many of its committees also require border crossing.

Picture Butte consistory requested that a Classis Far West meeting will be held once per year, even if there are no points to consider. This proposal was agreed to.

The Picture Butte consistory requested that the Classis adopt a procedure to follow when calling a Classis meeting under special circumstances, as has been experienced in the past years. They proposed a suggested procedure. This request was denied. The calling churches are free to consider this procedure as a guideline.

Picture Butte consistory has a translated copy of three documents derived from the Dutch Synod regarding marriage and divorce. They request that the translated copies be forwarded to the Synod for consideration. These translations have been completed and are again being brought to the Classis Far West to be forwarded to the Synod. This was put on hold and will be considered at the continuation of this meeting in October.

Article 8—Appeals

Several appellants sent appeals to the Classis concerning decisions made by the Fort Macleod consistory. Briefly speaking, the appeals were not upheld, and Classis gave recommendations to the Fort Macleod consistory concerning how to proceed further.

At this point the meeting was suspended and scheduled to resume October 19, 2022 (D.V.) at Nobleford.

* * * * *

Continued Classis Meeting Held on October 19, 2022

The Classis meeting was reconvened at 9:00 A.M. on Wednesday, October 19, 2022 in the sanctuary of the Nobleford NRC. Rev. den Hoed opened the meeting. He read Hosea 2:14-23 and opened with prayer. His meditation focused on Hosea 2:14&15: *“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt.”*

Article 8—Appeals (continued)

Two appeals pertaining to Fort Macleod that were not adequately addressed during the July portion of the meeting were considered. Classis gave recommendations on actions to be taken with an emphasis on reconciliation and healing.

Article 7—Submitted Points (continued)

Fort Macleod consistory requested the Classis to affirm that the doctrine taught in the Westminster Confession of Faith, Article 20, concerning Christian Liberty and Liberty of Conscience is according to the Word of God and consistent with our own Confessions. The Classis stated, “Knowing we all respect the Westminster Confession of Faith, there is no necessity to affirm.”

Picture Butte consistory has a translated copy of three documents derived from the Dutch Synod regarding marriage and divorce. They request that the translated copies be forwarded to the Synod for consideration. This request was granted.

The Classis agreed to forward the request of the Lynden consistory to the calling church that the date of the Synodical Meeting be changed from January 2023 to April or May of 2023.

Article 9&10—Election of Delegates to the Synod & Moderatorships

The delegates and alternates to the Synod were chosen. The moderatorships were unchanged. A schedule of church visitations was agreed to.

Article 11—Customary Questions

There was a question related to Fort Macleod members attending other congregations as well as another question concerning the Office Bearers’ Conferences. Rev. Adams gave a report on the potential relocation of some members from Alberta and Ontario to Manitoba.

Article 12—Arrangements for the Next Classis Meeting

The next meeting will be held in Lynden on March 15, 2023, the Lord willing, with the Lethbridge NRC as calling church. Rev. den Hoed will preach a prayer service the preceding evening. By rotation Rev. van Ruitenburch will serve as president and Rev. den Hoed as vice-president. Rev. Adams will make a presentation at the Office Bearers’ Conference on the liberty of conscience.

Article 13—Closing

Rev. van Ruitenburch asked the Classis to sing Psalter 126:1&5. He then closed with prayer.

*Edited 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 Maaike Van Wingerden at 509-840-0437 or email trinityrcs@embarqmail.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!**

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.**

■ 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 MCCS Society and the Reformed Congregations in North America. Inquiries should be addressed to the principal, Mr. Jan Neels, at jneels@mccs.ca. Please send your application, along with supporting documentation, to Mr. Jan Neels and to the board secretary, Mr. Toby de Rover, at tobyderover@gmail.com.

PLYMOUTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN, is accepting applications for open teaching positions for the 2023-2024 school year. While we would be interested in hearing from any interested applicants, candidates with certification or

experience in high school language arts, elementary, and special education are specifically needed. For more information about the positions or to request an application, please contact the principal, Mr. Nate Bleeker, at 616-454-9481 or email nbleeker@plymouthchristian.us.

PROVIDENCE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN, continues to welcome applications from qualified elementary and secondary teachers for the coming school year. For more information regarding possible openings or to send your cover letter and resumé, please contact the principal, Mr. Tom Kwekel, at tkwekel@pcskzoo.com.

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN SCHOOL, NORWICH, ONTARIO, anticipates needing a grade 6 teacher, several high school teachers and paraeducators for the next school year. For more information about elementary opportunities, contact Mr. Andrew Korevaar at elementaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 241. For more information about secondary opportunities, please contact Mr. Gerrit Ten Hove at secondaryprincipal@rcsnorwich.com or 519-863-2403 ext. 303. We invite inquiries about our locally developed teacher training program for those who hold a bachelor's degree. Cover letters and resumes should be submitted to hr@rcsnorwich.com. Applications will be reviewed and those applicants selected for interviews will be contacted by the school board.

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

■ 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.

The Sinner's Rest

Oh, when will Thou my Saviour be,
Oh, when shall I be clean,
The true, eternal Sabbath see,
A perfect rest from sin?
Jesus, the sinner's rest Thou art,
From guilt, and fear, and pain;
While Thou art absent from my heart,
I look for rest in vain.

The consolations of Thy Word,
My soul hath long upheld,
The faithful promise of the Lord,
Shall surely be fulfilled.
I look to my incarnate God,
Till He His work begin;
And wait till His redeeming blood
Shall cleanse me from all sin.

His great salvation I shall know,
And perfect liberty;
Onward to sin he cannot go,
Whoever abides in Thee.
Added to the Redeemer's fold,
I shall in Him rejoice;
I all His glory shall behold,
And hear my Shepherd's voice.

Oh, that I now the voice might hear,
That speaks my sins forgiv'n;
His Word is past to give me here
The inward pledge of heav'n.
His blood shall over all prevail,
And sanctify the unclean;
The grace that saves from future hell,
Shall save from present sin.

—Augustus Toplady